

Eau Claire School Board Agenda

Monday, July 22, 2019

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Members present

Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

Members absent

Joe Luginbill

1. REGULAR MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, President Eric Torres called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Board Secretary Meta Miske confirmed that the meeting had been properly noticed and was in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

Dan Wilson is a certified staff member who served on the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee. Mr. Wilson thanked the Board assembling the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee and including employees in the conversation. Mr. Wilson hopes this committee model can continue for future conversations. He indicated the Board would receive a presentation later in the evening from Ms. Johnson regarding the committee's findings. The nine ideas included in the presentation "have no major red flags to the employees on the committee." Mr. Wilson indicated the committee overwhelmingly feels the preferred option would be for the Board to take no action on OPEB and he said employees believe that and the liability of OPEB is very large but continues to decline and will eventually be eliminated. Mr. Wilson said every dollar the District saves by changing OPEB directly comes from the employees.

Aaron Sturgis said three years ago there was a recommendation to build a new Roosevelt Elementary. Then there was a new idea to repurpose Roosevelt as a 4K site. He said there needs to be consistency and transparency. Throughout the last year the Board discussed working alongside the City of Eau Claire, but he hasn't seen any discussions occur. When referencing the area north of Jeffers Road, there have been comments about it being landlocked. Mr. Sturgis said that statement is not accurate. On July 3, WEAU did a study and found that because of the growth around Jeffers Road, the area will receive a makeover including sidewalks, gutters, a bike trail. Mr. Sturgis asked the Board to recognize the consistent growth in that area and to make decisions using logic and sources of truth.

Megan Holmen sent the Board an e-mail the day prior to the meeting thinking she would not be able to attend this Board meeting. Ms. Holmen reiterated the contents of her e-mail: ECASD is in the business of educating children. She asked the Board to focus on the whole child. Ms. Holmen said moving a child can impact their social/emotional growth. In Princeton Valley, students are being moved from Northwoods to Locust Lane to balance capacity, which she said will cause ill effects for those children. The Board set a precedent a few years ago when making the boundary changes at the high schools and Ms. Holmen believes that what is good for high school families is good for all families.

Emma Holman is entering 5th grade at Roosevelt Elementary this school year and feels that it is unacceptable that Roosevelt does not have a secure entrance. Ms. Holmen said students should feel comfortable at school and not be afraid someone is going to sneak past the office. She would like to see a secure entrance at Roosevelt before moving on to DeLong.

3. BOARD/ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

3.1 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Hardebeck reviewed the Board's calendar of events.

Dr. Hardebeck indicated she would ask to be recognized again upon approval of the Employment Report.

3.2 Board President's Report

President Torres shared that at the Board meeting on August 5 the Board will begin thinking about the Comprehensive Plan which will be the Board's development process for next ten years and the Board will begin the process for the Superintendent search.

Dr. Torres shared that a donation would be presented later in the meeting and recognized Connie and Pat Ulrich - former educators from the Eau Claire area. It is thanks to their desires that an important contribution has been made to enhance the facilities at Memorial High School.

4. OTHER REPORTS

4.1 School Board Committee Reports

Budget Development Committee met and discussed the recommendations from the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee as well as the importance of establishing a philosophy from the full Board on budgeting.

4.2 Legislative Update

Legislative Liaison Tim Nordin shared that since the last Board meeting the State Legislature passed the biennium budget which increased school funding including general funding, per pupil aide, and Special Education percentage reimbursement. The impact to ECASD is an estimated \$3 million for the 2019-2020 school year and \$6 million for the 2020-2021 school year. Areas for improvement still include Special Education because public schools receive 30% reimbursement versus voucher schools who receive 90% reimbursement. Mr. Nordin asked that all present continue to advocate for public schools.

5. CONSENT RESOLUTION AGENDA

Motion by Lori Bica, second by Tim Nordin, to approve the following consent resolution items:

- Minutes of June 3, 2019
- Financial Report – May 2019
- Budget Adjustments – June 30, 2019
- Gifts in the amount of \$22,446.48 for the period of May 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019
- Gifts in the amount of \$82,292.78 for the period of June 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019
- Payment of all bills in the amount of \$5,269,796.87 and net payroll in the amount of \$3,560,511.94 for the period of May 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019.
- Payment of all bills in the amount of \$8,695,112.76 and net payroll in the amount of \$3,746,983.74 for the period of June 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019.
- Human Resources - Employment Report
- Approval of Curriculum Standards
- Approve Modified 2019-20 School Calendar Incorporating Inclement Weather Make-up Days
- 2019-20 Property, Liability & Worker's Compensation Insurance Renewal
- Culinary Equipment Bids
- Adopt New Policy 513 - Job Description and Labor Market Review
- Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of Wisconsin OPEB Trust Investment Advisory Agreement & Appointment of Investment Manager
- Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of the Wisconsin OPEB Trust and Custody Agreement and Appointing the Trustee and Custodian

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Dr. Hardebeck noted that on Human Resources Employment Report was the hire of Paul Uhren as South Middle School Principal, the transfer of Meta Miske to the position of Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board Secretary, and the transfer of Darryl Petersen to the role of Interim Director of Buildings & Grounds, all of whom have already begun their new roles in the District.

6. INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED RESOLUTION(S)

6.1 Gift from the Ulrich Trust

Dr. Hardebeck said a donation is being made on behalf of Connie and Pat Ulrich. Pat was a graduate of Eau Claire High School in 1943 and was a teacher and a librarian in area schools. Connie was a graduate of Eau Claire High School in 1947 and taught physical education for many years at Memorial, coached sports, and helped with dramatic productions.

Mr. Webster Hart, trustee of the Ulrich estate, said the Ulrich's were very dedicated to the Eau Claire schools and to students. The Ulrich's left a trust to be utilized for the benefit of students in the Eau Claire area and female athletes. Therefore, the trust will be providing \$250,000 for improvements to the Memorial High School Track. Mr. Hart presented President Torres with a check for \$50,000 with the remaining \$200,000 to be provided once bids are submitted and costs finalized. The track will be called the Ulrich Track and there will be a photograph of Connie and Pat at two locations near the track. The trust has also agreed to provide \$5,000/year for maintenance of the track up to 20 years (\$100,000). Mr. Hart said the trust has more funds available and invited Dr. Hardebeck and the Board to call upon him for future projects at all schools.

Dr. Torres stated that it is an honor to receive this donation in Connie and Pat Ulrich's memories.

6.2 Consider Demographic Trends and Facility Planning Committee Recommendation on Elementary Boundaries

Kim Koller, Executive Director of Administration, and Phil Lyons, Chair of the Demographic Trends and Facility Planning Committee, recapped previous presentations and discussions regarding boundary changes. Mr. Lyons indicated the Demographic and Trends Committee had reconvened to establish the parameters for changing boundaries and transitioning families in a manner to mirror the 2018 high school boundary changes.

The Demographic and Trends Committee therefore recommended the boundary changes with the following parameters:

1. Boundary changes will be effective at the start of the 2020-2021 school year
2. 5th graders from the 2020-21 school year may choose to remain at their current school until they transition to middle school
3. Students in impacted boundary areas with siblings in 5th grade may choose to remain at their current school for one year until the 5th grader moves to middle school
4. Middle school students from the 2020-2021 school year may choose to remain at their current school until they transition to high school
5. Students in impacted boundaries may choose to attend the previous middle school if they have concurrent enrollment with a sibling
6. Transportation will be provided to students affected by the boundary change for the outlined transition times in which students may choose to remain at their current school

Commissioner Bica asked why all children cannot remain at their current schools and why the ability to remain is isolated to 5th graders and siblings. Ms. Koller explained that when evaluating many possible scenarios, the committee choose to keep the transition as quick and simple as possible. When extending the grandfathering period, it could extend a family's enrollment at their previous school for possibly a decade or longer depending on the age of siblings. The committee also chose to mirror the Alternate School Request process which allows students in 5th grade to complete their elementary education at the same school if their family moves.

Commissioner Harder asked to confirm that the boundary changes are needed due to overcrowding which impacts academic achievement. Mr. Lyons confirmed that overcrowding is the driver behind the change. Ms. Koller shared that 85% capacity is ideal for schools. Some elementary schools have enough students to add an additional class section and an additional teacher, but no physical space to do so. Ms. Koller indicated that has been the case the past several years with Roosevelt's kindergarten. The overcrowded kindergarten classes have been addressed by asking families to choose to a different elementary school for their children. Additionally, common areas in an overcrowded school are a challenge, such as the gym and cafeteria.

President Torres asked for an estimation of how many fewer students are impacted by the boundary changes than initially estimated. Ms. Koller said approximately 66% of the originally estimated number of students will still be impacted.

Motion by Tim Nordin, second by Charles Vue to approve Demographic Trends & Facility Planning Committee recommendation.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

7. ADJOURN TO COMMITTEE

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS/ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Report from Equity Committee for All Night Graduation Parties

Kim Koller, Executive Director of Administration, and Caro Johnson, Chair of the Equity Committee for All Night Graduation Parties, presented the results of the committee's findings regarding All Night Graduation Parties.

The parties are coordinated entirely by parent and community volunteers and have been in place for approximately 36 years for the purpose of providing seniors a safe place to celebrate following graduation. The committee's goal is to increase attendance by removing barriers including cost, language, disabilities, process for requesting admission assistance, and transportation.

Ideas for reducing barriers for students include:

- Electronic process to request scholarships
- Accommodations for students with disabilities (possibly a paid aide to help with needs)
- Marketing and telling the story of the party

The committee reviewed the similarities and differences between the parties at Memorial and North. The committee agrees the school with the highest number of free and reduced students should receive a larger portion of financial assistance to help offset the costs and provide scholarships. Any additional money would be divided based on student population size. Any unused money would be used for the following year to reduce ticket prices. Both schools would like eliminate the cost for students entirely in the future.

Beginning in 2019, the committee agreed to collect common data at each school aimed at removing barriers for students, join together in a collaborative effort to offer quality experiences for all students, and gather student feedback after each party.

Commissioner Vue asked why Memorial hosts the party at their school and North hosts their party at Action City. The assumption is that there are more parents at Memorial willing to volunteer, whereas more North parents are unable to contribute to the experience. Ms. Koller shared that the committee made the same assumption about a lack of volunteers for North's party. It was then discovered that one of the parties at North caused some very costly damage to the facility, and therefore the parents made a deliberate choice to move the party offsite. Memorial has more volunteers because the Action City workers result in a lesser need for volunteers for North. The committee discussed this difference and determined that they want a safe location for students to celebrate and it can be up to the parents to determine where and how that will happen.

President Torres encouraged the committee to continue meeting to find better ways to serve students and their families.

8.2 Update on OPEB Committee

Abby Johnson, Executive Director of Business Services indicated that she worked with Budget Development Committee last week and is presenting the results of the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee's work with the entire Board. The committee has looked at ways to begin to reduce the impact of OPEB on the annual budget.

Ms. Johnson shared information about how the budget deficit over the last five years has impacted the fund balance. Information regarding the District's position at the end of the 2018-19 fiscal year will be forthcoming once the information is finalized. Budget Development Committee is looking at ways the District can impact the fund balance positively. The ideal fund balance would be between 20% and 23% of Fund 10 expenditures. Budget Development Committee talked about setting a target amount for the Fund balance to be at and asked if there is a threshold the Board is comfortable with.

Commissioner Harder said the trend is very concerning, and if it continues the District could be facing financial trouble. Mr. Harder asked as Budget Development Committee looks at the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 budgets, what is the goal? Should the goal be to have the same percentage, or to not drop more than a percent, or some other goal? What does the Board want to do in the short term and long term? Mr. Harder said when considering changes to OPEB, it is the alarming trend regarding the fund balance that is driving the conversation, but changes to OPEB alone will not solve the problem.

Ms. Johnson said the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee is made of representatives from all employee groups who have a variety of experience within the District. The committee discussed the married couple health insurance benefit, stipend benefit, health and dental coverage options for retirees, and previous OPEB scenarios. The Committee recommends no changes to the items in the charge, but instead came up with other ideas to present and ranked those ideas in the order of preference.

Commissioner Bica asked for clarification about what the committee is endorsing and what they are not? Mr. Wilson spoke from the audience on behalf of the Committee and shared that the Committee is recommending no change for all items in the Committee's charge. Instead the committee came up with other options they could support if the Board still decides that changes are needed.

Ms. Johnson shared that the Committee created alternative ideas which Budget Development Committee then asked them to rank. Ms. Johnson used the median of all the committee members' rankings. Ms. Johnson shared the nine items the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee ranked for Board consideration:

1. Delay HRA contribution for active employees to avoid paying twice for the same FTE.
2. Staff earn their HRA contribution through completion of the wellness steps (married couples already do this.)
3. No HRA contribution for retirees after retirement.
4. Grandfathering based on eligibility, not on when a person retires if the Board chooses to make changes to OPEB; Mr. Harder indicated that this would lessen the impact on the budget.
5. Cap rates at year of retirement instead of the year after retirement.
6. Modification of cap based on individual's actual needs: The current system locks the cap until Medicare eligibility. The Committee recommends determining each retiree's needs, such as how many years a dependent will be on the plan and adjusting the cap accordingly.
7. Cap insurance rate increases at 5% if the Board decides to make changes to OPEB.
8. Cap insurance rate increases at 3% if the Board decides to make changes to OPEB.

9. Grandfather based upon years of service instead of age and years of service if the Board decides to make changes to OPEB.

Commissioner Harder thanked Ms. Johnson for the presentation. Mr. Harder indicated that most options presented are cost savers except option nine. Capping insurance rates at a 3% or 5% increase would provide predictability though not provide significant cost savings; however, in combination with some of the other ideas, a cap could provide a stopgap. Budget Development Committee is looking at ways to cut and shift costs which all these options do; there is a shift of monetary burden from the District to the staff, but the staff has said these options are workable for them.

President Torres asked about the timeline needed for the Board to make decisions. Ms. Johnson shared that there have been several proposed timelines in the past that haven't been met. A realistic timeline to have any significant impact on the budget would be July 1, 2020, but that would likely not be well received by employees. The recommended implementation dates are built into the presentation and the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee is comfortable with the dates recommended.

Dr. Torres thanked Ms. Johnson for the report.

8.3 Superintendent's Interim Progress Report

Dr. Hardebeck shared that she would speak about what the District and Board is doing, why, and what results are hoped for related to the strategic plan. Dr. Hardebeck told the Board the Strategic Plan helps us to operationalize our beliefs as a District. She said the Board receives many updates with statistics and data throughout the year. Dr. Hardebeck reminded the Board that the Strategic Plan and all the work we do comes back to the students. They are the only ones who have the right to be in the schools, the adults have the privilege of working for the District to advance our students.

Dr. Hardebeck reminded the Board that their goals are aspirational goals. In the first goal, the purpose is to support the academic and social emotional growth of the whole child by building on diversity, relying on research and best practice, and focusing on partnerships. If we are successful, students will take on the characteristics of successful adults and be prepared for post-secondary success. We believe that families are the first teachers and we partner with families develop their children.

In the second Board Goal, the goal is to strengthen high performance and support to schools, ensure equity and provide access to a rigorous and engaging curriculum. We are working to build a respectful, positive culture. To do this we use high leverage strategies such as PBIS, responsive classroom, restorative justice, listening sessions, and collaboration. The District continues to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum. District-wide curriculum teams ensure students receive the next generation of standards and researched-based curriculum. Examples include a revised ELA curriculum, science curriculum review committee, middle school study, etc.

The District continues to work on culturally responsive practices. The District also has the High School MLSS Leadership team to help us achieve a higher 4-year graduation rate through a strong universal curriculum.

All of this work is being done to improve student performance and provide wrap around support for students. Our aim is to maintain safety and security, attend to adolescent mental health, close performance gaps, improve proficiency and growth, return open-enrolled students to ECASD, reduce referrals to alternate learning sites, build staff capacity and improve attendance.

The third goal is structured around building community partnerships and engagement. The District currently has over 200 partnerships ranging from large corporate partnerships to small non-profits which help give an added value to the student experience. Examples include scholarships for summer camps, college scholarships, gifts such as from the Ulrich trust, as well as unique programming including Spanish Dual Language Immersion, Virtual school, Project Lead the Way, Project SEARCH, Montessori, and McKinley. There are several committees to help our students and staff; Healthy Living Committee, Equity Committee, boundary committees, etc. The District has implemented listening sessions to help inform Board decisions and bring more voices to the table. Additional community support in the form of grants include the school safety grant, the mental health grant, Ann Marie Grants, grants from the Public Schools Foundation, and more continue to be developed by the District gift community.

The District facilitates student wellbeing and promotes community engagement. The Communications Committee has been working to promote the District and share what is special about our schools. If we want an all-in commitment from our community to continue to provide support, join us in the work, and enjoy the payoff of the work, we must increase our footprint and show the value that public schools have in this community.

Dr. Torres thanked Dr. Hardebeck for the report and reminding the Board of the goals and how they are achieved.

Commissioner Harder stated that he appreciated the focus on concepts over numbers and felt it was very timely.

9. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9.1 Requests for Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Bica shared that when Mr. Hart presented the gift from the Ulrich Trust, he mentioned values of the Board. Dr. Bica asked that the Board rely on the Equity Committee structure and questioned if it would be beneficial to create a committee to review the athletic facilities at all schools and evaluate possible future needs and gifts. President Torres said this would fit well in the Comprehensive Plan.

Agenda Setting Committee will convene at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

10. ADJOURN

Motion by Aaron Harder, second by Charles Vue, to adjourn meeting.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.