

Proposed Minutes of the Regular Meeting
November 8, 2010

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President Van Sickler called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Members present: Freeman, Keyes, McNerney, Palmer, Peglow, Ryckman, Van Sickler

Members absent: None

Administrators present: Beal, Hubbard, Weaver

Administrators absent: None

Visitors present: Alan Marshall, Phyllis Marshall, Mike Delacourt, Lisa Delacourt, Connie Marshall, Fred Vaughn, Jeanette Vaughn, Tami Emmons, Mayna Spohn, Lori Wolfe, Jerry Allison, Lynn Mason, Karen Garvey, Kristi Wainman, Doris Johnson, Sharle Wilmot, Randy Marsh, Justin Smith, Michelle Smith, Dawn Perrien, Dana Scott, Traci McCormick, Tracey Reed, Betsy Snyder, Serena Houseman, Mary Halley, Marcy Harting, Sharon Gerlach, Nancy Valenta, Ervin Pratt, Janell Kilmer, Marcie Peglow, Dianne Wilson, Jim Hodges, Sharon Davis, Larry Koutz, Barbra Alexander, Rhonda McNerney, Bill Walker, Bonnie Walker

Approval of Agenda

Van Sicker amended the agenda under new business move B below C.

Motion by McNerney support by Palmer to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Recognition of Guests

Connie Marshall, teacher - She believes that privatizing the custodians is wrong. She was told that this change would save money without affecting kids.

Jerry Allison, bus driver - represented the support staff and presented the board with over 170 signatures against the privatization.

Sharle Wilmot, parent – She has spoken with parents, board members and Mr. Beal. She stated that everyone she has talked to is against the privatization and will not vote yes again for any other millage proposal. Sharle stated this will hurt our community, the voters will not support this.

Karen Garvey, former teacher at Vestaburg, now at Montabella. She stated that her school went with privatization. The staff began to notice that cleaning was not being done. She had to personally clean her room to not lose her license for the preschool program. She stated that the company was allowed 11 minutes to clean the rooms. She stated that after 1 year they went back to their in house custodians.

Mary Hilly - she is here representing Melina Doll. Melinda is not able to attend due to the fact that she is working her shift. Melinda is asked to do different jobs like set up and tear down for special events on top of her normal duties. Melinda helps the teachers when they need something taken care of.

Mike Delacourt, parent - he does not believe that privatizing is a good plan. Do you know who is coming into the building to clean? One of our custodians has been here 22 years that is dedication. You asked the voters to approve this new building, now you are taking their jobs away. He does not believe that is fair. He believes you need to stay with the people that are dedicated to this community and school.

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Nancy Valenta, MEA Rep. - Speaking for Todd Vaughn, he has worked 22 years for the district. He has saved up over 80 sick days that is a dedicated employee.

Marcie Harting, representing Bob McMullen, he has worked many years for the school district and has developed a relationship with the teachers and knows their likes and dislikes. If the teachers do not want strangers in their classroom, how are the kids going to feel.

Ervin Pratt, MEA Rep – Representing James Fortunes, as a custodian he would like to thank the board for the opportunity to work for the Vestaburg School system. During negotiations he felt that they were working hard in good faith to agree on a contract that would help the budget.

Lynn Mason, It hurts her when privatization comes up. It hurts everyone. She knows that being a board member is not easy. She is on the county commissioners board. She would like to make sure that the board members think about the reason they got on the board and remember their beliefs. You want people here that are vested in the community. You're talking about 5 people that make custodian wages. That is not a lot of money. What academic goal is going to be achieved for privatizing?

Jan Vaughn, mother, grandparent and taxpayer. Todd is very dedicated to the school. Monday night was a night off and at 4:45 Todd was called and told there was a volleyball game and was asked if he could come to work. Todd left their family dinner to come to work for the school.

Lisa Delacourt, parent - She has a concern about the background checks on the employers that this private company hires. Also take into consideration that the custodians are here working their shifts instead of defending their jobs.

Kristi Wainman, talked about the public health issue, when the school has to close down, who is here scrubbing floors, disinfecting the building. Please remember that.

Questions on Building Reports: None

Communications

Dan and Valorie Palmer voiced their appreciation for the quality work that has been done on the Update.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Freeman, support by Peglow to approve the minutes of the Special meeting held October 11, 2010 as presented.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Motion by Peglow, support by Freeman to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting held October 11, 2010 as presented.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Motion by Ryckman, support by Palmer to approve the minutes of the Executive Session held during the Regular meeting on October 11, 2010.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

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Treasurer's Report

Motion by Peglow, support by Freeman to approve the bills as monies become available. Peglow also read the wire transfers to the board for approval.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Consent Agenda

Motion by Freeman, support by McNerney to approve the consent agenda.

A. Employ

1. Kim Whitney – High School Administrative Assistant
2. Troy Johnston – JV Girls Basketball

Mr. Hubbard introduced Mrs. Kim Whitney.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Mr. Beal also introduced Mr. Bill Willis as the new technology technician from the MAISD.

New Business

Mr. Beal gave the board a brief description of the middle school course changes for board approval.

Motion by Peglow, support by Ryckman to approve the course changes.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Mr. Beal talked to the board members, staff and community members about the reasons why the board is looking at privatization. Beal talked about the Foundation Allowance, local taxes and state taxes. Beal stated that a year ago the state cut \$165.00 per pupil. The projection for this year was 700 students. The pupil count for this year came in at 696. We came into this school year 365,000.00 in the hole. Preschool costs, retirement increase. Giving the projected balance at a 450,000.00 deficit. If we do nothing we will be out of money in August 2013. The district borrowed money for the first time in years to make payroll in September. That money has to be paid back this year. The teachers, support staff and administration group all made concession with insurance. Ed jobs are Federal Stimulus money of 140,000.00 that is suppose to come to the school. This is one time only and will not be here next year.

Beal stated I know this is hard; his recommendation to the board is that they look at the company DM Burr for a contract for the next 3 years.

DM Burr gave a presentation to the board. Their employees are insured and bonded. They go through a formal interview process. They would hire people from this area. They do mandatory drug and alcohol testing. They also go through the state police finger printing along with the live scan. DM Burr offers an employee benefit program. They also have incentive programs for their employees, cash rewards, certificates and quarterly bonuses.

DM Burr stated that they have 100% retention rate after signing on a school district. The company makes each employee go through several trainings, including chemical, OSHA, etc. There would be an onsite supervisor that would do daily inspections. Jerry Cox would be the overseer and he has the highest recognition for their company. He also oversees Gratiot Community Hospital. There will be 1-day shift person.

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Set up and tear down is all included in their bid. In their job description their employees are responsible for making sure that the building is locked down and secure.

Palmer asked about our current employees. DM Burr stated that they would automatically interview our current employees first.

Beal stated that he is recommending to the board that the district pursue privatization of the custodial services through Dm Burr.

Freeman would like to look at the communication from Thrun before they make a vote.

Motion by Freeman, support by Peglow to enter Executive Session - (P.A. 1976 Amended by Act. No 256 of 1978, per 15.268, Section 8, paragraph e.) attorney/client privilege at 8:53 p.m.

Roll call: Freeman – yes, Keyes – yes, McNERney – yes, Palmer – yes,
Peglow – yes, Ryckman – yes, Van Sickler – yes

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Motion by Freeman, support by Palmer to return to regular session at 9:12 p.m.

Roll call: Freeman – yes, Keyes – yes, McNERney – yes, Palmer – yes, Peglow – yes, Ryckman – yes,
Van Sickler - yes

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Motion by Ryckman, support by Peglow to accept the resolution to accept the bid from DM Burr for Custodial Services.

Freeman stated that it is not the presentation that bothers me. It is a great company, but the timing is what is bothering him. The board just accepted a tentative agreement with the current staff and Freeman does not feel it is ethical.

Ryckman stated that this is not something the board is just jumping on. The board has been discussing this for the last 5 months.

McNERney stated that he does not like sitting up here as a target. When guests state that the board has not done their homework, he personally has done his homework. He does believe that the district will still have community members working for the school. McNERney stated we do not take these decisions lightly. It is not personal. Just because we have to make tough decisions does not mean we do not care. Ryckman stated that he tries to separate business from personal. Just because the board has to make tough decisions, does not mean that they do not care.

Freeman stated at some point we need to make that budget work. It is not easy to be a board member.

Freeman stated he is not opposed to this move, he is opposed to the timing.

Palmer does not like the timing. Palmer understands that cuts are coming.

Freeman stated that the board is a multi million-dollar business and the community expects them to make sure it is run properly. We have to be responsible with our spending.

Keyes spoke to the community, when the superintendent proposes to the board a solution; the board needs to look at those options.

Roll call: Freeman – no, Keyes – yes, McNERney – yes, Palmer – no, Peglow – yes, Ryckman – yes,
Van Sickler - no

Motion CARRIED 4-3

Motion by Ryckman, support by Peglow to approve the resolution to layoff the current custodial staff.

Motion CARRIED 6-1

Old Business

Beal spoke to the board about the Student Memorial that was presented to the board from a community member.

Kristi Wainman spoke to the board about the design and implementation of a student memorial wall. Kristi called 20 area schools. Out of the 20 districts only 3 do not have a student memorial. Some schools have books in their libraries; one school had a memorial hill. Kristi had checked on the issue of vandalism and none of the schools have had a problem.

The other issue that was a concern to the board was who decides on who goes up on the wall. Kristi stated that all of the schools except 1 stated that the family decides if they would like their family member listed on the wall or not. Kristi stated that she started a page on Facebook and she has 362 supporters for the memorial wall. Kristi brought in pictures of examples for a memorial wall.

Beal stated he is not opposed to a student memorial venue. Mr. Koutz has worked very hard on starting that. Beal stated it is the board's wish to have a second memorial.

Koutz stated that the Walk of Pride would be between the sidewalk and the school building. The area could hold 1000 bricks.

Mrs. Vaughn mentioned a student that might have a hard time seeing it everyday walking into school.

Mr. Delacourt stated that he would hate for that to make it hard for his nephew to walk by everyday and possibly not want to come to school because of it.

Kristi is not against the other venue.

Hubbard stated that you are not going to please everyone.

Motion by McNerney, support by Freeman that we incorporate the student memorial with the Walk of Pride.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Items for Discussion

Beal stated that it is taking longer than expected to get the high school media center ready. Beal gave the board 5 options.

1. Do nothing. Doris Johnson staffs both media centers. The elementary would be open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The high school would be open Tuesday and Thursday. This represents no additional cost to the district and would staff the media center for 5 hours a day respectively.
2. Hire a 3-hour para-pro to staff the high school media center, leaving Doris in the Elementary 5 days a week.
3. Hire a 5 hour para-pro for the high school media center position.
4. Staff the high school media center with current para-pro or existing para-pros. This option would cost nothing but would take services away from other areas.
5. Restore Doris to full time status. This would still require her to work T & Th in the high school media center and M-W-F in the elementary media center.

Work in Progress

Bus Replacement Schedule
Election of Officers Mid-Year
Bid Process for Auditor

Recognition of Guests

Nancy Valenta, she asked when Mr. Beal first contacted DM Burr about these services. Beal stated that DM Burr dropped of a business card in July. Beal stated he talked to the custodians in July; he talked to the board in August, September and October. Beal asked the board in August if the district should pursue this.

Lisa Delacourt – she apologized for making the board members think that the visitors thought the board members were ignorant. She felt that the community should have been able to ask questions to the DM Burr Company. It was presented in a community forum and the community should be able to ask questions. She also asked what happens if you don't like their service in 1 year. The district is planning to lock in a 3-year deal. Lisa also stated that I know the building fund is separate money but when you build on you should expect the maintenance fees to go up.

Marcie Harting, MEA - You have just ended the retirement for these people.

Mike Delacourt – stated he looked at the minutes for the last few meetings and he knows that the board has discussed the custodial privatization. You have talked about fairness and now these people are out of jobs. Did they get the opportunity to take a pay cut. They were not given that opportunity. He stated that the board really needs to check that contract, make sure there is an exit clause if you are not satisfied with their work.

Kristi Wainman – She asked if the company could put in their contract that they guarantee they would hire at least 3 of our current custodians. Since the district is signing a 3-year contract, couldn't they guarantee that they would hire 3 of our current staff? Kristi believes it is the superintendent's duty to take care of the staff just laid off.

Brandon Hubbard – spoke on behalf of the Throop family, Mr. Throop called the school today and on behalf of the Chester Throop Scholarship Fund the family has purchased a washer, dryer and stove for the CI classroom.

Items for next Board Meeting December 13, 2010.

Motion by Freeman, support by Palmer to adjourn at 10:30 p.m.

Motion CARRIED 7-0

Karen S. Grover
Recording Secretary