

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

MINUTES

June 22, 2009

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, June 22, 2009 with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Bernie Baltes and Dale Groves present. Dr. Bender was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

There was a motion by Baltes, seconded by Groves to remove Action Item "B" - Designate Board Member, from the agenda. The motion was approved 5-0.

There was a motion by Baltes, seconded by Williamson to adopt the agenda as revised. The motion was approved 5-0.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

▪ Board Recognition

The board presented certificates to the following High School Track members for state competition:

- Mary Gamble
- Bobby Webb
- Kyle Smiley
- Coach Thom Smith
- Coach Natalie Sandoval

CONSENT ITEMS

▪ There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Baltes to approve the Consent Items as follows:

- Minutes - May 18, 2009
- Financial Reports
- Claims
- Payroll
- Personnel Report as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Karen Schiele - 3rd Grade - Rolling Prairie Elementary - Leave of absence beginning August 10, 2009 for approximately 6-8 weeks
 2. Tara Bush - 4th Grade - Prairie View Elementary - Leave of absence beginning approximately October 24, 2009 - January 4, 2010
 3. Kristina Pentelow - Math - Middle School - Leave of Absence beginning approximately September 2, 2009 for approximately six weeks.
- Employment
 1. Sandy Murray - Spanish - NPHS - Beginning August 10, 2009
- Contracts
 1. Superintendent's Contract Addendum
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Sandy Murray - Spanish Club - NPHS

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Kristi Ondrovich - ENL Assistant - Rolling Prairie/Prairie View - Resignation effective 5/29/09
- Employment/Transfers
 1. Melissa Adnson - Receptionist - Middle School - Transfer to full-time Secretary - Middle School effective July 27, 2009
 2. Shari Rose - Treasurer - High School - Transfer to full-time effective July 27, 2009
 3. Kregg Van Meter - Title I Activities Coordinator - Effective immediately

- Summer Trips - Bus Drivers
 - Floyd Tibbs
 - Donna James
 - Debbie Reinhold
 - Julie Olney

- Cleaning Buses
 - Debbie Vassal
 - Johanna Pickett
 - Jodi Goraczewski
 - Laurie Lanning

- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Garrett Curless - Co-Assistant Varsity Football
 2. Katlyn Reyes - Co-Assistant Varsity Football
 3. Bill Gumm - Freshman Football
 4. Larry Szczechowski - Assistant Varsity Football
 5. Bobby Whitenack - Assistant Varsity Football
 6. Robert Elkins - Head Boys Swimming
 7. Nancy Niespodziany - Co-Student Council Sponsor - Olive
 8. Lynne Holewczynski - Co-Student Council Sponsor - Olive
 9. Heather Alva - Co-Yearbook Sponsor - Middle School
 10. Rhonda Smoroske - Co-Yearbook Sponsor - Middle School
 11. Shari Rose - Junior Class Sponsor

The motion was approved 5-0.

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report
 - Dr. Bender reviewed the cash flow for June. The basic grant is \$1,285,000 which the state decided to give as stimulus monies. This is federal monies which has created problems because you cannot pay PERF and TRF. We are trying to pay everything but retirements.

 - Dr. Bender said it does not look like we will get any monies from LaPorte County. We will have to borrow more money from the bond bank. We have paid \$180,000 in interest to the bond bank and 1st Source. By the end of July, we expect to receive monies from St. Joe County.

- Dr. Bender talked about the state budget. It appears that both sides favor full-day kindergarten and utilities remaining in the CPF.
- Dr. Bender shared the final outstanding textbook fee report which shows an unpaid balance of \$39,635. We have submitted names of 280 families to the collection agency for over \$75,000. Those letters will be sent out in the next few weeks. If anyone gets a call regarding this, it is now out of our hands and they will have to deal with the collection agency. They have received anywhere from 4-9 letters requesting payment with the last request sent at the end of May. Dr. Bender said most of these people have not paid in years.
- Dr. Bender reviewed the Core 40 results for 2008 and 2009. We are up 1% overall from 2008 - from 49% to 50%. In Biology, some classes went up to 60%. In Algebra at the high school, they went up to 27% passing. At the middle school they went up to 71%. Language Arts at the high school is 60% passing.
- We are working with the Co-op with the IDEA stimulus money of \$158,000. They wanted to charge 7% for handling the monies, but we were able to get that reduced to .07%. All the stimulus monies coming to New Prairie will be spent on our students.
- The Title I stimulus monies will be spent collectively between Rolling Prairie and Prairie View. We are in the process of opening the building in the Latino Village. We will be hiring a Title I Coordinator this evening. Bernie asked what other entities are interested in working on this project. Dr. Bender said the YMCA is interested in a pre-school program; LaPorte Health Systems for dental. These groups have been interested in projects, but no means to get it started. This Title I money helped. They are looking at possibly doing more sites around the town.
- Dr. Bender distributed the Athletic Policy and Handbook several weeks ago for the board to review. He has asked Brian Williamson and the committee members to be present to answer any questions.

Dale Groves asked about the academic eligibility - page 38, #2 (b). He asked how often are "periodic" checks. Brian said he checks every nine weeks for eligibility. Some of our coaches check every week. Advisors can also check. With PowerSchool, it is very accessible. Dale asked if Brian felt nine weeks is enough. Brian felt it was because it takes him one full day to check everyone. If an advisor sees a student is struggling, they will contact the coach.

Dale said the minimum requirement to participate is a "D-". It seems pretty low to me. Could we set the bar a little higher? If it was my son, and he had one "D", I would not let him play. Maybe it is something we could look at to try and raise.

Bernie said if you are going to raise the requirements, will you have something in place to help those who are struggling and not have them hung out to dry if you cannot meet it? Dale said if they are struggling, I feel they are not doing the work. A "D-" is too low. To be eligible to participate, it should be higher. If they want to participate, the student could work on that. Bernie said if we raise the standards, will there be something to help them? Some students - if they are not in sports, they would not make it.

Phil said he believes there are a number of coaches that have a study table. You get what you expect. If you expect a "D-", that is all you will get. We had a student who knew the minimum and that is all he did. A lot of people tried to get him where he should be. We have talked about academic watch. The elementary requirement was stricter than the high school requirements so it was removed. Are minimum standards all we are about? That is what this is saying.

Rich said he is not against raising the standards, but what he is concerned about is we have not put any effort to see where we are and does it warrant raising the standards. Where are we? Does it warrant it? It does look low, but he does not want to do anything without a study. Brian said we only had two students who were not eligible.

Rich asked if we will put 25 students out if we raise it. We have made great strides in academics to make it stronger for graduating. He would not suggest changing this tonight. Dale said he agrees. He would like to have further discussions. Rich asked what type of information are we going to be looking at. Dale said that is debatable. Phil said you can take your teams and run a GPA. We can report back to the board to see what you are looking at. We can take the football team and see what the team is doing. For the majority of the students, it is probably not that low, but when the public looks at the minimum requirement, it would appear that we accept mediocrity.

Al asked if we have coaches that have higher standards than this? Dan Shead asked how often are you going to check and when will their eligibility be enforced. Is it at nine weeks, is it interim? Rich asked how it

is addressed now. Brian said it is at the end of the nine weeks. Dan said for the majority of the coaches, we feel we do a pretty good job. With the advisor program, they communicate with the coaches to know where our students are. Dan feels our expectations are higher than what the IHSAA suggests.

Thom Smith said when you start looking at this, there are other things that go into the GPA. If you look at higher level classes, their GPA may be lower than someone in regular level classes. Some students may start taking easy classes in order to maintain the higher GPA. You would have to be careful in this area. Bernie said he has seen studies over the years where students in extra-curricular activities have a significantly higher GPA than the regular student body. We are talking about the bottom end of the students, but we should be looking at the higher end of the student body. We need to be sure not to lose site of that.

Dr. Bender said he feels our students do better than what is written. Why is it lower when we know our students are doing better? We seem to be afraid to raise it. Rich said he does not mind, but just don't raise it too high. Brian said we should do a year-round GPA study because some of the teams seem to have higher GPA's than other sports. Swimmers seem to have a higher GPA and wrestlers are lower. Also, grades are better in season than out of season.

Dale is thinking how to proceed. Rich would suggest approving the policy and doing a study year long and address it next year. As a parent, I agree with Dale. If they know they have to raise the bar, they will do it. They can do better than that. You have teachers - if they need help, they can get it.

Bernie said he understands there are not a lot of changes in the handbook than what we had before. He would challenge the Athletic Director to be sure there are things that are completed like evaluations of all coaches. Brian said this is being done and he has copies. They were all done this year. Bernie said he understands there were some elementary coaches who never talked to the head coach. Brian said sometimes it is difficult for the coach to visit during the season.

Dale said in checking the academic eligibility, there are some schools that do that weekly. All of our grades are on line. It would not take that long to periodically check once a week to see how they are doing. If we do it

weekly, it keeps them on the hook longer. A student could be falling through the cracks during the nine-week period. Al said a football coach would have 60 students on their team. That would be a lot for them to check weekly. A baseball coach might have 12 students. Dale said that is a good thought.

Dan Shead said with block scheduling, you may only see a student two times during the week. There may be things that may affect their class average. Dan said Mark Peterson's students must carry a sheet of paper around to each class to have their teachers sign off. Dan said there are a lot of us who do these types of things to monitor students.

Dale asked how many are just scraping by. Dan said possibly the same as just the normal student body. There are other things that affect these students' lives outside the classroom. Some never have breakfast to eat, they work, no parental supervision, etc. They still have to meet the minimums because of those outside problems. When we see that happening, we try to find out what we can do. Chrystal says we have study groups and they are not beating down the doors to get in. Bernie said we have to have something in place if we are going to raise the bar. Chrystal said Language Arts and Science have extra help available, but they don't always take advantage of that. Dr. Bender said if I am doing the minimum, I am not going to go. He feels as a whole, our students are doing a good job.

LuAnn said she feels the coaches know the students well. They know who is doing well and who is not. They know better than anyone else.

Rich asked if these minimum standards apply to all extra-curricular or just the athletics. Brian said he gives the ineligibility list to everyone. He gives it to the sponsors and they take care of it from there.

Dr. Bender said we will do a study on the academics and come back next year.

ACTION ITEMS

- On a motion by Schwingendorf, seconded by Groves, lunch prices will not increase for the 2009-2010 school year. They will remain as follows:
 - Elementary Breakfast - \$1.00
 - Elementary Lunch - \$1.60
 - MS/HS Breakfast - \$1.00
 - MS/HS Lunch - \$1.85
 - Adult Breakfast - \$1.30
 - Adult Lunch - \$2.70
 - Student/Adult Milk - \$.40

The motion was approved 5-0.

- There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Schwingendorf to approve the Resolution and Warrant Agreement for the Indiana Bond Bank to extend payment of the 2008 principal loan balance. The motion was approved 5-0.
- There was a motion by Baltes, seconded by Schwingendorf to approve the Resolution and Warrant Agreement for the Midyear "B" temporary loans with the Indiana Bond Bank. Dr. Bender said LaPorte County will not be issuing 08, payable 09 July to December settlements until 2010. The General Fund is no longer a part of this piece since the state is funding this. The motion was approved 5-0.
- There was a motion by Baltes, seconded by Williamson to appoint Annette Ringer, Employee Services, as the agent to accept the PERF pension liability on behalf of the corporation. The motion was approved 5-0.
- There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Schwingendorf to approve the Athletic Policy and Procedures Handbook as presented. Bernie asked if the agreement for the eligibility requirements have to be a part of this motion. Dr. Bender said it was a part of the discussion that will be in the minutes. The motion was approved 5-0.
- There was a motion by Baltes, seconded by Schwingendorf to approve the Athletic Policy Handbook - New Prairie High School as presented. Dr. Bender said there was an insert in the policy that reflects the change in practice which indicates parents must attend the meetings at the beginning of each season. They felt there was a lack of communication.

The board also discussed Page #9 - Drinking. There is a statement regarding the reporting in an appropriate amount of time. This has been changed many times. We do not know how to enforce it. What is a reasonable amount of time? Dr. Bender feels it muddies up the language. This happens every year. We have tried to look at reasonable, but nothing is clear cut. He does not know what the answer is. He is not asking for a change, but he is not sure what that means. Maybe it will always be open to interpretation. Once a year it becomes an issue. If anyone can think of a way to word this that would be more effective, he would appreciate hearing from you.

Rich asked if the person violating the rule must report in a reasonable time. What is the difference? Dr. Bender said that is why he does not feel it has any merit. We do not have anything to hang our hat on. Rich said he does not know how it means anything. Bill said he feels the language is meant for someone who knows of someone who violated the rule must report within a reasonable amount of time. Rich said that puts a lot of pressure on a student. Chrystal Wilkeson said this becomes a character issue with the Honor Society. When they do get in trouble, we have to evaluate whether they meet the character portion. Honesty is an important issue. As a parent, it does not allow us to patrol. It does not give our students a chance to get out. If they show up and get out, they did the right thing. I have told my students to call, but if they do not report anything, they are in trouble.

Brian said if I go to a party and alcohol is there, I have violated the rule; but if I notify someone, that clears me if it got me out of the violation. If it is not in there, they would not get cleared. When we had the 15-minute rule, a student would say they were out in 14.99 minutes.

Clara said it was never their intent for students to tell on other students - just to clear themselves. She does not want them to tell on other students. Al said you don't ask them to tell what other students were there? Clara said her intent is just to find out who was there and to clear that student.

Rich said as far as school representative or school official - what are we talking about as far as school representatives. Is it a coach, a bus driver, who? Brian said we have stressed that they contact the coach, Brian or principal.

Brian said the attendance at the fall meetings are usually good. As the seasons go on, attendance gets less and less. We add or change things along the way, but people feel that since they went once, they do not need to attend again. We feel it is a good way to get information out to the students. The spring sports are about 50% lower than the fall.

Al asked if this applies to club sports. How can you enforce the rules if they are affiliated with our school? Clara said we cannot hold them responsible if they are not IHSAA regulated. Al suggests we eliminate the clubs from this.

The motion was approved 5-0.

- There was a motion by Williamson, seconded by Groves to approve the cafeteria bids as recommended by the Food Service Director. Bernie said it does not surprise him that we received a lower bid for milk through the Service Center. Milk prices are at the lowest. Because they are so low to produce, some investors may not be able to hold on. The motion was approved 5-0.

DISCUSSION

- North Property Line Fencing

Greg Dudeck indicated that John Saylor completed the survey of this area. There is an easement of about 15 ft. for utilities on the north side of the fence. We are running about 6-10 in. off. Some areas have wandered into the other property. There is going to be requests for gates. Do we want this? How many? Is there a need for a fence? Some say we need a fence for security. Bernie said under the Indiana Fence Law, you are responsible for the 50 ft. right if it is on the property line. Bill Kaminski said you maintain both sides if it is on your line. You cannot adversely possess public property. Dr. Bender said we do not want to alienate our neighbors. We have to maintain the area for weeds, etc., but some people plant on the other side of the fence and it creates a problem. Bernie said he is not in favor of fences and Greg is not either.

Dr. Bender said we just want to get your feelings. Is it something we want to do? We just want to maintain good relationships. Greg said it will cost about \$22,800 for a fence with no gates. The gates are about \$450 each. If you don't put in a fence, every time the property changes hands, you will have to have it surveyed. That is more reason not to put in a fence. People will push their property line up to the fence. Greg said he looks at the maintenance of the fence. Rich said he does not see spending \$23,000 to mark a property line. As far as security issues, kids would have to climb the fence if it were there. I would rather spend that money somewhere else than there.

