

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

March 26, 2024

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 Mary Jane Valdez, President.

ROLL CALL

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA/CHANGES TO CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Jake Cary to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Nathan Coombs.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve the agenda following additions of action item 10.d staff hiring and 10.e staff resignation, seconded by Tyler Buhr.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None

ACHIEVEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

Principals Report

Please see attached Principals reports.

BOCES Report

Darren Edgar attended the March BOCES meeting where the meeting was held online. The Board approved the purchase of the property for a new BOCES building in Monte Vista with the condition that a BEST grant is awarded for the project. Mr. Edgar will let Nathan Coombs know when the next board meeting will be held in April.

NCEA

Misty Espinoza reported that there was not enough staff participation in the survey to get results.

Administration Report

Mr. Edgar reached out to the BOCES administrator concerning teachers in the district that currently have an alternative licensure. The alternative licensure program is run through SLV BOCES and allows potential candidates that have a bachelor degree the opportunity to receive an alternative teaching license and after one year in the program can be turned into a Colorado Department of Education teaching license. SLV BOCES has not invoiced North Conejos School District until this month, which is after the fact. It is a challenge to those teachers and NCSD to try and collect the money due when the year is nearly complete. There was an ERR grant available that one of our teachers applied for and received. This helped her, but the others either did not receive the grant or failed to apply for the grant. This is a large amount of funds for staff to come up with at the end of the year and quite a large sum for the District to pay collectively. Mr. Edgar told the board that we will work with these candidates to pay back the \$4,500 on a payment plan if needed. Darren feels like there was poor communication on BOCES part with the school district and the staff. Darren just wanted to give the Board a heads up to this situation.

In April, the board of education will approve the 2024-2025 staffing plan and contracted agreements. Each spring the administration provides a staffing plan for the next school year. It contains a list of certified and classified positions in the school district that are being recommended for continued employment with the school district. The month of March is typically when the principals and superintendent are having deeper discussions on positions and any teacher in their school and it is their responsibility to make recommendations to the superintendent concerning the teacher's job performance. The 2024-2025 staffing plan will note the loss of two staff positions paid for with ESSER funds. It was always understood that unless the district could find additional funding that both positions would be eliminated after two years. Mr. Edgar is working with principals on a final staffing plan for each of their schools and is assisting them as they meet with teachers to discuss next year. Darren may recommend an executive session in the April meeting for a discussion of personnel. This will give the administration an opportunity to discuss the specific positions and employees who are not being renewed. We will notify the specific certified staff that they will be discussed in executive session, and they will be welcome to come into the executive session to hear the discussion, or they could request the discussion be held in open session.

Mr. Edgar gave the board of education a handout on the 2024 legislative bills concerning education. There are 62 bills that are up in the next legislative session. There is still quite a bit of time remaining before the legislature closes the door this spring and some of these bills will not survive. There are a few bills that do not favor school districts or elected officials. Darren went over some of the bills and shared his view of bills that could help or hurt school districts in Colorado.

Darren has been working on employee attendance and personal leave for some time. One of the areas reviewed after the 2022-2023 school year was certified teacher and administration attendance. Mr. Edgar found some teachers and administration modeled and exemplified good attendance, however, he also found poor attendance by others. On average last year, we needed five substitutes on a daily basis, and many of the certified staff that used all of their days and more were veteran staff members. He also found that personal leave policies allowed staff unrestricted access to take more than the nine days as long as they had days in reserve. He also found that employees see no value in saving the days as they do not feel they are paid fairly for the unused days. Nathan Coombs shared with the board that they need to be very wise and careful with potential policy changes. Mr. Edgar will be comparing our leave policies to other school district leave policies. Darren continues to work on this initiative which he feels is a big initiative and will take time to work through. He wants to really research this out before bringing a final recommendation to the board in May or June.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policies GCE/GCF, GCE/GCF-R, GDE/GDF, GDE/GDF-R, GBA, JLDAC, JLDAC-E, AEA, GBI

Mr. Edgar went over each policy with the board of education and the changes recommended by CASB. These policies will be presented to the board next month for a first reading.

