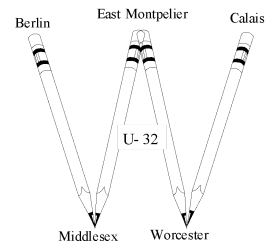


Washington Central Supervisory Union

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William Kimball
Superintendent



WCSU exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

Washington Central Unified Union School District Board

Special Meeting
Approved Minutes
6.18.19 at 6:30 PM

U-32 Middle/High School Room 128/131

approved 6-26-19

Present: Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Lori Bibeau, Scott Thompson, Allen Gilbert, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Richard Kehne, Dorothy Naylor, Jonathan Goddard, George Gross, Chris McVeigh, Rosemary Morse, Don Welch, Paul Cate, Sandal Cate, Peter Harvey, Lucy Wollaeger, David Lawrence, Virginia Burley, Leslie Matthews, Scott Bassage, Corinne Stridsberg

1.0 Receive Questions Regarding Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget and Proposed Amendments to Articles of Agreement

Scott Thompson shared a slide show to explain the budget development to date.

Sandal Cate asked whether the budget development process will be different next year. Will each town not have an opportunity to approve a budget that pertains to its own community? Scott Thompson indicated that it is unknown, but that he believes the budget development will start from the ground up, beginning at each school. He stated that his preference would be to be transparent about this process.

Richard Kehne stated that the argument is around equity, and he believes that we need to have accountability at a micro-level to establish trust.

Flor Diaz Smith stated that the budget development will begin in August as it always has.

Richard Kehne asked board members to not use the concept of “equity” to sell the budget, because he believes this is not an equitable scenario. He stated that if you strangle the taxpayers in a community, then you are strangling the children in the community.

Some discussion followed around assessment of costs.

Corinne Stridsberg asked whether close scrutiny has been given to the “administration” category in the pie chart of expense categories. Lori Bibeau explained that the agency of

education is going to provide specific guidelines for which positions fall under “administration” so that this can be shown more consistently.

Richard Kehne asked about the capital fund percentage. Discussion followed around this topic. Mr. Kehne stated that it is important to capitalize on the capital fund by generating income but have tight controls on how these monies are spent.

Discussion followed around creating a separate article for voters to consider regarding the capital fund.

Scott Thompson shared about the trend of declining enrollment in WCSU.

Allen Gilbert noted that one of the goals of Act 46 has been around equity for students. Now that we have equal access to funds for all students, will we see the same amount of equalized per pupil spending across the towns? Discussion followed around this topic.

The topic of debt was discussed.

Richard Kehne again noted that there is no equity in this scenario; that it is a travesty. Scott Bassage asked, how is it helping children when their parents are stressed by a huge tax increase?

Corinne Stridsberg stated that Act 46 was first touted as saving money. What is it that can be said to the community, a light at the end of the tunnel? about how Act 46 is going to benefit our students?

Board members discussed that in August, budget development will begin. Lindy Johnson reviewed that the Act 46 process has been ongoing for four years; it has not been a tight timeline in that respect. This happened in November, when the timeline was crunched; however, she reminded those present that over the past four years there has been a lot of public input.

Chris McVeigh stated that, while this discussion has gone on for four years, we were not grappling with the idea of one board, one budget; we were working hard toward an alternative structure. Now with the one board/ one budget, we are faced with the same amount of money but competing interests.

Richard Kehne spoke about our local representatives, who have not honored their promises that we would have flexibility in Act 46. He noted that they all voted in favor of Act 46 (except Anthony Polina). He reiterated that he does not intend to vote in favor of this budget, out of principle.

Flor Diaz Smith asked those present to consider honoring the work of the board members that they have elected.

Scott Thompson summarized by sharing contact numbers and online access for supporting documents. He reminded board members that the next budget and articles information meeting is on June 24th at 6:30. He stated his belief that, while he too has problems with

some of the equity issues that are discussed, he does not believe that this budget is the “battlefield” to choose to make the point.

Scott Thompson shared information about the articles of agreement and explained the meaning of each article. Sandal Cate stated that the way the articles are arranged on the ballot is very confusing.

Rosemary Morse asked why there is not a designation to comingle the budget ballots. She stated that, when/ if the budget is voted down, then it is known which towns voted against it. This can come back to the children; she noted that this had been an issue years ago with the U-32 budget; it is important to designate in the future to comingle the budget ballots.

Richard Kehne suggested that there be a simplified “cheat sheet” for each article so that people understand what they are voting for.

Corinne Stridsberg stated that absentee ballots are already coming in; any information that is going out about this vote should be going out before this weekend.

Allen Gilbert stated that the revenue raising aspect of the budget is very difficult to understand, and he suggested a better explanation for this at the Monday, June 24th informational meeting.

David Lawrence asked whether there is any provision as part of Act 46 which allows for evaluating the status, for example, in five years.

Richard Kehne stated that he believes the recourse at this point is in voting for legislators.

Peter Harvey stated that this meeting has been much more informative and engaging, because of the ongoing dialogue with the members of the audience.

Meeting ended at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt