

**MINUTES OF THE
October 27, 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 October 27, 2008, in the District Office.

Members Present: Helen Lounsbury Michelle Fusco
 Maureen Sikule Sean O'Connor
 Jack Harlow

Others Present: Timothy Holmes Richard Wheeler
 Fred Marcil Neil LeMere
 Brian Corey Karen Storm
 Chrissie Margiotta Staff
 Parents/Residents Students
 Mark Raven, Reporter Zack Simeone, Altamont Enterprise

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 Contract Negotiations, Legal Issues and CSE Recommendations. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. Holmes was present during executive session.

Return to Public Session

At 6:58 p.m., motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, 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 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Lounsbury welcomed all present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent Schrade led all in the pledge of allegiance.

Audit & Finance Committee/Independent Audit Presentation

Mr. Neil LaMere, from the District's Independent Auditing Firm of West & Company, presented to the Board the 2007-2008 Audit. He stated the audit went extremely well. The District remains financially sound and stable, with long and short-term plans in place. There are no compliance issues, stating the District is following rules and regulations; internal controls are in good shape. There was

brief conversation regarding GASB regulations, Extra-Curricular Activity Accounts, Fund Balance, and possible reserve funds. Much discussion ensued regarding the Employee Benefit Accrued Liability Reserve Fund. Mrs. Lounsbury expressed concern over the timeliness of the audit report.

Consent Agenda

Mrs. Lounsbury noted the removal of Appointment of Modified Basketball Coaches and Appointment of Clerk of the Works from the consent agenda.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on October 6, 2008, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to appoint the attached list of Coaches for the 2008-2009 Winter Sports Season, with the exception of Modified Boys and Modified Girls Basketball, per the recommendations of the Athletic Director. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Steven M. Schrade, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Denise Robinson to the permanent, probationary position of Keyboard Specialist, pursuant to the regulations of Albany County Civil Service. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Steven M. Schrade, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Gerald Irwin to the permanent, probationary position of Teaching Assistant, effective 11/13/08, at a salary of \$11,656, pro-rated, per the Teacher Support Contract. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Steven M. Schrade, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Scott Orr to the position of School Social Work tenure area, for a three-year probationary term, effective November 17, 2008, on Step 1 of the Teachers' Contract, salary pro-rated. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

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

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to accept the resignation from Melissa Watts, School Social Worker, effective 10/17/08. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

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

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that per the recommendation of the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Audit & Finance Committee, to accept the attached Audit report from the District's Independent Auditor, West & Company CPAs PC for the school year ending June 30, 2008, and to place the report on file. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to award the Bid for Milk for the 2008-2009 school year to Poundridge Dairy of Worcester, as per the attached memorandum. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

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

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

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to appoint Peter Shunney as Clerk of the Works for the Capital Project, as per the attached memorandum.

Mrs. Lounsbury votes no.

Mrs. Fusco votes yes.

Mrs. Sikule votes no.

Mr. O'Connor votes yes.

Mr. Harlow votes yes.

Motion was carried.

Much discussion ensued. Mrs. Sikule wanted the minutes to reflect her feelings that this is a large facility project the District has undertaken. The RFP for Clerk of the Works requested applicant proposals for full time, on site representation. Applications were to have a minimum of 10 years experience with State Education projects, be conversant with construction scheduling and project documentation, and be familiar with occupied SED proposals. While Mr. Shunney has a vested interest in this project and does a commendable job as Maintenance Supervisor, since he does not have the credentials stipulated in the RFP, she voted against the appointment. Both Ms. Lounsbury and Mrs. Sikule feel that Mr. Shunney is a highly respected, valued and capable employee. Mrs. Lounsbury was not comfortable with the process and felt since not all the qualifications stated in the scope of the RFP for Clerk of the Works were met, perhaps a new RFP with amended qualifications should be issued. Mr. Schrade reminded the Board that they had agreed to this appointment conceptually at the previous meeting.

Public Discussion

Mrs. Storm suggested that the Board look again at the information garnered in 2006 from the Shared Decision Making Committee in regard to the Valedictorian/Salutatorian designations, and not rescind their decision or send it back to the Committee for further review. She felt that since the message was clear, and that the Committee spent over a year in discussions, don't make community members look at this issue again.

Program Focus

Mr. Corey conducted a power point presentation on the roles and responsibilities of Teaching Assistants and Teacher Aides in our District. He outlined qualifications and requirements for a teaching assistant certificate; assignments and responsibilities of aides and assistants, their community connections and activities beyond the classroom. Future considerations include expansion of technical experiences and professional development opportunities to enhance staff and student experiences

Committee Reports

The Board reviewed the recommendations for improving community relations from Mrs. Sikule and Mrs. Lounsbury. Mrs. Sikule noted through the new E-Schools Software, the rapid dialer feature can be implemented, at no extra cost and would like to see it implemented for emergency callings. The Board decided against broadcasting board meetings. There was discussion on the potential of having Nick Viscio develop a video of our school district. Mr. Viscio will be invited to the next Board Meeting to explore this project. Chrissie Margiotta will also explore the idea of

web videos capabilities through BOCES.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. O'Connor to accept the Community Relations Subcommittee Report, as amended and attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes

A report from the Board Ground Rules Committee was tabled.

Mrs. Sikule noted the informational handout from the Administrative Restructuring Committee and noted another meeting is being scheduled.

It was noted there are still vacancies on the Middle/High School Shared Decision Making Committees. Mr. Corey reported the Elementary Shared Decision Making Committee is still in need of a parent and or community member. At their recent meeting, topics discussed were ideas to help the Board of Education achieve their goals; developing a plan of action to comply with NYS Physical Education Regulations, developing an Elementary Building mission statement and informational brochure, suggestions for building safety and improvements. At the next meeting, Mr. Gillis and Mrs. DeMuth will be present to discuss PE Regulations, further review of Board Goals, and feedback to the committee from Elementary Staff.

Mr. Holmes distributed information from the October 15th Drug/Health Insurance Committee Meeting. Topics under discussion were the cost of the self insured Drug Plan; costs of retail versus mail order drugs, overview of terminology; potential cost savings/containment ideas, i.e. HRA's and HSA's.

Mr. O'Connor noted he and Mr. Harlow are moving ahead with the Superintendent's Evaluation Instrument. Mrs. Sikule suggested that the Quarterly Review & Incident Report (QRI) Subcommittee be incorporated into the Superintendent's Evaluation Instrument Subcommittee.

Member Comments

Mrs. Fusco stated she was against doing away with the Valedictorian/Salutatorian designations, but agreed with Mrs. Storm in that the Board should not overturn the hard work that has already been done, but look closely at the Committee's work. Mr. Harlow is also in favor of honoring excellence by designating the Valedictorian/Salutatorian, but in order to do it correctly, he believes weighting of grades needs to be studied before overturning any decisions. This will be continued as a future agenda item.

Mr. Schrade announced that it was Board of Education Member Recognition week. He presented each of the Board Members with a special pen.

Mrs. Lounsbury reiterated her stand to have a 0% budget increase for 2009-2010, and also to require justification for new appointments/replacements of employees. Mr. Harlow felt it was the Administration's job to supply the data on new hires and the Board should then follow the recommendation of the Superintendent. Mrs. Lounsbury felt the Board needs data to support the filling of positions.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mrs. Sikule that in the future when considering hirings, that the Board of Education be provided data to justify filling or creating new positions by the Administration. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

New Business

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow that the Board of Education has no objections to the recommendations of the Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Pre-School 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.

Mr. Schrade noted the reoccurrence of MRSA in different school districts. Berne-Knox-Westerlo is, as always, taking measures to mitigate and stop the spread in our school. Nurses are reminding students to wash hands, custodial workers are disinfecting surfaces.

Motion was made by Mrs. Fusco, seconded by Mr. Harlow to reject all bids for Clerk of the Works, as attached. Motion was carried.

Mrs. Lounsbury votes yes.

Mrs. Fusco votes yes.

Mr. Harlow votes yes.

Mr. O'Connor votes yes.

Mrs. Sikule abstains.

Motion was carried.

Motion was made by Mr. Harlow, seconded by Mrs. Sikule to approve the changes to the 2008-2009 Tax Rolls, as attached. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. Harlow to increase the General Fund Appropriations (A9950.900-00-FACIL) Interfund Transfers – Capital Fund Project by \$1,100,000, and increase the (A511)- Appropriated Capital Reserve by \$1,100,000, as per the attached memorandum. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Mr. Schrade noted the sample student cell phone use policies from Erie 1 BOCES and other school districts in the Board packet. Mrs. Lounsbury would like to see additional examples of policies from surrounding districts, and also NYSSBA suggestions. The Board will review these for potential Board Policy adoption. In the meantime, Mr. Wheeler, Acting High School Principal, suggested forming a committee in the middle/high school to obtain input. It was also suggested that parents be surveyed.

Mr. Holmes gave clarification on the Employee Benefit Reserve Fund and the alleged overfunding of it. He indicated that he is waiting for direction from the Comptroller's Office and the Legislature. Mrs. Sikule requested that Mr. Holmes give the Board an assessment of how much is in the fund. There was discussion of possible use of these monies. Mr. Holmes will keep the Board apprised. It was suggested that the Administration and Mrs. Storm pay an early visit to the Legislators to lobby on behalf of the School District.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. Harlow to transfer \$28,590.74 from the Employee Benefits Reserve Fund to the General Fund, as per the attached memorandum. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mr. Harlow to accept the donation from Mr. & Mrs. Gladieux of various computer equipment. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

Unfinished Business

Mrs. Lounsbury urged all to attend the upcoming Community Forum on November 3rd at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Schrade distributed a draft of the survey results. An electronic copy will be posted on the School Website. There was discussion on how to interpret the responses.

Mrs. Fusco echoed Mrs. Lounsbury's sentiments to have a 0% increase in the budget. There was considerable discussion on the upcoming budget process. Mr. Harlow feels strongly that the Board should strive to preserve the quality of the educational program at BKW, and not tie the Board to a dollar amount. Mr. Schrade noted the first meeting of the Budget Advisory Committee was scheduled for November 5th. Direction and guidance was given by the Business Administrator, Mr. Holmes, suggesting refraining from setting parameters until the District receives notice from the Governor on revenues, then begin to formulate and set guidelines for next school year.

Motion was made by Mrs. Lounsbury, seconded by Mrs. Fusco to set as a guideline a spending increase in the Budgeted amount for the 2009-2010 school year not to exceed 3%.

Mrs. Lounsbury votes yes.

Mrs. Fusco votes yes.

Mrs. Sikule votes yes.

Mr. O'Connor votes yes.

Mr. Harlow votes no.

Motion was carried.

Mrs., Fusco suggested that Board Goals be reviewed quarterly, not at each meeting. It was noted there had been no significant developments since the last meeting.

Public Discussion

A resident stated that while not realistic, a 0% tax increase sounds good to a taxpayer.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Mrs. Sikule, seconded by Mrs. Fusco that the meeting adjourn. Motion was carried. 5 yes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Denise J. Martin
District Clerk