

BOARD NOTES
February 27, 2007

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, February 26, 2007 with all board members present. Mr. Wrightson was absent and Dr. Bender conducted the meeting.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Angie Hambling introduced Jeff Meinhard, 6th grade teacher at Rolling Prairie Elementary School. Mrs. Hambling said that Mr. Meinhard has prepared “The Perfect Lesson” that includes the state standards and the Rolling Prairie theme of “Where in the World”. Mr. Meinhard reviewed the introduction to GPS technology. His students can earn extra credits by going on a Geocache. Two students, Brittany Giesler and Brandon Ames explained their experience of geocaching. Mr. Meinhard said the project involves students, parents and community members.

REASONS WE'RE PROUD

- Dr. Bender and the Board recognized the accomplishments of Phil Oudhuis who placed second at the state wrestling meet. A certificate was presented to Phil. The Board also recognized Wes Hobart with a certificate as coach of the wrestling team. Mr. Hobart was unable to be present.
- Attached are the Reasons We're Proud that Dr. Bender reviewed.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The board approved the Consent Agenda as follows:
 - Minutes - January 22, 2007
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Michelle Deckard - ½ Kindergarten Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School - Leave of Absence beginning April 30, 2007 and continuing through January 7, 2008.
- Employment
 1. Tim Eldridge - Homebound Instructor for approximately 4-6 weeks
 2. Jessica Feathers - Temporary 3rd Grade Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School - beginning approximately May 6, 2007 through the end of the 2006-2007 school year.
 3. Casey Gumm - Temporary 4th Grade Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School - Beginning approximately February 5, 2007 and continuing for approximately 4-6 weeks.

REPORTS

- Legislation

Dr. Bender reviewed some of the current bills being discussed in legislation. The Circuit Breaker bill is of the utmost concern to schools. The original intent was to come up with a way to do away with property taxes. This bill would limit the ability of local taxing units to raise taxes and cap the amount of taxes at 2%. This would include schools, fire departments, police departments, etc. If this would occur, New Prairie would lose approximately \$650,000 in the first year. Also, because it is an assessment year, we may be faced with not receiving our monies in a timely manner again just like several years ago.

Dr. Bender said it appears that full-day kindergarten will be phased in beginning with free and reduced students. We are not sure how that will play out with the privacy laws.

Bernie Baltus said he has heard that Senate Bill #538 and SJR #15 which deals with the circuit breaker have been defeated. We will know more later.

Bernie asked how you will separate your students into the full day/half day kindergarten program. Dr. Bender said we will be discussing this with administrators and teachers to work through the process.

- Keith Dennis advised that we have been working with several insurance agencies to get better rates on our liability insurance. Mr. Dennis said they met with representatives from Hanover, which is now Wells Fargo and Gibson Insurance to receive quotations. Previously, Indiana Insurance was the only company that would work with school corporations. Due to competition, Gibson Insurance, our current company, submitted a quotation which reflected a reduction in premiums by about \$85,000. Mr. Dennis said he has talked with other corporations around the state that had Indiana Insurance, and it is competition that helped reduce those costs.
- Dr. Bender reviewed the preliminary AYP report for the corporation. Angie Hambling commented that this is one of the best presentations she has seen for our corporation. Dr. Bender praised the schools for their efforts and indicated to the Board that all schools are addressing the areas of concern.
- Mr. Dennis gave an update on the building project. Mr. Dennis said obviously the cold weather hurt us a little. Contractors tried to do what they could during that time, but they finally had to give in to the elements. He feels they are back on track at this time. Contractors feel we are still on target for the May, 2008 opening.

Mr. Dennis said he is working with the Town of New Carlisle to determine whether we will build a new waste water treatment plant or consider tying in with New Carlisle. They are reviewing the cost effectiveness of both options.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board approved the appointment of Fred Evans and Greg Dudeck to the Wage Committee for the auditorium light project and re-roofing project at NPHS. According to state statute, we are required to have a wage committee for each project over \$100,000.
- The board approved the lawn quotations from C.J.'s Outdoor Services for mowing the three elementary schools for a period of three years.
- The board approved the driver's education program for 2007 with student fees set at \$300 and instructor's salaries at \$25.25 per hour. This is the same as 2006.
- The board approved the summer school program for Category I subject areas for Grades 1-8 and Language Arts at the High School. The state will reimburse summer school at 105% for eligible costs. Dr. Bender indicated that the state does not always follow through with their reimbursement costs.

Bernie Baltes asked why the state includes teacher salaries but does not include their retirement and taxes in the reimbursement. Dr. Bender said when you file the initial application, you cannot include that, but on the final report you usually receive it.

Dr. Bender said the summer school program will be run a little different this year. We will be looking at a three-week program versus four weeks. It was felt that not much was gained in that last week for the elementary schools. Dr. Bender said we want a summer program that yields success. We will be looking at a differentiating teaching approach this year.

- The board upheld the decision of the hearing examiner in the student expulsion appeal of Case #1.
- The board approved the Affidavit of Payment for Wells Fargo on the building project.

DISCUSSION

- The board reviewed the 2007 CPF Wish list prepared by the administrators. Dr. Bender wanted the board to be aware that the superintendent wishes to have a carry over in each location and not expend those funds to zero so they can be added to next year for some further purchasing.
- The board reviewed the 2006 appropriation report showing the carry over figures.
- The board reviewed the financial information which gives an indication where we will be if our funds do not come in from the counties as predicted. Dr. Bender said there will be no investment of monies for May if we do not receive the monies on time. We should be able to go into 2008 before having to possibly borrow money.
- A Board Retreat will be held on March 19th which will include all administrators. The Retreat will be held at Heston Supper Club.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Bernie indicated that so few schools received the Bio-medical grant that New Prairie received. He would like to commend the group that put that grant together.

- Bernie also indicated that Bremen recently did a presentation on Project Lead the Way. New Prairie had this four years ago. He wants to commend the high school administration and Rich Shail for being instrumental in moving in this direction. Rich said it all started with a grant. Clara said we have over 150 students in that program now.
- Bernie would like to mention how interested the students were to learn the GPS system at Rolling. He read an article recently about a coach that said he evaluates a team by desire. That desire determines who will succeed.
- LuAnn said she works in South Bend and she said a lot of teachers are inquiring about positions in the corporation. She said there are a lot of people from outside the area who are interested in coming to New Prairie. In the past, there were people who did not know who we were.
- Colleen said last weekend she spent the night at Olive Elementary for the space camp. The sixth grade students ran the program for the 3rd and 4th graders. She said it was a fantastic experience.
- Rich advised that the superintendent at Wawasee has a blogg web site where he communicates daily with the community. He also has links to all the state representatives. He would like to promote something like that for New Prairie. He has been fighting for something like this. It will take an active role to impress upon the Central Office to look into this.
- Rich is very impressed with the Robotics project that the high school students worked on. Rich listened to their presentation, and they are very energetic. Rich said he is an engineer and these students talked circles around him. He said he would expect to see this robotics at a meeting soon. Clara said she will have them present that. Competition is in Michigan in the near future.

The next meeting is March 26th.