Facilities: 2024-2025 Capital Reserve Projects

Mr. Edgar gave the board of education a hand out on 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 capital reserve equipment and facilities projects. Projects for the 23-24 year include purchasing a van with lift, renovation of 3 restrooms (CTE), demo and replace concrete (CTE/CHS), bus stop and turnaround at Manassa Elementary, refrigerator/cooler door (ME), scrubber/chariot, teacher computers/PC, repeater-communications (CHS/LJE). As a reminder, the district is using \$45,000 from the BEST grant reserve to complete the repeater system in the high school and \$30,000 from capital reserve to complete the system at La Jara Elementary. This document handout is a living document that will be used in the future to prioritize the upkeep of equipment and facilities, as well as assist in establishing budgetary needs and limitations. The capital reserve budgeted for the 23-24 school year is \$650,000. There may be a capital reserve carryover into the 2024-2025 budget year of \$150,000. Mr. Edgar recommended a capital reserve budget for the 2024-2025 year of \$350,000. The priority expenditures estimates for the 24-25 school year include ME safe route to schools of \$40,000, LJE renovation of 2 restrooms \$20,000, CHS parking/French drain/gravel \$30,000, curb on CHS parking lot \$30,000, replace door locking/mechanisms at LJE, ME, CMS \$30,000. Other items on the list include window replacements LJE, CMS \$100,000, strip divider in hallways CHS \$7,000, restroom/concession facility CHS \$130,000, small handicap bus \$93,933, 2024 suburban \$62,000. Darren reminded the board that they will have to approve all capital reserve projects and spending for the 2024-2025 school year.

2024-2025 Salaries and Benefits Negotiations

Mr. Edgar sent a staff survey out as to when they would like the superintendent to discuss salary recommendations with the board of education for the 2024-2025 school year. The one question was, When would you rather have your 2024-2025 salary and benefits discussed and recommendations made? The staff was fairly divided with 52.86% saying they would rather have salary recommendation made in August or September of the 2024-2025 school year and 47.14% choosing the April through May of 2023-2024 school year. Darren feels that there is greater leverage negotiating in the fall and knowing where other school district salaries are set. The survey concerning district health insurance provides staff the opportunity to weigh-in on how the insurance is affecting them personally. This survey to staff will be forthcoming and Darren hopes this information will assist us as we negotiate the points of carrier plans available.

ACTION ITEMS

Policies: DIA, DIA-E1, DIA-E2, JLCD, JLCD-R, JLCD-E, JLCD-E-1

A motion was made by Kimberly Baroz to approve the policies DIA, DIA-E1, DIA-E2, JLCD, JLCD-R, JLCD-E, JLCD-E-1, seconded by Jake Cary.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

Board Treasurer Nomination

A motion was made by Kristin McCarroll nominating Kimberly Baroz as Board Treasurer, seconded by Jake Cary. There were no other nominations.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

Kimberly Baroz was elected Board Treasurer.

Capital Construction: NCAP Landscaping Project

A motion was made by Nathan Coombs to approve \$6,500 for the NCAP landscaping project as presented, seconded by Kristin McCarroll.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

NCS D Staff Hiring

A motion was made by Jake Cary to approve Caroline Van Berkum as a \$1 CHS track coach as presented, seconded by Tyler Buhr.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, aye; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

NCS D Staff Resignation

A motion was made by Kristin McCarroll to approve the resignation of Troy Reynolds, CHS Girls Head Basketball Coach, seconded by Tyler Buhr.

Kimberly Baroz, aye; Tyler Buhr, aye; Jacob Cary, aye; Nathan Coombs, nay; Kristin McCarroll, aye; Mary Jane Valdez, aye.

The motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

Meeting adjourned 8:55 p.m.

The next regular board meeting will be on April 16, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at the NCSD Board room.