

MINUTES OF THE
August 3, 2009

Regular Meeting
of the
Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD
Board of Education

The regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District was held on August 3, 2009, in the District Office.

Members Present: Maureen Sikule Michelle Fusco
 Helen Lounsbury Sean O'Connor
 Carolyn Anderson

Others Present: Kimberly LaBelle Tom McGurl
 Andy Nolte Brendan Hogan
 Joseph Golden Joan Adriance
 Katie Carll Donna McGovern
 Cindy Bevington Joann Rupeka
 Eileen Rogers Transportation Department Personnel
 Richard Hallenbeck Kelly Smith
 Jeff Hartnett Nancy O'Pezio
 Mark Raven, Reporter Zach Simeone, Altamont Enterprise

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Sikule at 5:36 p.m.

Executive Session

At 5:37 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to enter into Executive Session to conduct a Grievance Hearing, discuss Legal Issues and Employment of Particular Personnel. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. Nolte and Mrs. LaBelle were present during executive session.

Jeff Harnett, Kelly Smith and Richard Hallenbeck entered executive session at 5:53 p.m.

Mr. Harnett, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Hallenbeck left executive session at 6:01 p.m.

Mr. Nolte left executive session at 6:27 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m., three members of the Transportation Department entered executive session. The Transportation Department Personnel left executive session at 6:55 p.m.

Return to Public Session

At 7:03 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to return to public session. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Sikule at 7:07 p.m., and welcomed all to the Meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Schrade led all in the pledge of allegiance.

Consent Agenda

Mrs. Sikule asked if there were any items to be removed from the Consent Agenda; there were none.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on July 20, 2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the 2009-2010 Free and Reduced Priced Meals Policy Guidelines, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the Dates to Remember, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the Future Agenda Items, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Public Discussion

Resident Joseph Golden noted he had met with Mr. Schrade regarding his opinions on the hiring of a Dean of Students. He wanted assurance that he would still be participating in Dean of Students Committee as a community volunteer. Mrs. Sikule stated he was to be included in the Committee, as well as teachers and parents.

Mrs. Adriance also expressed interest in being a volunteer on the Committee, and questioned how information was distributed to the public.

Mrs. Sikule publicly thanked Mr. Schrade for his many dedicated years of service to the District, and noted this would be his last regular Board Meeting. A brief refreshment break was held at 7:13 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order by the President, Mrs. Sikule at 7:22 p.m.

Committee Reports

In regard to the Superintendent Search Sub Committee, Mr. O'Connor reported that Mrs. Lounsbury had spoken with the District Superintendent, Chuck Dedrick regarding the BOCES service, and he outlined their process. After much deliberation, the Sub Committee is of the opinion that the District is well equipped to handle the process itself, and recommends that the Sub Committee take the lead, with guidance and input from the entire Board. Their full report was distributed to the other Board Members for review. Included in the outline was a detailed proposal for the search methods which includes qualifications; recruitment strategies; application procedures; selection criteria; and interview process. Mrs. Lounsbury will contact BOCES Superintendent Dedrick to share ideas and check his availability to speak to the entire Board in public session at the August 24th meeting to provide further advice.

Mrs. Lounsbury also noted that NYS School Boards Association no longer offers this service; however, there is a binder for sale which details the process.

Mrs. Sikule and Mrs. Fusco, members of the Calendar Planning/Program Focus Sub Committee had no written report to present at this time. However, Mrs. Sikule noted they met to share ideas. Preliminary discussion included the potential for modifying the Program Focus segment of Board Meetings to be more academically centered. Other topics could be on a rotational basis, i.e. PTA every 2-3 years. The Committee is also considering ideas for student academic and sports recognition events; investigating ideas to encourage nominations for Board of Education Awards, perhaps enlisting the help of the PTA, e-mail, newsletters, etc. It was felt that Board Agendas need to be more academically centered, perhaps looking at other District's agendas, also determine a better time line to conduct business. Further expressed was that the Board receive additional information and Board packets earlier, perhaps on Tuesday, thus giving Members more time to review information to create more efficient meetings.

Member Comments

Mrs. Lounsbury noted the current BKW Website contains some very out of date information, and asked how often it was updated. She suggested it be looked at monthly. Mrs. LaBelle will give that information to Mrs. Geraci.

Mrs. Sikule asked if a Board Member would be attending the New Teacher Orientation on August 26th and 27th. Mrs. Lounsbury will attend the 6th Grade Orientation on August 25th. Mrs. LaBelle will forward the schedule of other orientations/events to the Board Members.

New Business

Mr. Hogan was present to give the Board an update on the electronic grades/rapid dialing system. E School data is supporting a third party rapid dialing solution that is aideable through BOCES. This is different from their original intention of providing rapid dialing as part of their core product, which would have come at no cost to the District. Mr. Hogan has concerns as to whether our contact data and the prioritization of that data is accurate enough at this time to use for implementation of this idea. The earliest Mr. Hogan predicts data being ready would be late January 2010. The District does not need to commit financially to this service until it is ready, and at that time, could sign a one or three

year service agreement. Mr. Hogan recommended doing a pilot of the program, to ensure we are comfortable that the system meets our needs. The parental portal component is not scheduled to be rolled out until the 2010-2011 school year, at the earliest. Discussion needs to take place to determine exactly what information the District wants to publish to the portal, have proper Board Policy in place to govern the information collected; e.g. teacher gradebook information, discipline and attendance.

Mrs. Anderson left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

It was also discussed that text messaging to cell phones could be available through the School News Notifier (SNN). The potential start up and maintenance costs were mentioned. The District could explore this with Mrs. Geraci.

Mrs. Anderson returned at 7:46 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Lounsbury to authorize an RFP for Banking Services. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. O'Connor will forward a list of suggested Banks to send an RFP to.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to authorize an RFP for Legal Services. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to authorize an RFP for Bond Counsel/Financial Advisors. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the resolution to correct the transfer made into the Employee Benefit Accrued Liability Reserve Fund, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to hire Management Advisory Group of New York, Inc. to perform the Internal Audit Function for a two year period, commencing July 1, 2009. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Discussion was held regarding the \$90 per diem rate for certified substitute teachers. Mrs. LaBelle noted that in the 2008-09 school year, there was an unusual number of long term illness leaves. It was determined that due to the elimination of an administrative position, if the budgeted amount for teacher substitutes was exceeded, there was sufficient money in another budget line to cover the additional expense. Mrs. Lounsbury also noted a number of teacher absences from the classroom were attributed to attendance at conferences, training, curriculum work and exam rating. Before the formulation of next year's budget, this budget line will be closely scrutinized to ensure sufficient funding.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy #8340 - Textbooks/Workbooks/Calculators/Instructional Computer Hardware, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mrs. Anderson asked how student damage of materials was monitored. It was noted that report cards were held, and parents notified of the loss, and billed accordingly.

Unfinished Business

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Lounsbury to approve the change in the hourly rate for Renee Sherwin, Part Time Operations and Maintenance Clerk to \$11.00/hour, effective 07/01/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mrs. Lounsbury asked that Mr. Schrade submit his annual report for the 2008-09 year.

The Board of Education Sub Committee assignments were reviewed.

