

**NORTH CONEJOS SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1J**  
**REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

February 21, 2023

District Administration Building

6:30 p.m.

**MEETING MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting scheduled for 6:30 pm at the District Administration Office was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chuck Finnegan, President.

**ROLL CALL**

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

**PREDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA/CHANGES TO CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Mary Jane Valdez to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Nathan Coombs.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

A motion was made by Steven Johnson to approve the agenda with no additions, seconded by Harman Hostetter.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

There were no citizens to address the board.

## **STUDENT/STAFF PRESENTATION**

CMS Science teacher, Debra Shawcroft, had her students plan, write, and illustrate a book on the Science topics she covered in her classes. Along with the Science curriculum she had students implement reading and writing skills. JT Salazar and Sage Harmsen did a great job presenting their books to the board.

## **ACHIEVEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS**

### **Principals Report**

Please see attached principals reports in the board packet.

### **BOCES Report**

Chuck Finnegan told board members that BOCES Director Jackie Phillips resigned on February 21<sup>st</sup>. BOCES will be searching for a new executive director.

### **NCEA**

No Report.

### **Administration Report**

Mr. Edgar reported that he was notified by our health insurance brokers (Assured Partners) that their firm had severed ties with Mr. Arnie Aranof, our broker representative contact. Darren & Gale met with Arnie Aranof and Vince Rogers concerning the turn of events. Arnie is not able to contract services with the school district or current schools that he has been working with due to the agreement he has with Assured Partners. Vince Rogers will be the broker of record and he will provide health plans for the district to review. Mr. Edgar and Ms. Gallegos has also met with the new representative brokers from Assured Partners and discussed a timeline for renewal. They have assured us that they will have all health plan information and associated premiums to the district before the third week in March. Darren plans to bring health insurance information and salary schedule recommendations to the board in April.

A snow day was called on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> due to the adverse weather conditions. Based upon the timing and movement of the storm, he thinks it was a good decision. To Mr. Edgar's understanding we have a snow day built into the calendar and he will count our current hours to make sure we have enough days, but this would have probably not altered the decision, as safety is our primary concern. Darren shared a weather rubric with the board and feels this may help to make these decisions.

The District Accountability Committee (DAC) will meet on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mr. Edgar has prepared an agenda and disseminated information to the committee concerning the statutory responsibilities of the committee. Besides the review of and basic requirements of the committee, we plan to focus our attention on parent engagement ideas and activities/events.

Mr. Edgar plans to discuss health insurance, staff salaries, and capital expenditures in the March board meeting. Darren would like to bring recommendations concerning salaries, benefits, staffing plans, and contracts to the April board meeting. He plans on presenting a preliminary budget for the 2023-2024 school year at the May board meeting.

Bills in the legislature concerning education include SB29: Addressing Disproportionate Discipline in Public Schools (rates among different student groups) and SB23-071: Educational Accountability Act (local control & right to sue State Board of Education).

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **BEST Update and Facilities Construction**

The high school project warranty issues continue in several areas of the new school. HPE, the plumbers on the project spent a couple days onsite last week running tests to ascertain the source of the sewer odor in the kitchen area. After running smoke tests on the drains and extending the ventilation pipes, they feel certain there is a crack in one of the drain pipes under the cafeteria. HPE is planning on running a camera through the drains again and repairing the crack over spring break, after they are certain this is the issue. This will not be a quick fix as they are not sure how much of the kitchen floor will need to be removed.

The eleventh month warranty walk on the new school is scheduled for Monday March 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. The general contractor, architect/engineer, plumbers, floor installer, owner representative, and the district team will meet and conduct a follow up assessment of the gym floors. Other warranty issues that will be reviewed include the floors in the school, drywall that needs replaced due to water damage, drain pipes, HVAC system, security systems, electrical, etc.

Darren met with Adam Robins and Hugo from Bradbury Stamm to review the concrete areas that were rejected by the engineering firm. The architects rejected sidewalks on the south, east, and north of the school due to a 2015 requirement of a 2% grade. Adam Robins has maintained that a 2% grade no longer meets ADA requirements that call for less than a 2% grade. The current sidewalks that were

rejected have a grade that is close to 1%. After inspecting the sidewalks and ensuring they do have a grade that will support water flow away from the building and considering the shape that many of them are in Mr. Edgar recommends we do not force Robins to replace them. There are three sidewalk areas, however, that Robins will replace, but Darren would like to give them a pass on the others and Darren has provided a drawing that shows the board the sidewalks in question. Adam Robins would like to patch the cracks and grind the cement down which will help in getting the filled cracks to blend in with the cement. Robins will patch, grind, and finish one of the concrete slabs for us to look at before they proceed. This is the solution they are providing instead of replacing the concrete where the heating tubes/cables are buried. Adam has assured Mr. Edgar that he will sue the general contractor if they are forced to replace all of this as he feels other subcontractors working under the general contractor caused the damage when the cement was still too green.

Other capital construction projects include renovating restrooms in the CTE facility to address ADA requirements, renovating the upstairs restrooms at La Jara Elementary, erecting fencing on the baseball field with a new backstop, and fencing in front of school. These are just a few that we have started working on, and Darren will update the board and present the cost and recommendations before we get too far down the road.

### **General Obligation Bond**

Mr. Edgar had an opportunity to speak to the bond attorney who assisted the school district in setting up the general obligation bond and helped in writing the ballot question. Tom Peltz from Kutak Rock Legal Services specializes in public finance. There is over \$140,000 left over of local dollars associated with the district match and local tax dollars. The goal is to try and find a legal path toward attaining these funds to spend on upgrading the CTE facility. The ballot question gives the district a strong argument on the intent of the voter, however, because our grant is a lease purchase the state holds the power on leftover monies.

North Conejos argument to the CDE BEST Department is that it would benefit the school district greatly to use the reserve match of local share to address CTE Facility Improvement (high school site and program) under duress to meet ADA requirements, communication, and security/safety systems, as the voters intended. If CDE does not agree with releasing BEST grant leftover match dollars, but agrees to work to reduce the bond payment then the argument is over and we at least saved our taxpayers \$140,000, however, if they refuse to entertain either action then I think it would behoove the district to set up a meeting with general counsel from Caplan and Earnest, Tom Peltz, Bond Attorney from Kutak Rock and CDE representatives, and exhaust the measure until there is a resolution.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Finnegan notified the public of executive session on the approved agenda pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f) employment matters related to the evaluation of and contractual agreement with the North Conejos School District Superintendent.

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs who moved the board of education convene into executive session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f) for discussion of a personnel matter involving the Superintendent, who was previously informed of the meeting, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

Nathan Coombs moved that the board of education end the executive session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f) for discussion of a personnel matter involving the Superintendent, who was previously informed of the meeting, seconded by Garth Crowther.

The motion passed.

One item of discussion – 45 minutes  
No action was taken.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **2022-2023 Superintendent Evaluation**

A motion was made by Harman Hostetter to approve the Superintendent evaluation, seconded by Steven Johnson.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

**2023-2024 Superintendent Contract**

A motion was made by Garth Crowther to approve the 2023-2024 Superintendent contract, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

**2023-2024 North Conejos School District Calendar**

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the 2023-2024 North Conejos School District Calendar as presented, seconded by Steven Johnson.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

**Route Driver Salary Schedule and Associated Policies**

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the route driver salary schedule with policies forthcoming on how to implement the schedule, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

**School Security Personnel**

A motion was made by Garth Crowther to approve the school security personnel as presented, seconded by Steven Johnson.

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, aye; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed

The next regular board of education meeting will be Tuesday March 28, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned 9:15 p.m.