

BOARD NOTES

July 24, 2012

A Worksession was held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 23, 2012 with all Board members present.

- Kelley Kitchen reviewed the new Gateway budget format with the Board. The new program was established by the state and required to be used by all government entities. All forms and resolutions will be on-line and available to the public.

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, July 23, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Bernie Baltes, and Dale Groves present. Jim Dermody was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

There was a motion to remove Ted White from the Personnel Report.

The Board adopted the agenda as amended.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

Mr. Dermody introduced State Representative Tom Dermody and Senator Jim Arnold who gave an update on recent legislation.

- Tom Dermody discussed the passing of a bill introduced and supported by himself, Scott Pelath, and Jim Arnold to help LaPorte County get back on track with the tax bills. He does not feel we should have to pay a penalty.
- Rep. Dermody will serve on the Select Commission on Higher Education. He said the key to establishing successful educational reforms is to put politics aside. He wants to talk about the testing process.
- School Consolidation – SE 259 – Allows discussion of strategy with respect to school consolidation to be conducted in executive session.
- Budget – Additional funding for FDK and money to be used on CPF.

Dale Groves would like to meet with Mr. Dermody to discuss the testing process in Indiana Schools.

- Jim Arnold wanted to thank the New Prairie Schools for the invitation to attend NPHS graduation.
- Mr. Arnold said there were over 800 bills introduced and about 100 went to the Governor's desk during the past session. Nine bills on education were passed.
- Mr. Arnold said he relies on contacts from constituents. Tom Dermody and Jim Arnold said it is very important that they sit down with the Board and the public to discuss future bills.

Bernie Baltes wanted to thank Tom and Jim for their response and contacts with the Board and local constituents.

CONSENT ITEMS

- The Board approved the Consent Items as submitted.
 - Minutes – June 25, 2012
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Bill Spier – Science Teacher – NPHS – Leave of Absence beginning August 9, 2012 through approximately January 3, 2013.
 2. Amy Henderlong – Science Teacher – NPHS – Resignation effective immediately.
- Employment/Transfers
 1. Kari McLaughlin – Middle School – Transfer from half-time Language Arts to full-time 6th Grade Language Arts effective August 9, 2012.
 2. Julie Cinal – 6th Grade ½ Science – ½ Math Teacher – Effective August 9, 2012

NON-CERTIFIED

- Employment/Transfers
 1. Judy Duensing – Bus Driver – Transfer to Special Needs Route #58 effective August 13, 2012
 2. Sheila Bougher – Bus Driver – Transfer to Double HS/PV Route #2 effective August 13, 2012
 3. Judy Ekovich – Bus Driver – Transfer to Double HS/RP Route #49 effective August 13, 2012
 4. Joe Ekovich – Bus Driver – Transfer to Single HS Route #25 effective August 13, 2012
- Extra-Curricular
 1. Greg Hulbert – Audio/Visual Club – NPHS – 2012-2013 school year
 2. ~~Ted White – Assistant Football Coach – NPHS – 2012-2013 school year~~

MODIFICATIONS

1. Sherry Bailey – Principal – Olive Elementary – MClass/Acuity Stipend
2. Jim Holifield – Principal – NPMS – Chinese/Mandarin Program Stipend
3. Tina Bunch - Position Reclassification - Payroll/Human Resources Coordinator effective July 1, 2012

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report
 - Ben Ingram and Chrystal Wilkeson reported on their recent attendance at the HSTW conference in New Orleans. They will concentrate on higher expectations beginning with the Freshman Academy and Literacy Across the Curriculum throughout the high school curriculum.
 - Mr. Dermody announced that we will be restoring the Health Assistants to six hours per day in all schools beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Mr. Dermody credits Kelley Kitchen and Keith Dennis for working to find additional dollars to reinstate additional hours in this critical area.

- The Technology Department will be launching the new website in the near future.
- The NPUSC will be implementing the new certified staff evaluation process. Three Student Learning Objective workshops were scheduled for this summer. We have experienced about 93% attendance at these workshops which were led by Carrie Cannon.
- Refunding/Refinancing Bonds

Kelley Kitchen indicated that since interest rates are very low at this time, we are looking at refunding/refinancing our 2006 Middle School bonds. We currently have an interest rate around 5%, but we could possibly get a rate as low as 2.3% and ultimately save the corporation about \$450,000, which would include any fees incurred and not extend the life of the bond. We feel it is in the best interest of the corporation to move ahead at this time.

We are also looking at the pension bond which was incurred in 2004. We may be able to remove the pension neutrality. We currently use the CPF now for this repayment which amounts to about \$150,000 a year. We have asked Kurt Pletcher and Jim Shanahan to help us with this process. Bernie asked if we have looked at an earlier pay-off of the bonds. Kurt and Jim said they will look into this option as well.

- ISTEP+/IREAD

Mr. Dermody advised that ISTEP+ scores were released a few weeks ago. Carrie Cannon presented the test score results. New Prairie scored above the state average in all corporation areas; however, we do have some specific areas that we need to focus on for the 2012-2013 school year to maintain higher classification levels. The NPUSC classification will also be impacted by the new A-F Growth model guidelines which will be implemented this year.

Mr. Dermody indicated that the final IREAD assessment was completed on June 18, and the NPUSC has zero students that will face retention. He congratulated all third grade students, teachers, and principals.

Rich Shail said this is very successful report. He is very proud of what the staff and students have done at New Prairie.

ACTION ITEMS

- The Board approved the resolution for the designation of qualified publications for the LaPorte Herald Argus and South Bend Tribune.
- The Board approved the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for Dale Groves.
- The Board approved the resolution to appoint Umbaugh & Associates as Financial Advisor and Shanahan & Shanahan as Bond Counsel for the refunding/refinancing of current bonds.
- The Board accepted donations from Feed the Children at the value of \$6,045.71 and \$2,000 from ArcelorMittal for the Activity Center to help fund at least two junior Lego teams.
- The Board approved the STAGES software program to help support the new RISE evaluation instrument adopted by the Board recently. This software will be placed on laptops and iPads for administrative use. Rich Shail was concerned about the data verification.
- The Board approved the revised Classified Handbook as submitted. Mr. Dermody commended Kelley Kitchen and Tina Bunch for working to have a consistent handbook for corporation employees.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Kelley Kitchen reported that she and Greg Dudeck have been looking at creative ways to be able to fund required projects throughout the corporation. The chiller at the high school is currently oversized and is in potential need of repairs. A new chiller could cost upward of \$500,000 should it need replaced. The NPUSC can enter into an agreement with an energy provider which must be qualified through the State of Indiana and must certify a certain amount of savings to the corporation. The NPUSC could enter into the contract and make semi-annual payments through the CPF. Kelley distributed a copy of proposed timelines to complete the process if the Board accepts this project.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Dale Groves said an idea to help make our high school students better readers is to make our kindergarten students better readers.
- Dale Groves said he is glad we have Carrie Cannon on board to help students and staff see the big curricular picture.

- Al Williamson was very impressed with the HSTW presentation. Also, Al said the bar has been set high for ISTEP+ scores. He is glad to see the scores improve at the middle school.
- Bernie and LuAnn agree with all the comments made.
- LuAnn asked if there is a similar HSTW model for middle school and elementary schools. Chrystal said they were close to implementing the middle school program when they lost funding.

The next regular meeting will be scheduled for August 13th which will also be the Budget Hearing.