

Conneaut School District

PUBLIC WORK SESSION
Minutes
Wednesday, March 4, 2015
7:00 PM

The Conneaut School Board of Directors met Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at the Alice Schafer Annex gym.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President Mrs. Jody Sperry.

The following members answered to roll call:

Mr. Boyce	Mr. Burnham	Mr. Ellis	Mrs. Klink
Mrs. Krachkowski	Mrs. Luckock	Mr. Schaef	Mrs. Sperry
Dr. Thomas			

Administrators Present-

Superintendent: Jarrin Sperry

Director of Special Education: Susy Walters

Curriculum Director: John Hines

Business Manager: Kara Onorato

Director of Buildings and Grounds- Elwood Schell

Technology Coordinator – Rick Kelly

Principals: Joel Wentling, David Maskrey, Sharon Sielski, Doug Parks, Kevin Burns and Adam Jardina.

Visitor Recognition

Mrs. Sperry provided a Visitor Recognition on Agenda Items referencing Policy 903 – Public Participation in Board Meetings. He announced all visitors who are recognized during the Visitor Recognition are allotted a maximum of five (5) minutes to address matters of their concern, unless otherwise determined by the Board President. Visitor recognition is to be limited to thirty (30) minutes unless otherwise decided by the Board.

Derrick Goodenow, a student at CASH, addressed the Board. He indicated a goal of his since a freshman was to be a senior class officer. He was elected senior class treasurer via a vote. The senior class advisors had decided that way of election with the goal to improve the quality of graduation. He was then tasked to setup the Mr. CASH table so he asked Ms. Struski about the National Honor Society and Mr. Bizjak about FFA. Mr. Bizjak told him he did not want to talk about it but to ask Ms. Aurand. He asked her and felt her reply was “getting attitude” back to him. This discussion was then moved to executive session.

Executive Session

The Board moved into an executive session to address a student concern.
Board returned at 7:44 p.m.

Discussion Items

Maintenance Updates

Smart Edge- Mr. Schell indicated they are about done with the interior lighting and will move to the Conneaut Lake Middle School building. Currently, in working between classes it is working out well.

Access control bids will be coming next Monday, therefore, after reviewing the bids he hopes to put that item on the agenda for approval. Three buildings, Alice Schafer Annex, Conneaut Lake Elementary School and Conneaut Valley Elementary School do not have them and this will put controls on key doors used during the daytime, cameras in the hallways and exterior locations. In the high school and middle schools we are putting some controls on the doors and adding cameras to stairwells, hallways and exterior locations.

Demand Response- Mr. Schell reminded the Board that three years ago the Board entered into an agreement with Enernoc. We would receive a request from Enernoc to curtail our energy consumption, specifically in the summer time. We were able to receive funds from them the first two summers but the third year/last year we did not. This was due to the timing of last year's which was the same time as when teachers were returning to school. Enernoc has also reduced the buildings involved for only CASH and CLMS.

Mr. Schell has been approached by another company with a similar program. In talking with them they would include the four buildings in their program and Mr. Schell is considering submitting approval for them next week. With this company, if we do not participate we do not get paid but there is no penalty. With each shut down we earn/save more but reducing energy usage saves the district a few thousand dollars. If we participate we could see \$12,000 to \$18,000 in the next three years. But this depends on the kilowatt usage and once the company can get their equipment in to make that determination.

With Enernoc, they are currently monitoring all six buildings and as their equipment/devices break down they are not replacing them.

REA does not fit into the program for either Enernoc or ECS therefore the Conneaut Valley area is not included.

Soccer Practice Fields-

Mr. Schell discussed the bids that came in last month at an unanticipated high amount. He felt one reason they were high would be due to no local bidders. The bids they did get in were not aggressive in pricing because each bidder felt that if they would get it then great, but they must not need the work. He does not feel sending them out to rebid will show much improvement. Local bidders did not bid because of some of the specifications that required the contractor take care of seeding, cutting/mowing the grass. He is going to take that out now to see if it would attract local bidders.

Topsoil is an issue as well, there are extra's in it which get expensive. He is looking at 6" of topsoil which keeps grass healthy year after year: worst case it could turn into a \$100,000 extra.

Mr. Burnham suggested building it with manure over time would be less than \$100,000. It would involve a more gradual build up to work with the humus in the soil. Mr. Schell agreed but originally the plan was to get the fields up and going, strong enough to take the activity this next fall season. We may have to forgo that and give it a couple years to build the topsoil.

Mr. Schell feels one of the most expensive portions of the project is the dirt moving. In reviewing the past projects, they have been coming in high. In that realm, the architect uses estimates they have from larger projects than ours. Another negative is the prevailing wage, which is significant in our smaller projects as overhead drives the price up.

Permits are in place and we are ready to go, that was the reason we held off putting it out to bid.

Mr. Boyce asked if we could use the fields at the Conneaut Lake Middle School. Mr. Schaeff reminded him that we would have to transport them there and back. Mr. Burnham reminded that for years we used the Conneaut Valley fields for soccer.

Mr. Schaeff reminded them though that in an effort to centralize here at CASH and try to control the transportation costs.

In conclusion, Mr. Schell is working with the architect to put out to bid after the snow is gone. This will enable everyone to access the fields, and if this works out bring the package in May and completion with seeding in late July. He is unsure if it would be ready for this year's season.

2015/2016 School Calendar-

In working with the Career and Technical Center, Crawford Central and PENNCREST each year, our district has the luxury of one less school day in the year. This gives us some freedom to change a day around. Mr. Sperry has prepared two drafts for the Board: Draft 1 has students last day and their graduation day at Friday, June 10th and the teachers last day Monday, June 13, 2016. It also has an extra day at Easter time for students on Monday, March 28, 2016 and this pushed the Snow Day #5 to Tuesday, March 29, 2016. Draft #2 there is no extra day at Easter which puts the snow day #5 on Monday, March 28, 2016, the last student day Thursday, June 9th as well as graduation on Thursday, June 9th, 2016 and teachers last day on Friday, June 10th.

In the past the Board has discussed preferring graduation on Fridays, as more convenience for families.

There was discussion with the Board regarding options. The general consensus was to use Draft #2 with students last day on Thursday, June 9th, moving graduation to Friday, June 10th and teachers last day on Friday, June 10th, 2016.

School Psychologist-

Mrs. Walters discussed with the Board the need for the district to add another school psychologist. Due to the number of special education students right now we are at an all time high. Presently we have 402 students with IEP's: 15 with 504 plans: 57 with GIEP's: and 14 coming into the district this fall through early intervention. She explained that early intervention includes students presently identified in pre-K or a Headstart program or in outlying areas through the IU who must be processed this spring. This involves meeting with parents, testing

the child and having the IEP in place before the doors open next school year. Of the 31 students tested so far (not including identified gifted requests) 28 have qualified for services. So only 3 tested did not qualify for services, normally half qualify. She also has at least 20 students who have been identified through building level team meetings who need to be tested. She further explained that when a student is enrolled from out of state, if they had an IEP from the previous school, they then have to be retested in the Pennsylvania system. The testing does have to be conducted by a Pennsylvania school psychologist and we are receiving a record number of students in from out of state requiring retesting.

Prior to consolidation our district had a full time instructional support teacher who helped with screenings, meetings, etc but that position was eliminated. At that same time our previous superintendent Mrs. Szallay thought to come to the board when she retired and indicate the need. Mrs. Walters is stating this now because the district had a need at that time and it is not something that just came about. When we consolidated, monies were tight so she tried to see how long we could go with just one school psychologist. Compliance dates only permit her 60 days to test a student, once permission to evaluation, meet with the parents and then 30 days to write, sign and implement the IEP. Therefore, she has time constraints and they are barely keeping above water.

Previous years, our district had been running at 320 to 350 depending on the graduation year, some years there is a high need but we are at the point now with move-ins, early intervention as well as the last three years we have had 12-20 come in for kindergarten to test. Mrs. Walters reflected back to when she first started as the special education director the district would only see 3 to 4 students coming in. The number of move-ins to the high school has tripled: for example, past summers had 10 students but this past summer we received 40 and the number has continued to grow.

She reached out to another district to inquire if they would share services, the district is open to the idea but right now they too cannot spare their psychologist.

She asked, due to the numbers now, to approve that position at next week's voting meeting, as well as allowing her to post and hire and have the person finish the year. She will bring the name to the next voting meeting.

Mrs. Krachkowski asked how the numbers were looking in the classrooms if we are receiving all these identified special education students. Mrs. Walters replied that we have maintained compliance guidelines but where we fall short are with those to be tested and needing services, specifically at the Conneaut Valley Elementary building. There are at least 15 on the list who are waiting to be screened. This screening will identify if the student(s) need services. Right now though we are only testing those that desperately need help. Those who are border line we have not been able to send out PTE's because we will not be compliant.

Currently, Franklin School District has four school psychologists but do not have guidance counselors: PENNCREST has 2 and are having a difficult time keeping up: Crawford Central has 2 and is hiring a third: fort LeBoeuf has 2: and Corry and General McLane both have 2. Mrs. Walters also inquired at the IU but they do not have a school psychologist to offer.

Mr. Schaef commented: what is not addressed is the number of students the psychologist deals with problems during the day, melt downs, etc. Mrs. Walters agreed, as well as when we have a student who is threatening self harm, to others, the principal will call and many times the psychologist will do a threat assessment. This helps with a liability and will decide if there is a need to call Crisis and the parent(s). She tries to do interference but there are only certain things a school psychologist can do: threat assessment is best done by a certified psychologist. They would be willing to work with us but that involves them hiring thus us paying for supervisor services. It would be more cost effective to have another person in-house.

Mr. Schaef asked: you are asking the Board to add a staff member but with 4-5 retiring this year we really are not adding to the overall staff. Yes and Mrs. Walters also indicated she did build this in her budget for next year.

Mrs. Walters was asked that if Titusville has four school psychologists but no guidance can we do some of the work with a guidance counselor. She answered that there are duties that only a guidance counselor can do such as testing, evaluations and decide if a student qualifies for services. Guidance counselors cannot perform these duties: they work with parents, develop behavior plans and help with school discipline. Threat assessments or the decision whether it is necessary for a student to have special education services or a 504 plan is the responsibility of a school psychologist. Another school psychologist can conduct observations and work with teachers and work with some of the more severe students.

Mrs. Sperry asked about any repercussion if the deadlines are not met because our special education program is highly praised at the Intermediate Unit. Mrs. Walters replied that her job is to make sure students are identified appropriately and receive the services they deserve. If not held compliant then the state hits us in our pocketbook. If we are not compliant, we are put in an improvement plan and receive more pressure and less funding for students.

It was asked why our district is receiving all these incoming students: Mrs. Walters felt our district is getting recommended by professionals because we run a really good department and parents choose to come here. The internet is another source, in receiving a high number of students moving in from out of state because they know someone who lives in the area.

Mrs. Sperry added that she went to Conneaut Lake Elementary School and encouraged anyone to spend an hour and witness the needs of our students; it was an eye opening experience for her.

There were no objects to adding another school psychologist to the agenda next week.

Student Information System-

Mr. Sperry refreshed the Board on iPass, the student information system. Of which, at the time the software looked good and our system at the time, ProSoft had been bought out by Harris. Therefore, we assumed it could not get any worse and we were willing to give iPass a chance, even though only five districts in the Commonwealth have their system. Since implementing iPass this school year we have had a change of opinion and have started looking at other systems.

Mr. Kelly has conducted a great deal of research in looking at the systems used in Pennsylvania and has found SunGard extensively in the State: specifically customers in the eastern side but also Warren School District and IU#5. Bill Clark, Superintendent at Warren is happy with the

system. We have made arrangements to travel to their district in order to look at it in operation. SunGard has worked extensively with PIMS and the state on the PIMS side.

Three top companies were put through the paces: Apples Power School, MMS and Sungard Eastwood Plus. Apples Power School was attractive as well as MMS but their support services were not as impressive.

Mr. Kelly is looking at a 2nd school year of traumatic experience for the school in implementing a new student information system but he is being very careful to include all groups to be involved in the decision. SunGard has come to the District twice now and has made webinars available. They will be coming a third time this Friday.

The Board expressed their concern with staff training when making the switch. Mr. Kelly felt that although it is a different software package there will be a learning curve. But Sungard is much more user friendly and he feels a number of the features make sense and users will adapt quickly. Sungard is visually appealing compared to iPass which has an old DOS program look to it. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bossard noted some positive features about Sungard such as the discipline attendance, notifications and mid terms and feels they are much more robust. It may not be the perfect solution but first impression it is light years ahead of iPass. Mr. Schaef asked if this vendor will provide training or will we utilize our own? Mr. Kelly felt there will be a mix of both, although he feels the new building tech people will be very instrumental. He reminded the Board that the building tech person(s) time is full and would be helpful in this transition but their time is limited with the allotted 2-3 hours per week.

Cost wise Sungard is front loaded just as iPass was in the first year (cost was \$47,000 first year, and \$27,000 the 2nd year and onward). Sungard will cost \$65,000 for the first year and \$26,000 every year thereafter.

Mrs. Sperry asked for the Board to be updated at the April worksession and from there they will decide if this should be put on the voting agenda. She would like to see examples of what the District is working with now, iPass.

Purple Martins-

Mr. Maskrey explained Purple Martins are migratory birds which were almost wiped out during Hurricane Hugo. A local Purple Martin Association contacted him over last summer about donating a house at the CASH property. One of our CASH students is planning on helping as an Eagle Scout project. There will be a wooden stake in the front yard and the association will provide posters and pamphlets for the environmental science classes. The Lake Purple Martin Association will take care of cleaning the house every year and making sure it is maintained. Starlings like the houses as well so the association wants to make sure it remains for the Starlings.

This will be on the agenda for approval.

Gosney Memorial Donation Monies-

In the past Ms. Sielski they have used monies received from grants for building PSSA incentives, attendance incentives but now struggle as to how to pay for these incentives. She has discussed the digital sign over the last 7-8 years of which the Student Council was going to contribute

some of the funds. She was surprised to hear we were receiving this donation with no stipulation on how to use/spend the monies. Her intentions are to use the bulk of the monies on a digital sign and indicated that the Athletic Director John Acklin agreed, a sign would get more use through event announcements. Unlike in the past discussions it seems the cost would be less than previously discussed and we would no longer need a post.

Ms. Sielski presented her proposal as follows;

Gift amount approximately \$20,000

Largest single usage: for either a digital sign for the front of the CASH property or a football scoreboard, with either items costing approximately \$12,000.

\$4,000 (\$1,000 per year) for 4 years for attendance incentives to include 9 weeks, semester, and year end Walmart cards in \$25, \$50, and \$100 amounts. It would include prizes for the perfect attendance drawing at the end of the year for a flat screen TV, X Box systems and more.

\$3,000 (\$1,000 per year) for 3 years for Keystone incentives. This could include treats or breakfast during the testing or reward trips for students who score proficient on any of the tests. Previously students went to a movie and bowling.

\$1,000 as yet to be determined, possibly a school wide activity day with t-shirts, prizes, etc or a special field trip for one or more grade levels.