Brian said with the fence there, we get more money at baseball, softball and track meets. If there is no fence, we will not get the gate receipts. Bernie said at \$23,000, that would be a lot of gate receipts. Dale asked if we could put something up during a meet.

Dan Shead said there are some people who have concerns about baseballs on the other side of the fence. Greg said the issues he heard from the patrons were gates and whether they would have time to move their bushes. Rich asked if they would put a lock on the gates. Greg said if we put a gate in, we would maintain that.

Matt Flagg asked if we do not put in a fence, are we talking about taking out the existing fence? Greg said yes. Brian is concerned about the motorized vehicles. They will have easy access without a fence. We have problems with that now and we have a fence. Dr. Bender said no matter how much fence you put up, they will find a way to get through. Rich said we need to get this fence down.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Dale would like to thank the principals for their State of School Reports. He felt they were great. Rich, Bernie and LuAnn also appreciated the reports.
- Bernie receives the Ag paper and there is a farm wife from Boonesville that writes some words of wisdom. She wrote: “The only place that success comes before work is in the dictionary.” The second statement is: “Too many people miss out on opportunities because it comes dressed in overhauls and it comes from work.”
- Rich said there is equipment on County Line Road that is not doing anything. We need a sewer update.

Michael Strang of Bonar Group, who was responsible for the plans for the system to the Town of New Carlisle, provided the following information:

- In mid-2007, they were to come up with an option regarding the waste water treatment plan. They came up with an option that would be more economical to the school corporation. They would take the sewer from New Prairie to New Carlisle and on to South Bend. They needed to put some pipe and a lift station all the way to New Carlisle.
- They came up with three packages
 - Lift station and facility piping
 - Sewer line installation, including piping and manholes
 - Decommissioning of the existing WWTP.
- They took bids and Oselka was the lower bid for Package A & B. This had to be done before Package C. Bids were awarded to Oselka.
- Once we got to April and May, 2008, Package A was going well. Oselka did hit several of the existing sewer lines on New Prairie property. At the same time, they started on the gravity line and forced main. When they started the gravity line on County Line, they found more problems than they thought. They balked and said they did not want to do anything with the gravity line until something was done with the fiber.

- Put in some forced main. That is through the summer of last year. It was more economical to keep Oselka and deal with the utility lines than to re-bid.
- In the fall of 2008, Embarq was contacted to re-locate the lines.
- Contract entered with Embarq and winter came. Embarq put the re-location off until March. Then the lines were re-located. Embarq was out of the way and told Oselka to proceed. Once they got on the project, they found another line - Century Tel that they could not deal with. We came up with a way to get around that. Oselka told me they would start tomorrow. Tomorrow never seems to come.
- Michael believes Oselka will begin and we will be back in business. It has been so long since the bid package of A & B, that package "C" is out of date. We will have to re-bid the package. It may be more economical, but maybe not. This will be coming.
- Keith said what Oselka has agreed to put in a new manhole at the point of conflict where Century Tel passes and go west. We have our reservations how they are going to get to the edge of Palm's to County Line Road. They can raise it about 3 ft., but cannot get it out of the pathway. Oselka says they cannot build that. They do not want to leave the impression that it will be completed. We need to find out how we get from the new construction to County Line Rd. All the issues are not resolved. We can get another 1,500 ft. down and get off the people's property. We hope we can resolve it, but we may have to get another contractor.

Michael said he hopes we can work with Oselka to get it done. He is optimistic, Keith is not. Rich said they do not need a reason to stop. Keith said they do not ask for more money, they just say it cannot be done. They just say no one can get this done. Michael said they keep saying if the school does this or that, we can complete the job. He has talked with other contractors. Three contractors were aware of all the situations and bid higher. One said he was not aware of any problems. We do not know whether Oselka was aware of it or would take care of their difficulties.

There was a motion by Baltes to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Signed:

President

Vice-President

Secretary

Member

Member

DRAFT