

NEW PRAIRIE UNITED SCHOOL CORPORATION
Office of the Superintendent
New Carlisle, IN 46552

MINUTES

October 22, 2007

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, October 22, 2007 in the Superintendent's Office with Rich Shail, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Shelly Goethals and al Williamson present. Bernie Baltes was absent. Duane Wrightson was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Schwingendorf to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was approved 4-0.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Chris Gesse introduced the new High Ability Program for the corporation. Mrs. Gesse talked about the Rinsulle Program that will be used for the high ability students. Every student will be able to utilize the program regardless of their ability level.

Marcia Kelly introduced Brandon Zimmerman, a 4th grade student at Prairie View who co-authored a book with his father entitled "The Mouse and the Acorn". Brandon read the story to the board and presented them with their own copy of the book.

REASONS WE'RE PROUD

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the Reasons We're Proud as per the attached.

CONSENT ITEMS

- There was a motion by Schwingendorf, seconded by Goethals to approve the Consent Items as follows:

- Minutes - September 17, 2007
- Financial Reports
- Claims
- Payroll
- Personnel Report as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Jackie Hunsberger - 3rd Grade - Prairie View - Leave of Absence beginning October 25, 2007 and continuing for 4-6 weeks.
- Employment
 1. Casey Gumm - Temporary 3rd Grade Teacher - Prairie View - Beginning October 25, 2007 and continuing for approximately 4-6 weeks.
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Lori Rose - 6th Grade Girls Basketball - Olive
 2. Ashley Wojtysiak - Co-Swim Coach - JHS

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Michele Dudeck - Cashier - Prairie View - Resignation effective September 13, 2007
 2. Brenda Gorny - Bus Driver - Leave of Absence beginning September 18, 2007 and continuing through approximately January 7, 2008.
 3. Sue Crowl - Food Service Manager - Prairie View - Leave of Absence beginning October 5 through approximately November 5th.
- Employment
 1. Steve Lott - Lead Custodian - Rolling Prairie Elementary School effective November 12, 2007
 2. Holly Maxwell - Cashier - 5 hrs/day - Prairie View Elementary - Effective immediately.

- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Julie Cinal - Young Astronaut Coordinator - 1/3 - Olive
 2. Greg Hulbert - Audio/Visual Club -NPHS
 3. Douglas Matthys - Girls JV Basketball

The motion was approved 4-0.

REPORTS

- The board received a copy of the Room by Room Evaluation to be used for ordering the furniture for each classroom. The superintendent met with representatives of companies as well as school personnel to review some options. Bids will be going out by mid January with acceptance by February. We would anticipate a June delivery. The committee agreed on the desk/chair combination currently used in the JHS.
- Mr. Wrightson said the SmartBoards are a separate issue which Mark Norton will discuss at a later date. Rich Shail asked if the SmartBoards are coming out of the same soft cost. Rich said he thought all along that the SmartBoards were part of the initial building project. Mr. Wrightson said the infrastructure was part of the project, not the boards themselves. Rich said he felt that Scott Winchester presented the SmartBoards as part of the project included in the cost. Mr. Wrightson said he did not think that, but it is part of the CPF project. Rich said he was always under the impression that the \$24 million for this project included this SmartBoard cost. He feels he was led to believe this by the architect. Now he feels we may have additional costs over the \$24 million for the SmartBoards. Duane said it could cost as much as \$26 million because we did not include the furniture. Rich said he did recall that would be a separate soft cost. Mr. Wrightson said he will look through the numbers. Keith said he has a schedule to show the resources.
- The board received a copy of the remodeling costs for the masonry for tearing down the wall to install the fire well.
- The board received a copy of the job visit notes. Mr. Dennis noted that the entrance windows had to be re-ordered. They should be here by next week. We were promised they would have the building closed up by Thanksgiving.
- Keith and Greg reported the incident with the sewage back-up on Monday. Sometime over the weekend we believe we experienced a power outage causing the sewage to back up into the sanitary line of the new middle school. Ritschard Brothers did not plug a line like they were suppose to which also contributed to the problem. They will be talking to Ritschard about incurring some of the cost for this incident.

- Mr. Wrightson distributed information regarding the Indiana property tax system and how it works. He would encourage the board to read this information so they have a better understanding of the tax structure.
- Mr. Wrightson also reviewed a summary of items that have contributed to the increase in property tax bills for Indiana homeowners. They are:
 - The reductions in tax base caused by the elimination of the inventory assessment
 - The expansion of the residential homestead exemption, coupled with;
 - Shifting property tax responsibility among various groups of property taxpayers resulting from a six-year trending adjustment for real property and
 - The delays in distributing new state homestead tax credits.
- Mr. Wrightson advised that Keith Dennis was instrumental in saving the corporation about \$14,000 by re-quoting our builders risk insurance. If we would have simply renewed with the current company, our cost would have been \$38,401. We received a quote from Zurich at the cost of \$24,138.
- Mr. Wrightson advised that we will be appearing at the Property Tax Control Board in Indianapolis on November 1st to discuss the appeal for the new facility. We were contacted by the Control Board for this meeting. Mr. Dennis and Sharon Heirbrandt gave a break-down of the additional cost of \$443,000 for the new facility. Mr. Wrightson said he will advise the DLGF that New Prairie's revenue ranks at the bottom 10% of all school corporations in Indiana. In expenditures, New Prairie ranks 303 out of 323 corporations. Keith Dennis said when we originally estimated the additional costs to run the new building; we did not add the groundskeeper. Our original estimate was \$400,000.
- Mr. Wrightson advised that we will be working with the Service Center on their proposal for administrative services for the new 403(b) regulations. Mr. Wrightson hopes to pay for these administrative costs through the CPF.
- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the new health insurance plan. We will no longer offer the HMO plan. The MASE representatives will be meeting with our staff to discuss the new PPO plan and costs.
- The board received a copy of the St. Joseph County tax bill time lines. LaPorte County may be releasing their bills by mid November - due in December. We had to borrow \$5 million through December 31st. If we don't receive our monies, we may have to borrow again. Mr. Wrightson will let the board know if we have to re-bid for additional monies.

- Mr. Wrightson advised that Tom Dermody was confused about the money that we were supposed to get that was appropriated. Because they did not appropriate enough money for state tuition, we will be cut back about \$20,260. Mr. Wrightson feels Mr. Dermody will be a great full-time legislator. He is putting in the effort gaining the knowledge to be an effective legislator. He feels Senator Arnold will work hard for the people as well.

ACTION ITEMS

- There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Goethals to approve the low bid for water piping excavation with Rolling Prairie Excavating at the cost of \$59,921. The motion was approved 4-0.
- There was a motion by Goethals, seconded by Schwingendorf to approve the low bid for the fire well to Peerless Midwest in the amount of \$188,000. The motion was approved 4-0.
- There was a motion by Schwingendorf, seconded by Goethals to accept a donation from Target through their Take Charge Program for Prairie View Elementary in the amount of \$80.35. The motion was approved 4-0.
- There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Schwingendorf to approve the second reading and adoption of Board Policy #5610 - Student Expulsion and Suspension and submitted. The motion was approved 4-0.
- There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Goethals to uphold the expulsion for Case #4 as recommended by the administration. The motion was approved 4-0.
- There was a motion by Schwingendorf, seconded by Williamson to accept the resignation of Shelly Goethals as Vice-President of the New Prairie United School Building Corporation. When Mrs. Goethals was selected to serve on the school board, she could no longer serve on the board for the Building Corporation. The motion was approved 3-0-1 with Goethals abstaining.

DISCUSSION

- The board received two options for the school calendars for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. We asked the Classroom Teachers Association to submit a calendar option for consideration as well. To date, we have not received any additional options. The calendars are very similar to the present calendar - again starting early in August. The reason for the early start is to end the semester at Christmas. We also liked the early start to help prepare students for ISTEP. With the change from fall to spring, this will be a mute point.

Mr. Wrightson said if the board wants a later start date, we will not be able to complete the semester by Christmas. Administrators feel there is lost instructional time by holding finals after the return of the holidays. That time is spent on review before beginning new materials. Mr. Wrightson said about 60% of our students are back at school by August 1st for extra-curricular activities. Mr. Wrightson said if we are looking educationally, we should try to work a calendar similar to Michigan City because of the Vocational students. The board had no comments on the calendar.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Al Williamson said he appreciated the meeting with the legislators. He believes Mr. Wrightson woke them up when he talked about our ranking. He feels Senator Arnold was taken back by the ranking. He felt the meeting was very worthwhile.
- Al Williamson said last week was Parent Conferences and he attended Prairie View. He would like to say “hats off to Prairie View”. The reports showing students where they stand was very good.
- LuAnn said she also felt the meeting with the legislators went very well. She feels they got a lot out of it.
- Duane said he feels Tom Dermody will be very good. He said Jim Arnold was in law enforcement and has a lot to learn in education, but he is interested in being there. He said he emphasized over and over about being at the bottom. He said he thinks the board really needs to sit down and come up with something regarding the CPF. We spend over \$1 million for technology, heat, lights, etc. and contracted services. He feels we need to have Tom Dermody and Jim Arnold try to guarantee a percentage of the CPF that can go to the General Fund. We would narrow down that money for a particular purpose. Tom Dermody said he felt it would just go for salaries. We have to come up with something. All we want is to meet the state average. If we can get it through legislation, that it would be put in the General Fund, that would be great. He does not feel the excess levy or state formula will ever change because of comments made by Lowell Rose in a meeting with Mr. Wrightson last spring.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Signed:

President

Vice-President

Secretary

Member

Member