Mr. Burnham indicated he was opposed to using the monies to purchase a digital sign but was for spending it on academic incentives.

Mr. Schaeff, in understanding the sign would provide 2-5 line texts and we can adjust the size of the lettering would provide a wide range of graphic capabilities then stated the Board needs to decide if they are approving the list presented by Ms. Sielski. He felt Mrs. Gosney would be supportive of the digital sign, as she was a very active long time subscriber of the Community News and he sees her supporting the bulk towards the sign. He is well aware of the sign costs as he is currently researching it for his church.

Mr. Burnham did not feel the sign would be doing anything for the other two communities, that it did not benefit Conneaut Valley, only the Linesville traffic. Mr. Schaeff responded that the traffic here is all communities.

Mr. Boyce agreed with Mr. Burnham, and added that the \$12,000 for a sign would pay 12 years worth of incentives to the school. Mrs. Luckock liked the assortment, monies for a digital sign as well as multiple years towards academic incentives. She felt though, that there should be a great deal of consideration given to the sign. While the complex version would become more of a center of activity for all families throughout the geographical area as elementary and middle schools transition over time to the high school.

SOAR-

Mr. Burns, Mrs. Sue Moss, Mrs. Sarah Pelc, Mrs. Shelia Mahoney provided a synopsis of the Conneaut Valley Middle School SOAR Program which is part of the Pennsylvania School Wide Positive Behavior Support System. They explained the program is a proactive approach to discipline that promotes appropriate student behavior and increased learning. The SOAR

Mission Statement as the school community, including students, parents, teachers, administration, and others, work together to create and maintain a safe and supportive environment that promotes teaching and learning. Understanding that most discipline strategies are reactive in approach. They discussed the three tiered approach and the matrix of expectations and is funded through an annual fun run held the end of May which supports the Eagle's Nest/Fun Zone, SOAR games and SOAR flight lessons. This program has provided dramatic gains to the students in school wide behavior.

Through this program they have received a 100% buy-in by all the teachers at CVMS and with its success have become know across the state: even as much as being asked to present their program at the next conference.

Board Goals-

Mrs. Sperry asked the Board to review the current school years board goals and to start the initial process of next years. She hopes to approve 15/16 at the May board meeting. Board members asked for an overview of the current ones at the additional work session.

Safe Schools and Healthy Students-

Mr. Sperry reminded the Board of the Safe Schools and Healthy Students presentation on Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at the Edinboro University. He attended one recently and felt it was very entertaining and full of information. Officer Grossman is a very dynamic individual. He would like all of the administrative staff to attend, local police have been invited and even state police. A large number is anticipated to attend.

Additional Work Session-

Topics for the additional work session include budget, Conneaut Valley Survey and Board Goals.

PSBA/NSBA Updates-

Mrs. Sperry felt there is a lot going on with the new governor making changes, some good but no closer to a solution to the pension crisis. The Governor removed someone that was a chairperson on a committee that voted in favor of a charter decision. The Governor was against his stance so the individual was pulled from that committee position.

The Tom Templeton dinner/meeting at the Northwest Tri-County IU#5 is receiving positive reviews with requests for continuing this sort of training. She described Mr. Templeton as an excellent speaker.

Coming up- Regional meeting April 30th at the Titusville Middle School, Legal Roundup on the 22nd.

Agenda Review-

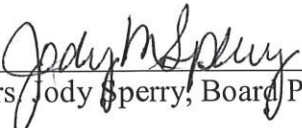
The Board reviewed the draft board agenda.

Executive Session-

Mrs. Sperry announced the Board would be going into an **EXECUTIVE SESSION** immediately following the meeting to review and discuss agency business which, if conducted in public, might lead to disclosure of information protected by law, issues might include student concerns.

Adjournment-

Mrs. Sperry adjourned the meeting at 9:38 p.m.



Mrs. Jody Sperry, Board President



Kara Onorato, Board Secretary