

BOARD NOTES

February 25, 2008

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, February 25, 2008 in the Superintendent's Office with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Bernie Baltes and Shelly Goethals present. Duane Wrightson was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Dr. Bender reviewed the achievements in AYP for the New Prairie Schools.

Al Williamson asked if there were any discrepancies in the scoring. Dr. Bender said if the principals had any concerns, they were to contact the state to get them re-scored. Almost everyone did that.

REASONS WE'RE PROUD

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the reasons we're proud from the schools
- Rich Shail said he is proud that we are not in the paper because of the closings of schools like some surrounding schools. He said he is very proud of that.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The board approved the consent agenda as follows:
 - Minutes - January 28, 2008
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel Report as listed:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignation
 1. Jenna Gensic - High School English Teacher - Medical Leave - Beginning immediately and continuing approximately until the end of the school year.
 2. Bart Curtis - Dean of Students & Football Coach - NPHS - Resignation effective approximately June 4, 2008.
- Employment
 1. Sandy Thomas - Temporary High School English - Beginning February 25, 2008 and continuing until the end of the school year.

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Joyce Collins- Food Service - NPHS - Medical Leave-Beginning March 17, 2008 and continuing until for approximately 6-8 weeks.
 2. Connie Benninghoff - Food Service-Rolling Prairie Elementary-Leave of Absence beginning April 30, 2008 and continuing until the end of the school year.
 3. Scott Powers - Technology - Central Office - Terminated effective January 30, 2008
- Employment
 1. Steve Hand-Transfer from Educational Technology Assistant at Prairie View to Assistant System Administrator Central Office -effective February 11, 2008
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Thom Smith - Head Girls Track Coach - NPHS
 2. Thom Smith - Head Cross Country Coach - NPHS
 3. Martin Mosson - Head Football Coach - NPHS

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the latest legislative information
- Keith Dennis said a letter was sent to the property owners asking for an easement in the Town of New Carlisle and the NPUSC. We have met with the family owners regarding this easement. We are now seeking a quotation for the worth of the property for the easement.
- We have been advised that Great American Plans Group is interested in administering the 403(b) plan for about 15 schools in the consortium. We will have more information on this.
- Mr. Wrightson talked about a communication system that is web based for student and staff communication. We would be able to make a phone call that would reach all students/parents' home or cell phones for school delays and cancellations, announcements and surveys. We will be looking into this for more information.
- Keith Dennis worked on the updated specifications for liability insurance. Our current vendor, Gibson Insurance came in as low bidder. Duane said competition is the name of the game.
- Mr. Wrightson indicated that we have met with a representative from the Unity Foundation regarding the donation received for a scholarship fund. Once you give them the money, it is theirs. Keith is looking into the Layton Foundation in St. Joe County also. They have no administrative fees where the Unity Foundation has a 1% fee. Bernie said he understands there are different types of investments with the Unity that may make a difference. Duane said we are reviewing all those options.

- HS/JHS Facility Usage

Clara Clark prepared a lay-out of how they will utilize the HS/JHS facility once the junior high vacates the building. We also reviewed the priority list for the renovation and repairs of that facility.

Rich Shail said he assumes we are addressing the priority #1 items and getting quotes and bids to begin this as soon as possible. Clara said we are already getting prices on a lot of the items. Rich would like to see some of the priority #2 items completed this year. Duane said the bulk of the money is the #2 items which will probably require an architect. We are trying to get some information to you within the next month or two. Clara said Kevin has been getting prices together. Rich said some of the #2 items like signage may not be a high cost. Jim said the signage is not affected unless you change the building. The signage is items like brail for restrooms, etc.

- Alegra Hand gave a presentation on the Big Brothers & Sisters program that has been started at Rolling Prairie and Prairie View through the Youth Service Bureau which is called “School Buddies.” “School Buddies” is based on forming and building a relationship with students. Students are referred to the program because a staff member feels they could use extra attention. The adult meets with the student one hour per week at the school only. The program is looking for volunteers. Alegra would like everyone to share this information so the program can grow.

Rich said this program does great things not only for the student, but for the volunteer as well. He said we will do our best to spread the word.

ACTION ITEMS

- Student Athletic Handbook

The board reviewed the revision to the Student Athletic Handbook recommended by the attorney and Athletic Council. Al Williamson asked who the “representative” is. Clara said it would be the coach or school official. A parent is not considered a representative. Al would recommend that we list that as “school representative” so there is no confusion. Bernie asked if there was any discussion on placing students on the council. Clara said they talked about that, but because of investigative situations and confidentiality, they have decided not to include students.

The board approved the handbook as presented with the inclusion of the word “school representative”. Since the handbook is not a policy, there is no need for a second reading.

