

**MINUTES OF THE
September 15, 2008**

**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 September 15, 2008, in the Elementary Library.

Members Present: Helen Lounsbury Michelle Fusco (arrived at 6:12 p.m.)
 Maureen Sikule Sean O'Connor
 Jack Harlow

Others Present: Kimberly LaBelle Beth Bourassa
 Timothy Holmes Richard Wheeler
 Fred Marcil Brian Corey
 Karen Barber Jill Roemer
 Carey Raymond Kelly Smith
 Gary Morin Tara Cummings
 Ed Ackroyd Judd Krasher
 Karen White Mark Cameron
 Peter Shunney Zack Simeone, Altamont Enterprise
 Noreen Shunney Joan Adriance
 Ralph Miller Mary Jane Araldi
 Parents/Residents Mark Raven, Reporter

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 6:00 p.m.

Executive Session

At 6:01 p.m., motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to enter into Executive Session to discuss particular Personnel Issues, Contract Negotiations, and CSE Recommendations. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Beth Bourassa and Mr. Holmes were present during executive session. Mrs. LaBelle entered executive session at 6:02 p.m. Mrs. Fusco arrived at 6:12 p.m.

Return to Public Session

At 6:58 p.m., motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to return to public session. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Lounsbury at 7:03 p.m. Mrs. Lounsbury welcomed all present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Schrade led all in the pledge of allegiance.

Introduction of New Staff

Mr. Schrade introduced the two new staff members present to the Board and the public. There were: Gary Morin - Mathematics Teachers; and Carey Raymond - Special Education Teacher. The Mentor Coordinator, Karen Barber, stated the new teachers were off to a good start. Jennifer Phillips, Long Term Substitute Science Teacher, was unable to attend. Mr. Schrade took the opportunity to introduce the Acting High School Principal, Richard Wheeler, to the group.

At 7:09, there was a brief refreshment break. The meeting resumed at 7:22 p.m.

Consent Agenda

Mrs. Sikule asked that Item 6f - Approve Board Policy #8261 - Title I Parent Involvement be removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education held on August 11, 2008, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on August 18, 2008, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education held on September 2, 2008, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to appoint Kelly May as Modified Volleyball Coach for the 2008-2009 school year, as per the attached memo. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the Emergency Conditional Appointments, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to appoint Ashley Swint and Craig Oskam as Volunteer Assistant/Helpers to the 2008-2009 Volleyball Team, as per the attached memo. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to accept the resignation from Christine M. Hansen, Food Service Helper, effective 09/05/08. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to accept the resignation from Deborah A. Larsen, Car Driver - AM and PM Run, effective 09/11/08. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to accept the resignation from Susan Bischert, One-on-One Bus Monitor, effective 08/29/08. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to accept the resignation from Leonard Cianfrocco as the 2008-2009 Modified Volleyball Coach, effective immediately. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco that the Board of Education has no objections to the recommendations of the Committee on Special Education, and approves the authorization of funds to implement the Special Education programs and services consistent with such recommendations, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the Treasurer's Reports, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the request from the Drama Class for a trip to New York City on April 29, 2009, with the District contributing \$900.00 toward the cost, with the usual disclaimer, as per the attached letter. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the Future Agenda Items, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the Dates to Remember, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to preliminarily approve Board Policy # 8261 - Title I Parent Involvement. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Mrs. Sikule inquired as to which programs/and or projects are funded by Title I monies, and if they should be enumerated in the policy. Mr. Schrade stated that since these programs change from year to year, the policy would have to be amended quite often. Mr. Schrade clarified Title I funding and noted that some teacher salaries are paid through this grant which helps to offset the ever rising special education costs to the taxpayers. Mr. Schrade will consult with Mrs. Berquist, the Title I Coordinator, and a summary of what this grant supports will be forwarded to the Board. Wording changes/additions will also be included before final adoption of this policy.

Public Discussion

Kelly Smith, President of the BKW Teachers' Association, thanked the Board on behalf of the Association for appointing Mr. Wheeler as Acting High School Principal, noting the overall improvement in the atmosphere at the High School Building.

A resident had concerns regarding homeless, emancipated students, and their potential impact on transportation and academic costs to the taxpayers.

Program Focus

Mrs. Lounsbury and Mrs. Fusco reported that acting as the Sub Committee of the Board, they conducted the annual legal requirement which entailed inspection of the buildings and grounds by the Board of Education with Mr. Shunney. They informed the other members and the public that the overall condition of the District was excellent. Mr. Peter Shunney, Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, gave his presentation to the Board. He gave an overview of the detailed report which had been distributed to the Board Members. He reviewed cost savings measures the District has initiated. Energy conservation measures enacted were enumerated. Improvements completed in each of the District Buildings were recanted. Mr. Shunney spoke of recent changes in personnel in his department. Recommendations for the future included possible appointment of a faculty member to serve in the position of School Energy Conservation Officer. Also recommended was a limited energy performance contract to replace the aging and inefficient lighting in the elementary classrooms. Included could be a conversion from pneumatic to digital thermostats to

accurately control room temperatures. Mrs. Fusco suggested that a copy of Mr. Shunney's report be placed on the BKW Website. The Board thanked Mr. Shunney for all his efforts.

Committee Reports

Mrs. Lounsbury reported an overall positive and enthusiastic attitude of District Employees during her attendance at the Transportation Department/CSEA training Meetings, and opening day ceremonies. Mr. O'Connor expressed similar sentiments regarding the Grade 6 Orientation. A parent expressed that she would like to see 6th graders tour the building while parents are in meetings regarding curriculum and scheduling. Mrs. Lounsbury also attended Kindergarten and Pre-K orientation. Board Members also attended K-5 Open House. Mrs. Sikule compiled notes on the open house and will share comments with other Board Members. There were positive comments regarding the School News Notifier and the Foreign Language Program. There was a request for more enrichment programs during 13th period.

The CSEA Negotiations date was set for Wednesday, September 18, 2008.

Mrs. Sikule noted the Contract Planning Committee have met, are making progress, and will continue to meet.

The Community Relations Committee brainstormed ideas, and after gathering additional information options will be analyzed and the Committee will submit recommendations to the Board.

The Board Ground Rules Committee is waiting for survey results from Frank Quinn. Mrs. LaBelle will contact Mr. Quinn to determine the status.

Mr. O'Connor and Mrs. Sikule stated the QRI Committee has not yet met.

The Administrative Restructuring Committee has also not met.

Mr. Harlow is in the process of formulating his thoughts regarding the Superintendent Evaluation Instrument. The Sub Committee for the Superintendent Evaluation Instrument has not yet met.

In regard to the vacant Community Member position on the Budget Advisory Committee, an e-mail was received from Carolyn Anderson in which she volunteered to do double duty and serve as a Community Member on both the Budget Advisory Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to appoint Carolyn Anderson as a Community Member to the Budget Advisory Committee. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mrs. Lounsbury explained the role of the Community Member on the Budget Advisory Committee. A District Resident, Vasilios Lefkaditis, who has worked over 15 years on Wall Street volunteered to serve on the Committee.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to appoint Vasilios Lefkaditis as a Community Member on the Budget Advisory Committee. Motion was carried 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to appoint Maureen Sikule and Jack Harlow as Board Members on the Audit & Finance Committee for the school year 2008-2009, with their terms ending on June 30, 2009. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

It was noted the Committee has issues with its Charter, and also needs to meet with the External

Auditor.

Member Comments

Mrs. Fusco attended and had much praise for the fashion show of “Do’s and Don’ts” held at the High School which focused on the school dress code.

In regard to a report on Open Houses, each of the Board Members was asked to jot down ideas to incorporate what the Board needs to do to follow through on these issues. These will be turned over to the Administration to make recommendations.

There was discussion regarding the potential posting of Board Agenda Item enclosures on the BKW Website. This will be discussed at a future Board meeting.

Mrs. Sikule asked the status of the Internal Audit Report. Mr. Holmes replied the report will be to the District by Wednesday or Thursday.

Mr. Schrade noted the architects were close to submitting final plans to State Ed for the Capital Facilities Project.

Mrs. Lounsbury inquired as to when the District last attempted to RFP for General Liability Insurance. Mr. Holmes explained a proposal was done just this year, with our current carrier, Utica Mutual, submitting the lowest proposal.

Mr. Schrade distributed to the Board Members two late additions to the agenda for consideration: one was Non-Resident Tuition Rates; and the other was a field trip request.

Mr. Schrade presented Mrs. Lounsbury with a certificate from NYSSBA for attendance at various training sessions.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the Non-Resident Tuition Rates for the 2008-2009 school year, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

New Business

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to approve the BKW Professional Development Plan for 2008-2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mrs. LaBelle clarified the new requirements and reviewed the Mentor Program. There was also mention of the Mentor Grant recently obtained by the District.

There was discussion regarding a time study proposal when filling administrative appointments. Mr. Harlow and Mr. O’Connor felt it was up to the Administration to identify and access administrative hirings, and make recommendations to the Board. This issue was tabled.

As an update on the Community Forum, it was noted Frank Quinn has agreed to be the facilitator. Mr. Schrade stated the format will be determined based upon the results of the soon to be completed survey.

Local Historian, Ralph Miller, was present to discuss the Town of Berne history. Mrs. LaBelle and Mr. Corey noted that the 4th Grades discuss New York State history in May of each year, and asked that Mr. Miller present to the students at that time. Mrs. Lounsbury noted that in the past, various

history classes toured the District, which included a stop at Hannay Reels in Westerlo. Mr. Miller volunteered to speak with various classes, and even to do professional development with the staff.

Mr. Holmes gave an explanation to the Board and public of how the school tax bills are calculated, in particular in regard to the STAR Exemption Rates, Assessed Value, and Equalization Rates in conjunction with the 2008-2009 school tax bills. Much discussion ensued. Mr. Schrade noted that residents will be receiving STAR Rebate checks again this year. It was suggested when the District has its annual meeting with the Legislators, that STAR Exemptions and Equalization Rates also be raised as District concerns.

Mrs. Fusco and Mrs. Lounsbury volunteered to help with tabulating the results of the District-wide survey.

Mr. Holmes updated the Board on recent meetings with the Town of Berne in regard to shared services. Still under discussion is the feasibility of the bus wash and fuel station projects. These would require a large capital project, in which start up costs are sizeable. There are planning and implementation grants available. Due to the approaching building project, the Board felt that this is not a good time to embark on such a large project, although it wants to cooperate with the Town. Mrs. Lounsbury asked if the Town of Berne could be the lead agency. Mr. Holmes stated that because of state aid garnered, the School District should be the lead agency in pursuing these projects. Mr. Holmes will continue to have conversations with the Town of Berne

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Harlow to preliminarily approve Board Policy #5734 - Passengers on School Buses. Motion was carried. 5 yes. (First Motion)

Brief discussion ensued. Mr. Schrade noted that four year olds enrolled in the District's Pre-k Program mitigates any liability.

The Budget Advisory Meeting was tentatively set for Wednesday, November 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office. Mrs. Lounsbury asked that Mr. Schrade contact the various District Unions for a possible representative on the Committee.

Mrs. LaBelle distributed the 2008-09 BKW Board of Education Goals. It was noted the Administrators were writing action plans to be presented at the October Meeting.

Public Discussion

A Member of the audience felt that copies of agenda materials, attachments were not necessary, and also noted that not all residents have internet access.

A resident voice his displeasure with the current system of funding education.

Executive Session

At 9:40 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to enter into Executive Session to discuss a student issue. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. Holmes and a resident were present during executive session.

Return to Public Session

At 9:51 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to return to public session. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that the meeting adjourn. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 p.m.

Denise J. Martin
District Clerk