

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

April 18, 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 6:35 pm by Chuck Finnegan, President.

**ROLL CALL**

Nathan Coombs, aye; Garth Crowther, absent; Chuck Finnegan, aye; Harman Hostetter, aye; Steven Johnson, absent; 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 Nathan Coombs to approve the consent agenda with removing the quarterly financial report to discuss after consent agenda approval, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

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

The motion passed.

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the consent agenda as amended, seconded by Harman Hostetter.

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

The motion passed.

Finance Director, Gale Gallegos, reported to the board concerning the quarterly report. Energy cost is up at the new High School building. We may want to possibly reduce the safety lighting at night. The district is already over budget by \$22,000. All district buildings are up in electric costs, but CHS is up

much more. We are currently at 65% of our yearly budget and should make our budget for the year in the general fund. Food service seems to be okay with their yearly budget. There are some concerns with the student activity fund. General fund does transfer monies over to CHS student activities yearly, but the need seems to be increasing and we will need to figure out how to proceed for next year. Mr. Edgar and Ms. Gallegos are working on the budget for next year and may have to make adjustments as there will not be ESSER monies next year. The board may want a work session in May before the board meeting to work on the proposed budget. We will need to approve a proposed budget for the 2023-2024 year at the May board meeting. A final adopted budget will need to be approved at the June board meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the agenda with the additions of items 7b special wrestling recognition award and 11e dispersal of district buses, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

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

The motion passed

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

Angela Garcia addressed the board concerning CHS cheer/dance.

#### **NCSD Student 2023 Teacher of the Year Nominee**

Kelanee Crowther was recognized as the North Conejos School District Teacher of the Year. She will represent NCSD in the Valley Teacher of the Year Award. Mrs. Katie Montague told the board that Kelanee brings every student up to better than they were in English. She teaches the whole student.

#### **Special Wrestling Recognition Award**

Gary Hostetter thanked Randy Keys and Jason Coombs for many years serving the young people of the NCSD community as wrestling coaches. Mr. Hostetter presented plaques to Randy and Jason and told the board that coaches make a difference in kid's lives.

## **ACHIEVEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS**

### **Principals Report**

Please see attached principal reports in the board packet.

### **BOCES Report**

Mr. Chuck Finnegan reported there has been no changes in BOCES since last meeting. There will be a BOCES meeting this Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **NCEA**

No Report.

### **Administration Report**

Mr. Edgar has still heard no word from the Capitol concerning the school finance act. Letters of opposition were sent concerning the Rural Alliance. NCSD should get rural money this year as we are listed as a small rural school. The legislature is smoothing out differences in the budget factor.

District health insurance renewal plans were delivered by the insurance broker Assured Partners last week. In order for the school district to keep the current carrier and benefits, we would encumber a 31.39% increase in plan cost. Assured Partners have offered a couple other carriers with the same medical benefit plan to compare and consider. Cigna is offering the same plan/benefits with an 8.94% increase from our current plan. This sounds pretty good, but there are a significant number of employees on the family plan that will see an increase of \$140 come out of their checks on a monthly basis or \$1,600 a year, equivalent to a 2% increase in salaries in most cases. As Darren looks more into the MERP or gap plan in place, there may be an opportunity to reduce administration cost and put it back into the employee's pocket to offset increases to the family plan coverage. Gale Gallegos has reached out to two other brokers and asked for competitive plans to review. As a reminder, there is no increase to the district's cost in purchasing employee health insurance as the benefit of \$915 exceeds the single paid premium, however, it is important to remember the percentage increase is decreasing the amount of money employees are taking home. Mr. Edgar will email the board when he gets more information.

Mr. Edgar shared current staffing plans for the 2023-2024 school year with board members. At the current time NCSD is still in search of two elementary teachers and one middle school Science teacher.

We are currently working on finalizing the district health insurance, finalizing the 23-24 budget, and are working on distributing staff employee agreements.

