

MINUTES OF THE
September 28, 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 September 28, 2009, in the District Office.

Members Present: Maureen Sikule Michelle Fusco (arrived at 6:12 p.m.)
 Sean O'Connor Carolyn Anderson

Member Absent: Helen Lounsbury

Others Present: Kimberly LaBelle Tom McGurl
 Brian Corey Brian Jeff Keller
 Chrissie Geraci Joan Adriance
 Mr. & Mrs. Kalina Residents
 Marlene Tiffany Carol Willsey
 Tim Tryon Darlene Shrederis
 Karen White Ida Motschmann

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs. Sikule at 6:04 p.m.

Executive Session

At 6:05 p.m., motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to enter into Executive Session to discuss Legal Issues, Contract Negotiations, and CSE Recommendations. Motion was carried. 3 yes.

Mrs. LaBelle and Mrs. Martin were present during executive session.

Mrs. Fusco arrived at 6:12 p.m.

At the request of the Board, Mrs. LaBelle and Mrs. Martin left executive session, at 7:02 p.m.

Return to Public Session

At 7:06 p.m., motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to return to public session. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Interim Superintendent LaBelle 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. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on September 14, 2009, as attached. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the 2009-2010 Student Code of Conduct, as attached. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the 2009-2010 Athletic Code of Conduct, as attached. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to appoint Frederick Marcil as the Director of Athletics and Director of Physical Education for the 2009-2010 school year, with a stipend of \$4,000.00, as per the attached recommendation. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the Treasurer's Report, as attached. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson 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. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the Dates to Remember, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to approve the Future Agenda Items, as enclosed. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Mrs. LaBelle noted the distribution of additional information to be voted upon in regard to a new CSE Recommendation and appointment of Substitute Bus Drivers.

Public Discussion

Tim Tryon, representative of the Helderberg Christian School, asked if the Board was in receipt of the letter sent by his organization. He reiterated HCA'S interest in purchasing the Westerlo School Building, noting the Board of Education has expressed this was the last year the School District intended to rent the facility. Mrs. Sikule responded that the Board had just received the letter, and will discuss the proposal.

Mrs. Kim Kalina noted the Varsity Golf Team had achieved an undefeated season, the first ever, with retired Teacher Don Dennis returning to coach the team. She asked that Mr. Dennis be recognized for this impressive fete.

District Resident, Karen White expressed her children's difficulty logging onto the internet at her residence, and the challenge it presents to them in accessing the website for homework and doing assignments. She asked that the Board and Administration explore alternative options and times for student use of computers at school. The Administration is already considering other alternatives.

Program Focus - Opening of School Reports

Elementary Principal, Brian Corey reported on the successful opening of school at the Elementary Building. His report included information on student population per grade level, class sizes, and program offerings. On September 15th, Open House was held, with a new format which proved to be very successful, with positive feedback. Mr. O'Connor and Mrs. Sikule attended K-5 Open House, and thought the staggered grouping was a great idea. Mrs. Sikule noted parents were forthcoming in offering their services to the District. Mr. Corey also gave an overview of the District's Special Education Programs, commenting on the addition of two new self-contained classrooms.

Mr. McGurl, Secondary School Principal, also told of a successful start to school. He complimented the Maintenance Staff for the pristine condition of the building. Open house was well attended and very productive. There was very positive feedback; parents and students are very receptive to the newly instituted student discipline policies. Parent involvement in the process is being emphasized, and the importance of open communication between home and school was stressed. He outlined changes that have been enacted in regard to ISS, detention, and restricted study hall. He gave an overview of student enrollment, course offerings, and distance learning courses, noting trends he has observed. He made special note of what he believes to be an excessive number of students scheduled each day in study halls. This is being examined. He would like to see more curriculum offerings and higher enrollment in classes and electives. Also being analyzed is the number of students attending Career and Technical School Courses out of District. The success of the senior lounge was touted, as well as the enhanced Distance Learning Room. The process for receiving senior privileges and off campus issues is currently under consideration.

The newly appointed Dean of Students, Mr. Keller, reported on his first week. He has already had successful contact with parents as well as students, which has avoided potentially volatile situations. Parents in attendance noted their students have already expressed a more positive atmosphere at the middle/high school, and thanked the Board and Administration for their efforts.

Mrs. Fusco expressed her pleasure and how proud she is of the positive things going on in both buildings.

Committee Reports

Mr. O'Connor distributed a summary of his exit interview with Mr. Schrade. Mr. Schrade thought his tenure to be very successful overall. Mr. Connor thought an underlying message was the importance of communication and support between the Board and Superintendent. He emphasized the need for the Superintendent to be surrounded by the finest possible support staff, to enable the Superintendent to do the best job. Specific skills of importance are a willingness to learn and seek information from groups within the District and outside the District. He felt Mr. Schrade's comments can be used to finalize the Superintendent's evaluation tool, and also be customized to become a two way evaluation.

Mrs. Sikule noted K-5 Open House was very well attended, with a very positive tone. Parents offered their expertise in various capacities, which will be passed on to Mrs. LaBelle. Mr. O'Connor was impressed with the number of new, enthusiastic, and inspired parents. Mrs. Sikule suggested setting up tables for the specialized teachers in the cafeteria.

Mrs. Anderson attended the 7-12 Open House. She had not been familiar with the building, and was impressed with the classrooms, the music room, and the upbeat tone from the parents. She was pleased to be part of the experience, stating conversations were positive, with parents noticing the differences in atmosphere. Mrs. Sikule suggested the use of maps of the building. Mrs. Adriance

noted signs on the walls directing parents to the different classrooms would prove to be helpful in navigating their child's schedule.

Mrs. Fusco attended the first 9th Grade Orientation. There was a good turnout among students. Teachers verbalized expectations at the High School level, and outlined courses.

Mrs. Sikule and Mrs. Fusco are in the process of formulating topics for program focus, and also the Board of Education Meeting Schedules. In regard to Program Focus, they are exploring recognition of sport teams outside the regular Board Meetings, possibly during regular school time, enabling other student's attendance. Mrs. Fusco will take the lead and consult with Mrs. LaBelle and Mr. McGurl. The Board is attempting to create a more academic focus to Board Meetings, possibly starting with grade level reporting, how the District is doing on standardized tests, teaching strategies, etc. There is a need for input from the Administration and Board on what they want to see. Mrs. Sikule will have a proposal included in the October 5th Board packet.

In regard to Board Meeting dates, Mrs. Fusco reported that her recent change in employment prohibits her from attending BOE Meetings on Monday evenings. In order to accommodate these days, Mrs. Sikule and Mrs. LaBelle will meet to come up with alternate dates for the Board of Education Meetings. Mrs. Martin will consult with NYS School Boards Association regarding any legal obligations prohibiting this change, and what procedures and timelines need to be followed. This will be a future agenda item.

Member Comments

Mr. O'Connor complimented Mrs. LaBelle and the Business Office Staff for keeping the "train on the rails" in the absence of the School Business Official. He also urged Mrs. LaBelle to let the Board know if there is extra help needed.

Mrs. Sikule noted the additions to Personnel for appointment of a School Business Official, Substitute Bus Drivers, and also an additional recommendation from Committee on Special Education.

New Business

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to approve the request from the Drama Classes for a field trip to New York City on May 26, 2010, and also to approve the funding in the amount of \$900.00 to help defray the costs of the trip. The usual disclaimer will also be in effect. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

The membership of the Budget Advisory Committee was reviewed. It was determined that we currently have three community members. Mrs. Kalina expressed interest in becoming a community member. When set up, a schedule of meeting dates will be forwarded to Mrs. Kalina.

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to award the bid for Legal Services to Whiteman Osterman and Hanna LLP for the period 10/01/09 through 06/30/14, as per the attached proposal. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Unfinished Business

Mrs. LaBelle gave a brief update on the status of the Capital Project, stating the NYS Ed Department has rejected the School Architect's most recent proposal, due to a lack of water capacity. She stated publicly that the Berne Fire Company has in no way stalled the project, and has in fact been very receptive and cooperative. Mrs. LaBelle will organize a meeting with members of the Berne Fire Department, the School's Architect, Mr. Shunney, and members of the Administration to go over specifications, and what the District needs to do to proceed with the project. Mrs. Sikule noted that a District Resident who works for the NYS Education Department has offered his service/advise to the District in this matter.

Personnel

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the Emergency Conditional Appointments, as attached. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. O'Connor that be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, Kimberly A. LaBelle, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Kevin Callagy to the position of School Business Official in the School Business Official tenure area, for a three-year probationary term, effective November 2, 2009, at a salary of \$87,000, pro-rated. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to appoint John Hunsicker as a Substitute Bus Driver, effective 09/29/09, provided he meets all the rules and regulations under Article 19A of the Vehicle and Traffic Laws, per the attached recommendation. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mrs. Anderson to appoint Larry Walley as a Substitute Bus Driver, effective 09/29/09, provided he meets all the rules and regulations under Article 19A of the Vehicle and Traffic Laws, per the attached recommendation. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to approve the contract between the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District Board of Education and Kimberly A LaBelle, Interim Superintendent, as attached. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Anderson 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. 4 yes.

Mrs. Sikule also announced the undefeated Golf Team's success, and in addition, that several team members have qualified for sectional competition.

Public Discussion

Mrs. Tiffany asked for the spelling of the new Business Official's name.

Mrs. Adriance asked that the Student Code of Conduct and Athletic Code of Conduct be available on the BKW Website. She also praised Mr. McGurl, the much improved atmosphere at the middle/high school, the success of the Senior Lounge, and suggested that the Student Government Class be given the opportunity to participate in the process of determining criteria for senior privileges.

Mrs. Kalina commented that it was a pleasure to attend the Board meeting, and complimented the Board on how efficiently the meeting was organized and run.

Executive Session

At 8:29 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal issues. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Mrs. LaBelle and Mrs. Martin were present during executive session.

Return to Public Session

At 9:02 p.m., motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to return to public session. Motion was carried. 4 yes.

Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Denise J. Martin
District Clerk