

SOUTHERN COLUMBIA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
800 SOUTHERN DRIVE
CATAWISSA, PA 17820

The March 14, 2005 Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:32 p.m. with President Karl Meyer in charge of the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

President Meyer welcomed everyone, followed by a roll call of Board Members.

BOARD MEMBERS

Amanda Bell-Perry
Elsie Bittner
Hugh Jones

Linda Kreischer
Karl Meyer
Ronald Savitski (*Arr. 7:39 pm*)

Richard Swank
Michael Yeager

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Alan J. Lonoconus, Superintendent; Joseph Springer, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Roy Clippinger, Pat Shultz, Paul Caputo, and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Meyer announced that all Personnel Items on the agenda would be considered action items.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lonoconus' report included the following topics:

- 1.) He requested an executive session following the meeting to discuss negotiation items.
- 2.) He asked Board members to return their State Ethics Commission reports to the Board Secretary as soon as possible.
- 3.) The Act 72 flyers were printed by the Printing Technology Department at Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School and will be mailed in the near future.
- 4.) He noted that Senator Gordner has introduced a bill to help school district's defray the cost of the Act 72 mailings.
- 5.) He reported that he and Mr. Springer met with a representative from PPL and he would give a detailed report during the Facilities Committee report.
- 6.) There is a transportation concern with the Junior High National Honor Society trip to New York City in May. No driver is willing to take a school bus into the city. The cost of a charter would be between \$800 and \$1,000.
- 7.) The senior high play will be held during the upcoming weekend. There will be performances on Friday and Monday evenings and Sunday afternoon.
- 8.) Josh Marks finished 6th in the 275 pound class at the PIAA State Wrestling Tournament.
- 9.) Jesse Mauer is participating at the All-State Jazz Chorus concert.
- 10.) He spent two days in Harrisburg at the Superintendent's Leadership Seminar through CSIU. He met with Senator Gordner and Representatives Millard and Phillips regarding Act 72. He also spoke with the writers of the bill. There are still some questions they couldn't answer. One question being what would they do with the money if only a few districts opt into Act 72? There are currently two interpretations: 1) the funds would be shared among the districts that did

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opt into Act 72, and 2) the funds would be allocated to all of the 501 school districts in the state, but only sent to those enrolled in Act 72. Solicitor Roberts noted that there is some litigation pending concerning extending the Act 72 deadline due to questions regarding Act 71. There is argument regarding the way the Act became a law. The Pennsylvania School Boards Association is trying to get the deadline moved.

Dr. Lonoconus noted that he also met with PDE representatives regarding assessment. They will try to keep the cut scores as close as possible to current scores. They are also considering extending the Bridge I deadline. Act 48 and highly qualified teachers were discussed. The State will allow IUs to provide more highly qualified training. They want more vigor in regard to allowable Act 48 credit. The State is looking at ongoing improvement planning concerning the Strategic Planning process. Intermediate Units will be reviewing the plans instead of the state.

11.) Mr. Caputo noted that he looked at enrollment trends over the past 15 years. The high school currently has the second highest enrollment throughout that period. An English teacher, Business Education teacher, full-time Athletic Director and a Cafeteria Monitor all have not been replaced during the 2004-2005 school year. As a result, there are increased class sizes. The bottom line is that the high school can still function, but class sizes will be higher and course offerings will be limited. Speech and Accounting II were not offered this year. Ideally, he would like to see the English teacher position reinstated. Next year there will be 479 students in the high school. Mr. Yeager asked what effect the fourth year of Science and Math will have on the high school. Mr. Caputo replied that most students are already enrolled in an additional Math and Science course, so the impact should be minimal.

12.) After a brief discussion, it was determined that the consensus of the Board is that the Auto Mechanics program at Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School should continue at least until the current participants have graduated. Mr. Swank was asked to make that recommendation on their behalf at the upcoming Joint Operating Committee meeting. He agreed to do so.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities & Services - Michael Yeager, Chairperson, reported that the Coca-Cola agreement, the high school gymnasium roof and the auditorium sound system were discussed. Mr. Yeager asked the cost of a service call for the sound system. Mr. Springer replied that it is about \$200 depending on the nature of the call. Mr. Yeager noted that the more expensive console might cost less in the long run. An individual module would be able to be removed and repaired instead of the entire unit. President Meyer noted that he was not entirely convinced that the more expensive unit would be worth it. Dr. Lonoconus noted that consoles currently have to be rented for a performance. He noted that a 5' x 8' sound room would cost between \$500 and \$775. The size of the room would have to be increased to 5' x 16' to include both the soundboard and lights. The cost would increase to approximately \$1,500. Mr. Swank asked if the room could be built in advance. Mr. Springer replied that it would be preferable to build it in conjunction with the project to fit around the console. Mike Yeager noted that he would like to see the base bid plus Alternates 2 and 4 accepted. He reported that \$120,000 was budgeted for the HVAC system, but the lowest bid came in at \$239,700. The Committee is recommending that the Board reject all bids.

Dr. Lonoconus reported that he and Mr. Springer met with a PPL representative to discuss an Energy Savings Program. The program would focus on a chiller in the Middle School. When the Middle School wing was constructed, the infrastructure was put into place in preparation for the future installation of a chiller. A letter of authorization would be required to allow PPL to do a

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feasibility study, which would be conducted with no obligation from the school district. The Board authorized Dr. Lonoconus to proceed.

Mr. Yeager reported that R.A. Clapp would provide specs at a cost of \$7,000 for the Auditorium lighting project. That item was tabled. Dr. Lonoconus noted that a company from New York could provide specs for approximately \$1,500 to \$2,500. The company was recommended by Bloomsburg University.

It was determined that the best time to add a layer of cracker dust to the track would be in the fall due to settling. The baseball infield was discussed. The cost would be approximately \$3,000 for soil removal and sod replacement, and an additional \$2,000 for drainage. This would be a future project. Good progress is being made on the "Regardless" projects.

Dr. Lonoconus reported that the Committee has discussed paving the road to the lower fields. Mrs. Shultz noted that she would have a concern with a fence along the road. She would prefer to have a gate installed at the entrance to prevent use during school hours when the playground is in use.

He also noted that three items were added to the projects list. The fronts of the lockers need replacement due to wear on the latches. The auditorium doors need replacement and the windows at the auditorium entrance would be replaced with solid walls for heating efficiency. The old ventilators in some of the rooms are inefficient. There are about 20 that need replacement.

Finance - Karl Meyer, Chairperson, reported that the main topic of discussion was the budget. They are planning for a \$200,000 increase in medical benefits costs. Mr. Springer noted that meetings of the CS Trust are scheduled for March 31st and May 3rd. He would probably not know the amount of the increase until the May 3rd meeting.

Columbia County real estate tax rate is unchanged at this point. The Northumberland County real estate tax rate will increase one-half mill due to equalization. The SAWW rate will be 3.8 percent for 2006-2007.

An Act 72 information meeting is scheduled for March 29th at 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

ITEMS – TREASURER’S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

President Meyer asked for clarification on the following checks. Mr. Springer provided explanations unless otherwise noted.

#10767 to Platinum Plus for Leapfrog - Mrs. Shultz explained that this was for the purchase of Leapdesks that were purchased through grant funds for Kindergarten students. In an attempt to lower the retention rate, the Instructional Support Specialist has been working with Kindergarten students on basic skills.

#10788 to Berwick Area High School - This covered tuition for a special needs student.

#10803 to Columbia-Montour AVTS Authority - This was part of Southern Columbia's share of a bond issue for renovations done at the Columbia-Montour Area Vo-Tech School.

#10809 to CSP Office Equipment Co. - This was for the purchase of copy machine supplies.

#10887 to Share Corporation and #10888 to Robert M. Sides - Mr. Springer noted that he did not know the specifics on the two checks, but he could pull the invoices and they could discuss them after the meeting. President Meyer agreed to do so.

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ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Swank and second by Savitski, directing the Superintendent to provide PPL Energy Service with authorization to provide a Feasibility Study at no cost to the district was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Savitski and second by Jones, changing Darlene Semerod from 2-Hour Cafeteria Worker to 3-Hour Cafeteria Worker effective March 15, 2005, was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Swank and second by Yeager, adding Erin Stone (Elementary/Special Education) to the 2004-2005 Instructional Substitute List effective March 15, 2005, (pending completion of all employment requirements) was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Kreischer and second by Yeager, Erin Kramer was approved as an After School Tutor effective March 15, 2005, (pending completion of all employment requirements) at a rate of \$10 per hour, which will come from the proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

BOARD COMMENTS

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Richard Gotshall, asked where the \$600,000 from the potential Partners in Distance Learning Grant is generated. Dr. Lonoconus replied that it would be Federal funds. Mr. Gotshall was concerned that there was a middleman involved. Dr. Lonoconus informed him that Dr. Dan Paul would be invited to attend a meeting in April and he would be able to answer Mr. Gotshall's questions.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Jones and second by Swank, the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary