Minutes  May 13, 2019

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 4:16 p.m. in the Community Board Room of the Jr./Sr. High School with Mrs. Ziolkowski, Board Vice President, presiding.

CALL TO ORDER  Mrs. Ziolkowski asked if anyone would be recording the meeting. No one indicated their intent to record.

Board Members Present:  Mrs. Larkin (arr. 4:27pm), Mrs. McAvoy, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Redner (arr. 4:37pm), Mrs. Taylor (arr. 4:31pm), Mrs. Waxler (arr. 4:31pm), and Mrs. Ziolkowski.

Board Members Absent  Mr. McCaffrey and Mr. Zeppos

Administrative Staff Present:  Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Arnst, and Mr. Cafoncelli.

Attendees:  David Kostival, Reading Eagle; James Comerford, English Department Chairperson, and Shelley Filer, recording secretary.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS  • School Board Business Meeting – May 28, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
  • Committee of the Whole Meeting – June 10, 2019, 4:15 p.m.

All listed meetings are held in the Community Board Room of the Jr./Sr. High School unless otherwise noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT  None.

ROUTINE APPROVALS

MEETING MINUTES  Upon a motion by Mrs. McAvoy, second by Mrs. Phillips, the Board approved the following minutes:

- April 8, 2019 Committee of the Whole Minutes

  Yeas:  McAvoy, Phillips, and Ziolkowski.
  Absent:  McCaffrey, Zeppos (Larkin, Redner, Taylor, and Waxler arrived after the vote)
  Nays:  None. Motion carried.

COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM/TECHNOLOGY  1. JSHS ELA Book Approval – Mr. Comerford, English Department Chairperson reviewed the suggested additions to the summer reading list and regular curriculum. Grade 10 Comprehensive - *Note to Self* is a collection of letters from famous people to their childhood selves encouraging
perseverance through difficult times. Grade 11 AP English – *Educated: A Memoir* is by Tara Westover, a member of a family of Idaho survivalists who made her way to Oxford. It deals with identity, decision making and the consequences of those decisions. Two selections for Grade 9 Comprehensive include *All American Boys* and *Fresh Ink*. *All American Boys* deals with a misunderstanding that leads to police brutality described through different perspectives of the protagonists and their intertwined relationships. *Fresh Ink* is a collection of short pieces dealing with identity, terminal illness and coming out. Grade 9 Reading will study *Long Way Down*, a selection in narrative verse covering a 60-second elevator ride in which the character contemplates avenging the death of his gang brother. The chapters in the book correspond to each floor the elevator passes. Grade 12 AP English will study *The House of Mirth* – a selection presented in a female voice dealing with issues of class and finance in the 20th century.

Mr. Comerford said there is a library of the summer reading books so every student has access to them. Dr. Woodard commented she appreciates the balanced approach the department takes in selecting titles.

2. Elementary Report Card Revisions Update – Dr. Woodard reported that meetings with K-2 teacher representatives began in March to review the District’s report cards. They suggested converting from a quarterly reporting system to a trimester system K-4. An advantage is that teachers have more time to adequately assess the students’ performance as they get to know them better. Trimester reporting will also better coincide with parent-teacher conferences in November to report progress timely and accurately. More than half the county uses trimester reporting. Trimesters also better align with standardized testing calendars. Changing to trimester reporting will not adversely affect school-home communication as students with interventions will receive additional progress reports. Dr. Woodard said progress descriptors will also be improved to be more standards-based per grade level. It could take up to three years to complete the revision due to an impending change in the student management system.

3. TIPS Update – To date ten students have registered following the first round of invitations targeting Title I students. The program can service 36 students and will meet Mondays and Wednesdays 9-11 a.m. in the summer at the Stone House. The Stone House also provides an area in case of inclement weather as well as storage for the class materials provided by
Title I funds. Invitation letters have also been mailed for the summer math and reading programs at WREC. Current internship students have expressed interest in helping with the summer programs. Other volunteers will be sought from service organizations at the JSHS.

4. Class of 2019 – The list of pending 152 graduates will be on the May 28, agenda for approval.

5. Student Expulsion – A request for approval of an expulsion will be on the voting meeting.

B. FACILITIES

1. Pay Phone Removal – The District still has two operational pay phones receiving limited use that cost $50/month each. One of the phones has been the source of prank 911 calls. One is at the main entrance to the JSHS, the other is at Flannery Field. Mr. Cafoncelli recommended having them removed as a cost saving measure. Mr. Cafoncelli will research if there are any charges for their removal and the extent of the District’s liability should they be vandalized.

2. Water Testing District-wide – Samples will be taken on June 20, for lead testing. Results will take approximately two weeks and any issues will be remediated over the summer prior to the start of the next school year.

3. Flannery Field Update – The pre-construction meeting was held May 9. The same superintendent and project manager from Schlouch, Inc. who did the tennis courts will serve on this project as well. Some equipment will be staged that won’t interfere with the Spartan Challenge on June 4. The substantial completion date is August 12.

4. Capital Plan Review – Mr. Cafoncelli reviewed the capital projects for the 2018-19 year. The track renovations that were estimated for $1.5 million will be $1.2 million. The football field sod repair is done every year. The cost of the new wrestling mats was mostly defrayed by donations, costing the District only $3,000. The quote for the parking lot repairs and repainted lines is being reviewed by AEM for better pricing. Drawings, permitting, boring, and core sample costs are approximately $22,000. Fifty thousand dollars is allotted each of the next three years for repairs. The netting in the batting tunnel will be replaced. Quotes for the choral riser replacement are still being secured.
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The Committee of the Whole Meeting recessed at 5:01 p.m. for an Executive Session and reconvened at 5:30 p.m.

C. FINANCE

1. Budget Presentation – Mr. Boyer’s presentation contained three parts: the State of the District, the Budget, and the Capital Reserve and Fund Balance. Some uncertainties exist in the budget process such as a proposed increase in the minimum wage. Enrollment and special education enrollment are still fluid. Pending reform for cyber/charter school costs is also uncertain. Also the actual increase in health care will not be determined until late May. Each percentage point equates to $40,000. On the revenue side, the state subsidy has not been finalized and the District’s assessed value could change based on construction and permitting. Administration is recommending a tax increase of 2.99% which is above the 2.3% Act 1 index. The current budget is at a $991,000 deficit. Mr. Boyer reviewed the revenue sources and expenditures which represent a 3.71% increase over the 2018-19 budget. He presented the three tax increase scenarios of 2.3%, 2.5% and 2.99% as requested by the Board at the last meeting. The remaining deficit would be covered from the PSERS fund which had a balance of $4.1 million as of June 2018. The Board will decide in June how to cover the deficit by reassigning funds. By policy, the unassigned fund balance must be 6-8%. Mrs. Ziolkowski asked about refinancing the debt. Mr. Boyer said we could explore the possibility. Mrs. Waxler suggested hiring a grant writer to bring in extra money. Mrs. McAvoy asked about the impact of the minimum wage hike. Mr. Boyer said a hike to $12/hr. or $15/hr. would have a significant impact especially considering compression of long-term employees. Mrs. Ziolkowski asked about the savings of cyber/charter school reform. Mr. Boyer estimated the District would save between $100,000 and $125,000 if the District had its own cyber option.

Mr. Redner requested that the Board discuss the three tax options for the proposed final budget prior to the voting meeting. Three members were in favor of the 2.99% increase citing the multiple years with a deficit, the need to put money aside for future capital projects, many of the increases in expenditures are beyond the District’s control, and the fact that raising taxes by smaller portions is more palatable than a huge increase in one year. Three members were in favor the 2.3% Act 1 index rate saying that the deficits have come in less than forecasted the last several years, they prefer to reassess next year to see how the renovated properties in the boroughs will affect the assessed value. Mr. Redner suggested the
compromise of the 2.5% for the next four weeks to see if any additional information that becomes available that would sway the final tax rate in either direction. All members present agreed to the compromise.

The Committee of the Whole meeting was recessed at 6:44 p.m. for the Business Meeting and reconvened at 6:47 p.m.

2. Minimum Wage Impact – Mr. Boyer said if the minimum wage is raised to $12/hr., the impact would be approximately $57,000. If it increases to $15/hr., the impact would be approximately $448,000, including some compression.

3. Cash Flow/Budget Projections 2018-19 (April) – Mr. Boyer said the new business privilege tax regulations had a positive impact on collections. The District realized a cash influx in April as businesses now must pay the tax in advance. Also, Mrs. Lengle was able to secure additional contingency funding of $106,000 for special education students with significant needs.

ADJOURNMENT  A motion was made by Mrs. Waxler seconded by Mrs. McAvoy to adjourn at 6:59 p.m.

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Board Secretary