- Driver’s Education Program

The board approved the Driver’s Education Program for 2008 with student fees set at \$325 and teacher’s salary set at \$26 per hour.

- Middle School Bids

- The board approved the bids for the Pressure Sewer from Oselka Construction for Package A and B at the cost of \$501,000; and the generator at the cost of \$28,160. The board also accepted the bid Package C from Thomas Excavating at the cost of \$31,448, which is for the demolition of the existing plan. Keith said we may not need the generator. We are still in discussion with the Town of New Carlisle on this item.

- The board also approved the Loose Equipment bids as follows:
 - Sharp School - \$406,420.30
 - Educational Furniture - \$23,454.89
 - School Specialty - \$19,276.89
 - Lee Company - \$24,586.55

Bernie asked if this cost includes installation. Keith said it includes all delivery, installation and removal of old equipment.

DISCUSSION

- Mr. Wrightson reviewed the 2008 Budget and discussion of staffing for the 2008-2009 school year. The following considerations were discussed as possible impact on the budget:
 - (a) Elementary Teachers - Rolling Prairie - Grades 1-5 (Reduce from 18 to 17 teachers). Watch on 4th grade which currently has 76 students.
 - (b) No Kindergarten teachers added to the budget currently. Reviewed expenses for Full-Day Kindergarten. Projected grant money is \$1,200 per student. Concern is whether the state will provide the full grant amount and how many students we will enroll. Duane feels it is safe to go with Full-Day Kindergarten.

Bernie feels the cost would only cover salaries and not supplies. Duane does not feel there would be that much additional cost in supplies because the specials teachers would stay at the elementary schools and they will work with the kindergarten students.

Rich asked if the superintendent will come back to the board at the March meeting with a recommendation on Full Day Kindergarten. Parents need to know. Also, we have to issue pink slips in May if there is any reduction.

- (c) Mr. Wrightson said at the New Middle Schools, we need to add three staff members as follows:
 - P.E. Teacher - 100%
 - Industrial Tech - 50%
 - Art - 50%
 - Music - 50%
 - Life Skills - 50%
- (d) High School Staff would be status quo

- (e) Summer School Band for 5th Grade students who are interested. This would be a four-week program. Duane said we could charge for this program if we choose.
- (f) Area Vocational Students - Reduced because of the Construction Trades Class at NPHS.
- (g) High Ability Teacher - 1/2 of teacher salary because of grant monies
- (h) Special Education Co-op - This is a guesstimation of about a \$32,000 increase
- (i) Elementary Counseling

If we stay status quo, the middle school would have one counselor for 617 students. If we move the elementary counselor to the middle school, there would be no increase in cost. Allison Middlebrook may be interested in this change. We could possibly look at a Grade 8/9 counselor at the middle school. We need additional help there. Mr. Wrightson also indicated that in order for Rolling Prairie to continue in the direction they are going, he feels it is important to maintain the current situation with the counselor there.

- (j) Nursing

Amy Mullen has utilized a substitute nurse during the past year. She would like to make that a full-time position. This is in the budget.

- (k) Assistant Superintendent

We could go with contracted services for the remainder of 2008 and save about \$30,000.

- (l) High School Assistant Principal

There would be no additional cost by going to an assistant by using the 5th step on the Assistant Principal salary schedule which is about \$65,000.

- (m) Middle School Assistant Principal

There would be an increase of about \$5,000 to move to the first step on the assistant principal's salary.

(n) Receptionist at Middle School

There would be an added cost to add the receptionist as secretary at the Middle School.

(o) Middle School Custodians

There were no custodians placed in the budget for the JHS from September to December. This will have to be added. It cannot come from the CPF. We would be looking at 4 ½ custodians at the Middle School and two custodians at the JHS. We are still reviewing these numbers.

(p) Utilities - Estimation of \$190,000 for 2008.

(q) Maintenance of Grounds

May have to look at this for 2009. The contractors are responsible for the grounds for one year as part of the building project.

(r) Snow Removal

We will be over-budgeted because of 2008. We have already used \$60,000 of the \$75,000 budgeted as of February 1st.

(s) Insurance - Will include the new middle school.

(t) Coaches - We have removed the secretary's salary from the one line item and added \$10,000 for increased salaries for ECA.

(u) Retirements - There are no retirements considered at this time.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Shelly Goethals asked if the Bus radios have been installed. She thought they were to be installed after the first of the year.
- Rich Shail said he received a call from a parent who was concerned and confused over the communication that a half day would be increased to a full day.
- Rich Shail received an invitation from PNC inviting members to attend a meeting at the Rolling Prairie Fire Station regarding the LaPorte County land use.