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to appoint Helen Lounsbury and Michelle Fusco as Members of the Building Inspection Sub Committee of the Board. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

A meeting will be scheduled with Mr. Shunney for the end of August to start the building inspection process.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to appoint Maureen Sikule and Sean O'Connor as Members of the Business Official Vacancy Sub Committee of the Board. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to appoint Carolyn Anderson and Michelle Fusco as Members of the Dean of Students Sub Committee of the Board. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Much discussion on the configuration of the Dean of Students position ensued. Mrs. Fusco felt the position should be strictly disciplinary in nature, and felt the District should attempt to fill the position as soon as possible, and not pursue the Civil Service route. Mrs. Lounsbury suggested rather than making any hasty decision, that a retired teacher, such as Mr. Leonard be hired on a substitute basis while the Board goes forward with the process of hiring a permanent Dean of Students. Mrs. Sikule gave information garnered from the School Attorney regarding a Civil Service designation, and the process involved in getting that approval. Mrs. Lounsbury and Mrs. Anderson concurred this option should be pursued. Mr. Schrade suggested another option which entailed appointing a teacher from our current staff who has an administrative certification for one year, then re-evaluate at the end of that time. Mrs. Fusco reiterated the purpose of this position was to take the duty of discipline from the building principal, allowing him to do administrative tasks.

Mrs. Anderson left the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Mrs. Sikule suggested appointing a staff member for half of the year, while putting the title in place. Mr. Schrade strongly urged the Board to do what is best for the school and students, feeling someone with an educational background is needed, someone trained in dealing with kids. Mrs. Lounsbury felt that the person was the key, not their background, going back to the desire of the Board to hire the right person for the position.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to hire a substitute while the Board continues the process of identifying what they want in the position, and also investigate the Civil Service option.

Further discussion continued regarding the motion. Mrs. Lounsbury withdrew her motion. She expressed the need for a special meeting to discuss further and garner information from Civil Service.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to hold a special meeting to identify specifically what is involved in the process. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

More discussion ensued. Mr. Schrade noted the major issue is whether the position be certified or non-certified. Mr. McGurl expressed his desire to start the school year with staff in place, for at least one year, to have consistency established.

The special meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the District. The Administration was directed to garner the necessary information from Civil Service, i.e. job description application, requirement, qualifications, timelines, etc. to make this a viable option.

Mr. Schrade noted he was still awaiting information from Greg Zeh on the Westerlo Water District. Mrs. Sikule reported that at the last Westerlo Town Water meeting, water billing rates for the past three years and new billing rates was discussed. Mr. Schrade will attempt to contact Mr. Zeh for more information.

Personnel

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Steven M. Schrade, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Amanda Gorman to the position of Teacher in the Physical Education Teaching tenure area, for a three-year probationary term, effective September 1, 2009, on Step 2 of the Teachers' Contract. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The motion to appoint a School Social Worker was tabled.

The motion to appoint the One-on-One Bus Aides, Classroom Aides and LPN was tabled.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to appoint Amanda Gorman as the Modified Girls Soccer Coach for the 2009-2010 school year, as recommended. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to accept the resignation from Erin Styne, Special Education Teacher, effective 07/31/09. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Public Discussion

Kelly Smith urged the Board to quickly make the appointment of Dean of Students, which needs to be a certified position in order to take charge and needs an education background - there has been too much flux. The High School Staff is thrilled with Mr. McGurl, and wants to present a unified front, have the whole package in place in September.

Donna McGovern expressed concern that the Board may be setting Mr. McGurl for failure, if he does not have the support of a certified administrator, especially in light of the challenges of last year. Katie Carll expressed fear that the work of the PBIS Committee may not continue. Eileen Rogers also expressed support of a certified Dean of Students.

A resident expressed displeasure over only one section of Driver Education being offered for the upcoming school year. Mr. Schrade explained that the previous requirement for VOTEC has changed and those students (about 40), need to receive physical education from their home district.

Mr. Schrade took the opportunity to thank the Board Members present and past for being supportive of his efforts. Also the staff, and in particular Mrs. LaBelle and Mrs. Martin who have both been top notch.

Executive Session

At 9:11 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to enter into Executive Session to discuss a Legal Issue, and the employment of particular personnel. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Mrs. LaBelle was present during executive session.

Return to Public Session

At 10:17 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to return to public session. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Lounsbury to approve the Emergency Conditional Appointment of Evan Place as a Tutor. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that the meeting adjourn. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Denise J. Martin
District Clerk