Mr. Edgar brought up having a work session to discuss the 23-24 budget and asked board members for input. The board meeting in May will be moved from May 16<sup>th</sup> to May 9<sup>th</sup> with a work session at 5:30 p.m. and the regular board meeting at 6:30 p.m.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Capital Construction**

Mr. Edgar has asked Bradbury Stamm to reach out to Robins Construction concerning the concrete in front of the high school and having it replaced. He will continue to check on the progress of the concrete replacement.

The bidding and selection process for the construction improvements on the CTE Facility are under way. Mr. Brad Huffaker has been helping Mr. Edgar facilitate this and he asked Brad to brief the board on the process, and the number of site visits and quotes by interested contractors. We are also seeking bids on the upstairs restrooms at La Jara Elementary and the renovation of the concession stand restrooms at the football field. We are also asking for bids on the construction of a facility where the old building resided that would house restrooms, a concession stand, and a booth to take gate.

Another construction initiative is the Outdoor Learning Classroom paid for by ESSER funds. This classroom/pavilion is scheduled to be constructed this summer. The plan was to place the pavilion out on the sports complex area North East of the football field. In light of the possibility of renovation the restrooms and concession stand, or the potential in building a new facility on this site we have decided to move the Outdoor Learning Classroom Pavilion to the area between central office and the middle school. This idea can kill two birds with one stone as the pavilion will dress up an area that needs work and will provide a greater opportunity for the middle school to use the classroom as well.

Darren should know more in about a month on the remaining funds from the Bond

### **Student Health & Safety: Anti-Substance Abuse Programs**

School District initiatives to counter student vaping and drug abuse have been the topic of conversation in the last couple of weeks due to recent awareness of how great the issue is. Through discussions and planning with principals, we have identified some goals and initiatives that we will begin working on. Mr. Edgar asked the principals to place a greater focus on providing anti-vaping and anti-substance abuse education to our students. This will also become a greater focus in our elementary schools as well. We need to erect and incorporate our vape detectors within our schools as soon as possible. We are currently waiting on outside technical services to get this going. Mr. Edgar would like to reinstitute the use of canine inspection services at our middle and high school campuses. Unfortunately, this service is not as easy to find and contract with as it once was. The Valley school districts may need to work on building a collaborative group, raise an assessment, and contract services with someone on the

Front Range. Darren will be working with superintendents to see if we can get a contract in place for the 2023-2024 school year. Administration is considering initiating a drug testing program for all students in grades 7–12 who are engaged in extracurricular activities. This is not a move that we consider or make unilaterally without further discussion and approval of the board of education. We do have the resources and experience to implement such a program. All testing is random and no one is ever aware of the time, date, testing pool, or number of students selected except for the testing administrator.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Special Policy Updates**

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the first reading of special policy updates as presented, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

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

The motion passed.

### **2023-2024 Staffing Plan: Renewal of Employee Agreements**

A motion was made by Harman Hostetter to approve the 2023-2024 staffing plan: renewal of employee agreements as presented, seconded by Nathan Coombs

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

The motion passed.

### **2023-2024 Salaries and Benefits**

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the 2023-2024 salaries and benefits as presented, seconded by Mary Jane Valdez.

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

The motion passed.

**Policies and Practices: District Credit Cards**

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve **establishing an account with Alamosa State Bank for the purpose of facilitating the use of district credit cards. Within the motion, Nathan Coombs included approving three additional credit cards for a total of (5) District credit cards, noting cards will be issued to administration members under the direction of the superintendent on behalf of North Conejos School District**, seconded by Harman Hostetter.

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

The motion passed.

**Dispersal of District Buses**

A motion was made by Harman Hostetter to approve the dispersal of NCSD buses as presented, seconded by Nathan Coombs.

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

The motion passed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

Meeting adjourned 9:15 p.m.

The next regular board of education meeting will be Tuesday May 9, 2023 with a work session on the 2023-2024 budget at 5:30 p.m. and the regular session at 6:30 p.m. at the District Administration Building.