

BOARD NOTES
April 24, 2007

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, April 23, 2007 with Rich Shail, Bernie Baltus, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Colleen Lincke and Al Williamson present. Duane Wrightson was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as written.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Brenda Moffitt, 5th Grade Teacher at Olive Elementary School introduced three students who participated in the recent History Fair at Olive.

Adam Burns received 1st place for his project on the Mongol Empire
Tyler Smith received Honorable Mention for his project on “911”
Jessica Cinal received Honorable Mention for her project on “Studebaker”

The History Fair focuses on students completing a project and public speaking to present their project. The three students presented their individual projects to the Board.

REASONS WE'RE PROUD

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the Reasons We're Proud as submitted by the schools.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The Board approved the Consent Agenda as follows:
 - Minutes
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Dena True - Spanish Teacher - NPJHS - Leave of Absence beginning April 30, 2007 thru the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Also, Child Rearing Leave beginning August 10, 2007 thru October 13, 2007.
 2. Kay Shott - 4th Grade - Prairie View Elementary - Retirement effective June 4, 2007
 3. Elaine Sebasty - 1st Grade - Olive Elementary School - Retirement effective June 4, 2007
 4. Sue Groff - 1st Grade - Prairie View Elementary - Retirement effective June 4, 2007.
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Cortny Kramer - Drama Club - NPHS

NON-CERTIFIED

- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Robert Palm - 8th Grade Girls Basketball - NPJHS - 2006-2007 school year

Bernie Baltus indicated that he is frustrated with the State because there are no budget reports to judge where we stand as far as appropriations. Duane said we still do not have our rate established. We have an idea, but it is not official.

REPORTS

- The Board received a copy of the latest cash flow. Mr. Wrightson said based on our figures, it appears we may have to borrow up to \$479,520 by October and \$2 million by November if we do not receive our monies from the County. We received a letter from the LaPorte County Auditor's office indicating that based on a lawsuit with the County, nothing will be issued until that lawsuit is resolved as they will be unable to complete the tax bills. If the DLGF received certification in September, there would be one tax bill and one distribution - possibly in November. Mr. Wrightson said because of legislation and the County issues, we are forced to borrow money and lose interest monies rather than earning monies.

- Keith Dennis gave an update on the building project. He reviewed the change orders as discussed with the board previously. We are at 20% of our payments with the contractors. The board received copies of the pay applications for all contractors to date.

Mr. Wrightson said we are still reviewing the issue with the location of the outdoor basketball courts at the new middle school. Because the original location was in a soft spot, the courts could not be located there. We are reviewing the cost to relocate those courts. At this time, the cost is not acceptable to the corporation. Mr. Wrightson said we may possibly locate those courts on the parking lot. Rich Shail expressed some concern for security if the courts are on the parking lot since most of the use would occur outside of school hours and on weekends. The parking area would be behind the school. Mr. Wrightson said there is a driveway going back there. Rich said he is just concerned because it is out of the mainstream of traffic. Keith said we have asked for a cost to deduct this just to see if we can get the cost down. Bernie said we can ask for the deduct and install the courts at a later date.

ACTION ITEMS

- Mr. Wrightson recommended an increase in substitute pay for the following groups as follows:

Substitute Teachers:		
Licensed	-	\$84
Degreed	-	\$70
Non-Degreed-		\$63
Secretaries	-	\$8.00/hr.
Teacher Ass't	-	\$8.00/hr.
Food Service	-	\$7.00/hr.
Nurse Assistants	-	\$9.00/hr.
Custodians	-	\$9.50/hr.
Lunchroom Ass't	-	\$17.00/day

Mr. Wrightson indicated that substitute salaries had not been increased since 2004. He told the board we will be in the top range for teacher substitute pay in the area; however, because of the large number of absences in the certified staff, we want the best of teachers in the area to cover those classrooms.

- The board approved the affidavit for payment for Wells Fargo.

DISCUSSION

- Kindergarten

Mr. Wrightson said the administrators met recently to discuss full-day kindergarten. We talked about space, which Prairie View has two rooms, Olive has one, and Rolling Prairie may possibly have one room that would be based on enrollment for 2007-2008. Based on Kindergarten Round-up held recently, Olive and Prairie View enrolled 38 students each, and Rolling Prairie enrolled 60, for a total of 140 students. By the start of school, we may have as many as 200-210 students.

Tammy can do some work with us in looking at the free and reduced students, but the official form to fill out by the state will not be available until July 1. Bussing will not be a problem. We may have to add one route. We could be looking at 1 ½ additional staff members. We will need to look at the curriculum. We have two teachers who have expressed an interest in visiting other schools who offer full-day kindergarten to review their programs. We have talked about some alternative full-day programs that would offer the core subjects in the morning and social skills in the afternoon. We are just exploring options at this time.. It is difficult when you might have some students going a full day and the other students going a half day. You do not want to cheat those students out of an education. We will not know what is going to happen until the legislative session is over. We do not know how they can base the criteria on free and reduced because that is illegal.

Rich Shail said Argos Schools will be offering full-day kindergarten regardless of what the state decides. Duane said we cannot offer full-day kindergarten to 200 students because of the space. The schools just cannot handle that. We would possibly have to consider portables or other options.

- Strategic Plan

Mr. Wrightson reviewed the minutes from the Strategic Plan presentation that was held on April 18th. Mr. Wrightson said he wanted to look at what some other schools have done with their plan. We were able to get a copy of Michigan City Area Schools' plan and he will also look at a plan from a school in Minnesota. There will be some familiar items in all plans. He asked the board that when they look at the plans, you have to ask yourselves how many staff members will it take to complete the plan that you design. Mr. Wrightson feels if we visit the NCA District meetings, there will be a lot of similarities to a strategic plan. He said the teacher and parent representatives will get a copy of the Michigan City plan to look over. He will then meet with each individual and review the plan and come back to the board within a month to see if there is an interest in going in this direction.

Mr. Wrightson said it is a heavy investment in money and time. Can we get a lot of people involved to commit to the process?

- 2008 CPF Review

Mr. Wrightson reviewed the CPF list comprised by the administrators. He said this is not a total wish list this year because we are trying to get by with just our real needs in order to save money for the middle school project completion and the HS/JHS remodeling.

Mr. Wrightson said we will be looking at a separate middle school CPF and technology needs list. This will be included in this 2008 report, but it is not included at this time.

Mr. Wrightson said Bernie Baltus was concerned with including transportation and food service on the CPF list since they have their own budgets. Mr. Wrightson said he feels that if it is equipment needs, it should be on the CPF list and not come from their individual accounts. Bernie said when you see a \$2 million CD in the Food Service account, it is difficult to see us paying for items from the CPF.

Duane said we will be addressing the high school bleachers. We hope to be able to do this through the monies we have set aside for the building project.

Rich Shail questioned the Lego Robotics. Phil Bender said Jim Holifield had indicated they wanted to expand the program at the JHS. Rich said he was under the understanding that the Lego Robotics was an elementary program, and if that is so, he would love to see that offered at the elementary level.

Rich also asked if the lap tops are leased or purchased. Mr. Wrightson said they are leased currently and we are reviewing the direction we will be going.

We have increased the technology salaries to include two additional technology assistants - one each for the high school and junior high school because of the need in both those buildings.

We also looked at additional parking at Prairie View which has become a safety issue. A committee has done a study there on how they want to re-do the front parking. Mr. Wrightson will keep the board updated on this project.

- Olive Soccer Field

Colleen Lincke said she has been receiving a lot of calls regarding the field. Greg Dudeck reviewed the situation. Originally, the Little League met with him to expand the baseball field. We had some concerns because of the flag football program, but felt we resolved those issues because the fence would be removable. Then we received some concerns from the Town of New Carlisle who indicated they had a lease with the corporation for their Sportsplex and skate park. Some people were concerned because they were not consulted about this. He said they talked with Pat Cummings and some other town officials to indicate that it was an oversight on our part. Greg thought it was resolved; however, there still seems to be some concerns.

Duane said he talked with Sherry Bailey and Bart Curtis and also thought there were no problems. Greg said the majority of the concerns are with the soccer parents. Colleen said they tell her that we took Soccer away at school and now the fields, which means it will be gone forever. Mark McBride said the fence can be removed in 30 minutes, but they are pouring cement dug outs. Mr. Wrightson said he was not aware of this.

Most of the soccer teams have been using Prairie View and Rolling Prairie. Rich said the number of kids in baseball is increasing. There are over 400 students. Both New Carlisle and Rolling Prairie leagues are growing. They are all cramped for safety facilities for those students. He said IN/Tek/Kote has allocated another \$25,000 to the New Prairie Little League for the baseball field at the end of town. He said the Little League and Parks Department are looking at the possibility of installing restrooms in the Memorial Park and Bourissa Park area. They are trying to grow for the general public.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Bernie Baltus wanted to commend Joann Evans for the minutes she took from the retreat. He said it refreshed his memory of everything we discussed.
- Bernie felt the article on NCLB was excellent.
- Bernie said the senior exit project on “Coon Hunting” was outstanding.
- Bernie Baltus said we had another New Prairie student receive the Lilly Scholarship. He said we have had one student receive the scholarship every 4-5 years. We need to take our hats off to ourselves because of the number of students in the county that our students are competing against.

- Colleen said the prom committee did a great job. The prom was beautiful.
- Rich advised the board that the Top Ten Dinner is May 24th.
- Rich also advised that if the board has not signed up to help with the exit projects, they should do so.
- Rich advised that the 100 Symposium at the high school is scheduled for May 3rd.
- Mr. Wrightson wanted to recognize that Bart Curtis and Koby Keck received the Moose Kraus awards recently.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 28th.