

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

December 15, 2008

The regular business meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, December 15, 2008, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Johnson in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 65 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Shirley Johnson, Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, Rusty Rathburn, Jennifer Whistler, and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Wells announced the District's new legal counsel, Thrun Law Firm, and invited Mr. John Manske, Legal Counsel, to provide further introductions. Mr. Manske introduced Mr. Gordon VanWieren, President of the Thrun Law Firm, and attorney Mr. Kevin Harty, who will be the principal attorney at Thrun for the Portage Public Schools. The Superintendent recognized and thanked Mr. Manske for his years of service to the District adding the value of his efforts will be missed. President Johnson informed the audience that Mr. Manske has represented the District for 35 years.

Superintendent Wells shared a follow-up to the Public Hearing on the Attendance Area Study Committee (AASC) proposal, discussed feedback received, noted the Committee met to re-evaluate the proposal, and affirmed their earlier recommendation. She welcomed AASC member and District parent, Mr. Bob Betzig. Mr. Betzig discussed the recent meeting to consider feedback received from one neighborhood, adherence with the guidelines, and the decision to stay with the current proposal. The Director of Assessment and Student Information Systems, Mr. Dan Vomastek, shared plans for customized letters to all elementary families explaining grandfathering, application deadlines and next steps. He discussed specific requests for placements and informed the audience of a survey that would be conducted with the Lexington Green neighborhood pertaining to transfers. Mr. Betzig and Mr. Vomastek responded to Trustee questions pertaining to the manner in which concerns and feedback were addressed, delaying a decision, grandfathering, and notification efforts. Trustees thanked Mr. Vomastek and the AASC for their hard work and efforts on this proposal. They also thanked all the parents who advocated for their children in a very respectful manner.

Superintendent Wells discussed an article regarding substance abuse prevention that appeared in the *Gazette* and plans to speak more in January about the partnerships in this regard. She wished all a safe holiday season adding Winter Break begins December 19th at the end of the school day and classes will resume Monday, January 5th.

Financial Report: The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr shared the General Fund Condensed Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the five month period ending November 30, 2008. Mr. Noverr will provide additional information after the State Revenue Estimating Conference.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Johnson opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board. Mrs. Polderman explained guidelines the Board uses for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Kevin Siegel, 700 Plymouth N.E., Grand Rapids, on behalf of Peninsula Fire Protection, shared concern about the denial of their bid to provide fire protection at the Northern site.

Mr. John Huizinga, 9757 West P, President of Allied Mechanical, shared concern about the contractor selection process for plumbing and mechanical services work at the Northern site. He requested the Board to take a closer look and award the contract to Allied Mechanical.

Mr. John Burgess, 1262 Cutting Dr., Moline, representing Burgess Concrete Construction, addressed the decision to re-bid the Northern High School concrete work and asked the Board to reconsider this decision.

Mr. Bryan Kuhtic, 6329 Angling Road, CEO and partner in A1 Refrigeration, shared concerns about not qualifying for the mechanical work at the Northern High site.

Mr. Nick Vlachos, 1107 W. Kilgore, a citizen, acknowledged his acquaintance with Mr. Kuhtic and A1 Refrigeration. He gave a brief commentary on the quality of work, product, and staff at A1 Refrigeration and suggested very strongly that the Board consider using their services.

Mr. C. J. Shroll, 425 Eleanor, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Executive Director of American Subcontractors Association of West Michigan, shared concerns with the District bid process. He urged the District to communicate with the construction community to help improve this process.

Mr. John Doherty, 480 Cascade W. Pkwy, Grand Rapids, Michigan, President/CEO of the Association Builders and Contractors, Inc. Western Michigan Chapter, shared concerns with the District bid process.

Ms. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood, a citizen, discussed District impact should full day Kindergarten be established, shared concerns about sister-schools, thanked the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, Dr. Ric Perry for Curious Kids information she received, requested bus schedules posted on the District web site, and asked that all correspondence pertaining to the boundary changes be posted on the District web site.

Mr. Harold Bartholomew, 8614 Shirley Ct., a citizen, shared concern about the utilization of Bond funds.

President Johnson opened the floor to comments from fellow Board members.

Mrs. Polderman welcomed Mr. Whyte to the Board and congratulated Mr. Ted Vliek, Sr. on his appointment to a seat on the Portage City Council.

Mrs. Kurdys welcomed Mr. Whyte to the Board, acknowledged Mr. Manske for his support, and the citizens for their comments. She also shared information pertaining to the restorative justice model program for suspensions she received at the State Board of Education meeting.

Mr. Rathburn welcomed Mr. Whyte to the Board and thanked the *Gazette* for the recent substance abuse prevention article. He shared thoughts and ideas on redistricting and urged all to move forward with a positive message to students.

Mrs. Whistler welcomed Mr. Whyte to the Board and acknowledged his previous experience has allowed immediate participation. She thanked the citizens for their comments. Mrs. Whistler commented she is confident those elementary students affected by redistricting will find great teachers and staff at their new school.

President Johnson welcomed Mr. Whyte to the Board and discussed his background. She offered deep appreciation and thanks to Mr. Manske for his 35 years of service to the District. President Johnson thanked all the individuals that contacted the Board to share concerns and thoughts about redistricting in a respectful manner.

Mr. Posthumus welcomed Mr. Whyte to the Board and thanked him for his willingness to serve. He thanked citizens who spoke and acknowledged sensitivity to all concerns. He also shared some redistricting comments, echoing Mrs. Whistler's comments, and urged parents to help make this a positive move for the students.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda. Included on the Consent Agenda was the approval of the Minutes of October 27, 2008 Regular Meeting, November 22, 2008 Policy Development Meeting, and November 24, 2008 Regular Business Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

REQUIRED APPROVAL AGENDA ITEMS

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Posthumus, that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution, Amendment #1 to the Building and Site Sinking Fund Appropriations Act, for the 2008/09 fiscal year, as presented.

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr provided background information and responded to Trustee questions pertaining to tennis courts at both high school sites, accountability, cost estimates, timing issues, long-term impact. Mrs. Kurdys acknowledged she could not support the use of Building and Site Sinking Funds for Bond related projects. Mr. Whyte stated that this appeared to be an interim means to use so that the District could move forward with time sensitive projects.

Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6-1 with Mrs. Kurdys voting nay.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Rathburn, that the Board of Education approve the Northern High School Bid Package 2, as presented, and reject all bids only within Cast-in-Place Concrete in order to re-bid this work category.

An amended motion offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mr. Rathburn, that the Board of Education remove the mechanical, fire suppression, and plumbing from the Northern High School Bid Package 2, as presented.

Another amended motion was offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mr. Rathburn, that the Board of Education remove the Cast-in Place Concrete re-bid request.

Mr. Noverr provided background information on the design process and bid interview process. He welcomed Mr. Casey Peters, Project Manager from AVB Triangle Associates, to present further details. Mr. Peters also introduced Mr. Ryan Leaser, from AVB Triangle Associates who serves on the Northern High School oversight team, and Mr. Gary Kalleward, Construction Manager. Mr. Noverr, Mr. Peters and Mr. Kalleward responded to Trustee questions pertaining to local versus non-local bids, partnerships, size and scope of project, and the bid process.

Motion carried unanimously to approve the Northern High School Bid Package 2 with the exceptions noted.

Motion offered by Mrs. Kurdys, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education remove all bids only within Cast-in-Place Concrete in order to re-bid this work category, as presented.

Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions pertaining to re-bidding, timelines, and how delays could adversely affect the project.

Motion was unanimously denied.

Motion offered by Mr. Whyte, supported by Mrs. Whistler, that the Board of Education approve the lowest qualified, complete bid from Burgess Concrete, for the Northern High School Bid Package 2. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mr. Posthumus, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education approve the mechanical, fire suppression and plumbing bids from Pro Services, for the Northern High School Bid Package 2.

Mr. Noverr and Mr. Peters responded to Trustee questions pertaining to lowest bids, not offering an opportunity for other providers to team-up services, and local preference. Superintendent Wells re-emphasized the challenges of the Northern High School project as classes will continue to meet during construction and this recommendation represents the most effective choice.

Motion carried 6-1 with Mrs. Kurdys voting nay.

Motion offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education affirm the 2009 Elementary Attendance Boundary Plan, as presented.

Superintendent Wells thanked the Attendance Area Study Committee and Mr. Dan Vomastek for their efforts on this proposal. She assured the District will communicate extensively with all elementary neighborhoods and realtors and responded to Trustee questions pertaining to full day Kindergarten and sister-Kindergarten programs. The Superintendent noted she will provide a status report on the transition plans at the February Regular Business meeting.

Motion carried 6-0 with Mr. Whyte abstaining.

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Rathburn, that the Board of Education ratify the 2008/09 Contract with the Portage Education Association, as presented.

Mr. Manske provided background information on the competitive compensation package. He thanked Mr. Dave Laing and the Portage Education Association negotiating team along with the District Administrators for their efforts on this contract. Superintendent Wells added a special thank you to Mr. Manske for his valuable input on this agreement.

Motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mrs. Whistler, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing student discipline. Upon a roll call vote, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

The Board moved into closed session at 9:38 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 9:55 p.m.

Motion offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education expel student A from the District. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mr. Posthumus, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education expel student B from the District. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary