

*Conneaut School District*

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 3, 2015**

**7:00 PM**

The Conneaut School Board of Directors met Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at the Alice Shafer Annex cafeteria/gymnasium.

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. Schaeff	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:** 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.

*Mr. Rick Bridge* from Anderson Bus approached the Board. He wished to let the Board know what the Conneaut Valley Elementary staff did for the bus drivers two weeks ago for bus appreciation. Each driver received an invitation to come into the building after a specific mornings drop off. They were escorted to the cafeteria for punch and h'or doeuvres and a presentation. Each grade took turns coming in for a short presentation and read a thank you to all the drivers expressing their thanks for all they do. The students made cards as well and after each grade finished their presentation they went to their respective driver and presented thank you cards. The only portion missing was the tissues. Needless to say the drivers were misty eyed. The toper was after the presentations were done from all grades and as the drivers exited the cafeteria the entire building staff and students lined the halls all the way out to the buses and applauded. Since this the drivers have not stopped talking about it, they were very very impressed. Mr. Bridge wished to thank Mr. Jardina and staff for doing this; they had never seen it before and were ecstatic about it. It was done very well and very appreciated by the drivers.

*Discussion-*

*Purple Marlin Request-*

Mr. Jardina was approached by Bill Wenger with the Purple Marlin Association regarding placing a Purple Marlin house on the elementary school property, much the same as at the high school. He felt it would make a great first grade project to research the birds. Mr. Wenger stopped last week and walked the grounds for three good locations.

Mr. Jardina described three locations that were identified, favoring the most ideal spot out front on a strip of grass between the building and Route 18. This location is best as it is a nice open area for the Marlins.

*Business Manager Topics-*

- a. *Insurance* – Matt Turk and Will Collins presented the insurance premium comparisons that are up for renewal. A handout was provided to each board member which identified the price comparisons between Liberty Mutual and Utica National in relation to property, inland marine, crime, general liability, automobile, umbrella and workers compensation (with an option to go with Eastern Alliance with the workers compensation). Terrorism coverage was also discussed and compared. Mr. Turk indicated there were two additional companies offering competitive options compared to the current carriers. Currently the district utilizes Liberty Mutual and Highmark for workman's compensation. They received lower prices, as much as 25% lower for workman's compensation with comparable services.

Mrs. Sperry asked why there was a difference in comparisons which did not appear to be comparing apples to apples. Mr. Collins explained these enhancements that he himself would not be concerned with and if the Board wished for higher amounts it would not amount to much in a higher premium.

Mr. Burnham asked about the foreign and domestic terrorism differentiation. Mr. Collins explained this is a regulation item and the District is covered and required to carry it under the workers compensation. Mr. Collins has never seen a claim since 2001. Government dictates what is termed terrorism because if there is one, they have to help the carrier.

Mrs. Krachkowski asked about the large number of workers compensation claims. Mr. Collins explained that actually our district has a very low number of claims; we are a very aggressive in keeping claims at a minimum. Even so much that one insurance broker called them to state how good our rate is on workman's compensation claims.

- b. *Budget-* the Budget/Finance Committee met just before the evening's retirement ceremony and discussed two primary areas. Potential savings from retirements compared to positions to fill show a savings of \$230,000 which five positions retiring and filling three of those. Along with the sick time the retirees have is significantly less than she budgeted. She had originally budgeted \$102,000 but the actual was \$70,000.

Secondly, in working with Anderson bus in consolidating routes, start times, lengths and combining life skills/emotional support it would save another \$65,000; add this to the \$230,000 for a little over \$300,000 savings to narrow the gap from 1.6 million to now a 1.3 million deficit.

Mrs. Sperry asked everyone to sharpen their pencils and write your representatives to ask for cyber charter reimbursement from the Senators. There is \$450,000 we can take off that deficit if nothing else.

Brief discussion regarding cyber charter schools and the expense comparison they have to public schools; no lunches, transportation, technology, and much more but can build a \$25 million performing arts center for students who live all over the state. Cyber charter schools also have no restrictions as to where to spend their monies and donate a great deal to legislators.

Another issue is our district is responsible for truancy for cyber charter students. It is up to the cyber charter schools to notify us if the student is not logging in but often we are not notified until months later, after we have still been paying. Cyber charter schools are to notify us if they are truant. Mr. Sperry indicated cyber schools are also known for identifying students as special education with speech impediments in order to get more money from the resident school.

Ms. Onorato explained the finance committee reviewed looking at cuts and adjustments which will be presented June 16<sup>th</sup> at the special board meeting.

*Nutrition breakfast/lunch prices-* Sharon Gruver, Nutrition Regional Director presented to the Board provisions regarding school lunches and paid equity. She explained this is where school districts need to consider raising paid meal prices. This year the United States Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Department of Education are indicating that school districts should be at \$2.70; this is the free reimbursement minus paid reimbursements. She further explained how districts log into a system each year; enter information that calculates if the district should raise the paid prices. This is a problem for a district if one does not raise the prices to the minimum then that same district gets further behind. Typically the prices raise .05 cents each year.

She understands it is a tough decision to raise the prices every year but her recommendation is that if our district does not then we will be further behind next year. The same nickel raise will increase revenue by \$3,925.00.

The board members discussed other districts in Mercer County looking at raising prices by as much as .15 cents each meal putting lunch for students at \$2.60 and some others as high as \$2.75/\$2.85 for lunch, where our prices are very reasonable.

Mrs. Gruver also noted that if school districts get too far behind they cannot use federal funds to help offset the losses.

Mrs. Gruver recommended the following;

Elementary and Middle school paid student paid lunch from \$1.80 to \$1.85

High school student paid lunch from \$2.05 to \$2.10

Reduced lunch students at \$.40 with no increase

Student paid breakfast \$1.00 and no increase

Student reduced breakfast \$.30 and no increase

Adult breakfast \$1.60 and no increase

Adult lunch \$3.05 to \$3.10

*Revised Policy-* Policy 810 – Transportation. Mrs. Walters reviewed the changes and clarifications made to the policy noting these tightened it up some more this year. It is on for 1<sup>st</sup> Reading and the Board decided to note on the web site the first reading. This will allow the public an opportunity to read/review the changes until 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and adoption in July.

*Maintenance Updates –*

- a. *Smart Edge-* Mr. Schell announced that Smart Edge Energy Management has completed the majority of upgrades to the lighting inside of Alice Schafer and Conneaut Lake Elementary. There are still upgrades to complete at Conneaut Lake Middle School and they are currently working on the parking lot areas. Next week they plan on working on replacing the boiler at Conneaut Lake Elementary; upgrades to UN-invent and variable speed drive motor upgrades in the boiler room. He anticipates them to be done the end of summer.
- b. *Access Control cameras-* these improvements start next week with a scheduled completion date of August 5, 2015.
- c. *Conneaut Lake Middle School former cross country course property-* completed the listing agreement with ERA today with plans on listing it at \$165,000. There have already been some inquiries on the property so he feels it might move very quickly.
- d. *Soccer practice fields-* update on the practice fields. Kimball Architects conducted a soil analysis; estimate came back with 4 inches of existing material and would need another 2 inches added. He reminded the board from the former bid had come in estimating 6 inches of soil at \$80,000 to \$120,000 so now \$20,000 to \$30,000 of material would be needed.

The soil analysis also indicated plants indicative to wetlands. Therefore, he is now asking for a recommendation from the Board: do you want to move forward with the project or not with the project coming in now only needing 2 inches of material. Mr. Schell estimates that it would cost around \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Mr. Burnham felt this decision should be put on hold and Mrs. Klink thought there was another site on the property that could work better.

Additional discussion on different scenarios with the field options included tight on practice space and play space, not full regulation size and a fence surrounding the retaining pond causes issues when balls are kicked over the fence. This particular issue causes a safety hazard with students climbing over the fence to retrieve the ball(s).

Mrs. Klink also felt shuttle buses to both middle schools may be cheaper than spending monies on a field; Mr. Schaef added it is easier to keep students at a central site.

In conclusion, the Board asked Mr. Schell to research the cost of the lower field, field between the ball fields and the cost of a/the shuttle bus over a years' time.

*iPad Training-* Mr. Sperry had previously been asked by the Board for additional iPad training because, in the past, they felt it was very beneficial. After several dates were discussed it was decided to have Mr. Messerall come Wednesday, August 5, 2015 for 2 hours for those who would like some additional training.

In light of iPad trainings, Mr. Kelly would like to collect the Boards iPads sometime this summer to update the system; he will work with Ms. Moss to accomplish it.

*Board Goals-* Mrs. Sperry reminded the Board to turn in their compilation of suggested goals in order for the 2015 goals to be on next week's agenda. She had provided the goals to the board and asked them to circle their top 8-10 choices and send to her.

*PSBA Updates-* Mr. Ellis reviewed PSBA information which he had previously emailed the Board members.

Mrs. Sperry commented on hearing from Brad Roae on Facebook.

*Athletic Ad Hoc Committee Update-*

Committee Chairman, Mr. Schaefer addressed a letter provided to the Board members from a softball parent. He stated this is regarding the program therefore the committee will address the issue but due to it addressing personnel the meeting will most likely be executive session. Once it is held he will share the discussion and issues with the entire board.

Mrs. Sperry read two thank you cards received.

*Board Agenda Review-*

The Board reviewed the draft agenda with some questions and comments.

It was noted that the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading on Policy 810 – Transportation would be posted to the website and given the standard 30 days for parents, staff and public to review the proposed changes. The policy would then be placed on the July regular board meeting agenda for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and Adoption.

*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 personnel and contract concerns.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

  
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Jody Sperry, Board President

  
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Greg Mayle, Board Secretary