

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

The May 9, 2005, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:30 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

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, James Becker, Paul Caputo, James Dunkelberger and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

**AGENDA HEARING PERIOD**

President Meyer announced that all items on the agenda would be for discussion only.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Lonoconus' report included the following topics:

- 1.) He requested an executive session immediately following the Board meeting to discuss the terms and conditions of employment of a Board appointee and for two professional employees.
- 2.) Senior Matt Payne was named a United States National Award winner in student council through the United States Achievement Academy. Fewer than 10 percent of all American high school students are recognized with this prestigious honor.
- 3.) The Middle School students that gave presentations at last month's Board meeting went to the Capitol to compete in the state competition. Kayla McCloskey and Courtney Heitzman finished first in the logo design competition.
- 4.) The Catawissa Masonic Lodge donated a new scorer's table for the high school gymnasium. The total donation will be approximately \$3,500.
- 5.) Mr. Becker presented the first edition of the Middle School Yearbook to Board members.
- 6.) Mrs. Shannon Jeffrey (Math Teacher) will be administering a survey on different topics as part of her statistics class. Students and parents will be surveyed on subjects such as computer and internet access, whether or not they receive a newspaper and other general topics that may be helpful to the administrators and Board.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Facilities & Services - Michael Yeager, Chairperson, reported that the bleacher demolition is nearly complete. The steel has been taken down, stacked and will be sold. The press box on the

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visitor side has been taken down and the home side press box will be taken down in the near future. The foundations have been removed and were found to be just as the architect had reported. Some of them were not in the ground very deeply. He thanked the Maintenance Staff for performing the demolition. Mr. Springer noted that the district saved thousands of dollars by having the demolition done in house. President Meyer asked when construction would begin. Mr. Springer replied that the foundations would be poured on May 16<sup>th</sup> and would have to cure for 28 days. The actual construction should begin in the middle of June and be completed by mid July.

Finance - Karl Meyer, Chairperson, reported that the committee discussed the budget status. There was only a 10 percent increase in health care costs, which was lower than expected. The High School Study Hall/Cafeteria Monitor position will be eliminated at the end of the 2004-05 school year. Gasoline and fuel oil is budgeted to increase 50 cents per gallon. The actual increase will not be known until the bids are opened. The Board will be taking action on an Act 72 motion next week.

Negotiations & Personnel - No report.

Activities - Linda Kreischer, chairperson reported that the committee met prior to the meeting. The main discussion was on the cheerleader locker decoration issue. She noted that Cheerleading Coach, Kenda Roth, met with students and some parents at a meeting during tryouts. She informed them that the Board is asking the girls not to pay for gifts out of their pockets. If they need supplies for locker decorations, they should contact Mrs. Roth. She also noted that they should follow the chain of command and report any problems to her directly. The entire squad will decide upon any special locker decorations or activities. Several questions were asked, such as:

- What if someone does something on her own?
- What if someone puts a gift in a player's car?
- What if someone goes above and beyond what is expected?
- What are the consequences?
- Do other teams have to go by the same guidelines (in reference to buddy gifts)?

Mrs. Roth also noted in her report to the committee that the Boosters treat the cheerleaders the same as the football players. They receive the same awards at the end-of-season banquet. Mrs. Kreischer noted that the Policy Manual outlines a chain of command for reporting problems. It was not even close to being followed in this case. President Meyer asked the committee to look into the matter and make a recommendation to the administrators. He noted that if a team decides to do something, he has no problem, but issues of extravagance must be dealt with. He does not feel it is something the Board should have to monitor. Mrs. Kreischer asked if what Mrs. Roth did was satisfactory. Board members responded affirmatively. Dr. Lonoconus noted that initially, the extravagant gifts were the issue, but somewhere along the way, it got twisted into a discussion about locker decorations. Mr. Caputo noted that he interviewed the cheerleaders. Out of 20 girls, 17 chose to participate in the interviews. None of the girls had a complaint about the locker decorations, but some reported that they felt peer pressure to buy extravagant gifts. The students need to speak with Mrs. Roth if they need help with supplies. He noted that any student should not be afraid to speak to a coach or advisor.

Mrs. Kreischer asked if there would be a problem with other sports, in which players buy buddy gifts out of their own pockets. President Meyer noted that he has no problem with buddy gifts if that is what a team chooses to do. Mrs. Kreischer requested that an Activities Committee report be included on the May 16<sup>th</sup> agenda.

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### ITEMS – TREASURER’S REPORTS

### ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

### ITEMS – FISCAL

President Meyer asked if the district would have to undergo a single audit. Mr. Springer replied affirmatively and explained that it is because of the federal grant money received. He noted that the cost is an increase of approximately 3 percent over last year’s audit.

President Meyer asked if the cost of the buses was significantly higher this year. Mr. Springer responded that bids are usually provided for used, as well as new buses. He is recommending the 2006 buses because of the minimal cost difference between the new and used 2004 models.

President Meyer asked if there were any updates on the pending litigation regarding Act 72. Solicitor Roberts replied that the Commonwealth Court has ruled against PSBA’s request for an injunction. The Resolution (Exhibit C) will be provided for the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Springer explained the tentative budget and the Budget Status report. He noted that the tentative budget is an increase of 2.5 percent over the 2004-05 budget. The building and athletic fund budgets will maintain the 10 percent reduction. Two vacant instructional aide positions and one maintenance position vacated by furlough will not be filled in 2005-06. The Board has been committed to reducing expenditures each year in it’s effort to reduce the budget gap. The budget gap is about \$225,000, which is currently \$12,000 ahead of the target. Typically, the gap is reduced based on the actual financial results. He noted that fuel oil, gasoline and diesel fuel prices would not be known until after the bid opening on May 18<sup>th</sup>, and the state budget has not yet been approved. He hopes to have the final budget adopted in June. Dr. Lonoconus noted if Small School Assistance comes into being, it might be possible to hire a half-time secondary English teacher. They will be able to maintain the elementary position. Mr. Yeager noted that he would like to look into a full-time English teacher and a half-time Guidance Counselor. Dr. Lonoconus noted that it would be very difficult to obtain a half-time Guidance Counselor. Mr. Springer referred to the SAWW rate increase for 2006-07. He noted that it might be possible to add staff in 2006-07 due to the reduction in the budget gap.

President Meyer asked the reason for the sizeable increase in the transportation expenditures. Mr. Springer replied that it was in part due to the current health insurance program. The majority of employees in the transportation department have single coverage. Under the previous health insurance plan, there were single and family rates. Under the current plan, there is one composite rate. An area like Transportation, which has primarily single coverage results in an increase, but other areas that have primarily family coverage result in a decrease in health insurance costs. It is merely a redistribution of the expense. Higher fuel costs area a factor as well.

President Meyer also questioned the increase in Special Education expenditures. Mr. Springer replied that the figure includes salaries and benefits costs for the special education staff and it is a natural increase. He asked if the expenditure percentages shown on the graphs on page 23 have been consistent over the years. Mr. Springer replied that they do not vary by more than a percentage per year. President Meyer asked if the increase in the Football expenditures were due mainly to salary increases. Mr. Springer responded affirmatively. President Meyer commended Mr. Springer for developing the budget and thanked him for his time and effort. Mr. Springer noted

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that he could not take all of the credit. The administrators have a great deal of input in the budget process and they do a great job of maintaining their programs.

### ITEMS – PERSONNEL

Mrs. Kreischer noted that she wants to donate the \$240 Board Treasurer salary back to the district. Mr. Springer asked her to put it in writing.

Mrs. Kreischer noted that the Board seems to approve a lot of college students as after school tutors and asked how many positions were budgeted. Mrs. Lombardo gave a close estimate, but Dr. Lonoconus provided the actual numbers: 28 teachers and 20 students. Mrs. Lombardo explained that the after school program loses college student tutors when their student teaching placement is changed. Tutors are periodically hired to replace those that are lost.

President Meyer asked for clarification of the on-the-job training for students. Dr. Lonoconus noted that student workers are hired to help in the maintenance department over the summer when the staff is extremely busy. Students are also hired for the high school and middle school offices to assist with clerical duties. The practice of hiring student workers has been done for many years.

Mrs. Bell-Perry asked who would cover the study halls and cafeteria since that position is being eliminated. Dr. Lonoconus replied that Mr. Miccio will still be there and Mr. Becker and Mr. Caputo will assist.

President Meyer asked for an explanation of the revisions to the staff handbooks. Mr. Springer explained that the purpose of the revisions is to keep the handbooks and benefit packages of non-union employees in line with union contracts and benefits.

### ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

Mrs. Kathy Holleran (Food Services Director) that the district has participated in the National School Breakfast and Lunch USDA Commodities Program for many years. The district receives reimbursement for lunches served but must meet certain standards. The Food Services Department receives government commodities such as meat and cheese, which they must incorporate into the menu. There are restrictions, which pertain to fat content and nutritional value. The Childhood Obesity legislation will force the cafeteria to change the items offered in the ala carte line. Low-fat items must be offered and only limited soft drinks can be provided. Mrs. Holleran noted that she is already making changes to ease the transition. Her department is audited every two or three years. The auditor looks at one month's menu to determine fat content and nutritional value. She noted that the fat content has always been well below the 30 percent level. Mrs. Holleran noted that it is very important for eligible families to apply for free and reduced lunches. The application process is very easy. The more people that participate, the more reimbursement the district receives.

District resident, Susan Dubb, asked how parents would go about getting a better selection of food items in the ala carte line, such as yogurt and fresh fruit. Mrs. Holleran replied that those items are always available. Mrs. Dubb noted that some students' lunches have been taken away because they owe money on their account. Mrs. Holleran noted that their lunches are not taken away, but they may be given a substitute lunch, after receiving a prior warning that their account has a low or negative balance. Mrs. Holleran encourages parents to send checks or money orders instead of cash to ensure that the total amount gets deposited into their child's account. Mrs.

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Dubb also noted that it is her understanding that the cafeteria actually makes money on lunches and asked where that money is spent. Mrs. Holleran noted that the cafeteria runs like a business. It is self-sufficient and pays for the salaries and benefits of its workers. Mrs. Dubb asked if Mrs. Holleran takes suggestions from students. She replied that she has set up a Youth Advisory Council made up of 2 students from each grade (7-12). She meets with them once or twice a month to get their input and suggestions. Mrs. Dubb noted that parents are not notified when their child's account has a low or negative balance. Mrs. Holleran explained that she sends letters to parents when possible, and gives the student an envelope to pass along to their parents.

Mrs. Kreischer asked if they would be able to provide reasonable assurance to district employees that their jobs would be available for the upcoming year. Mr. Springer replied that at this point, they could.

Mr. Yeager asked if the Pennsylvania Youth Survey was used before. Mrs. Lombardo replied that it was administered four years ago.

### BOARD COMMENTS

Dr. Lonoconus noted that there were some residents in the audience that had young children with them, and due to the time, he asked President Meyer to allow them to speak during Board Comments. Mrs. Connie Lupold noted that she is the parent of a two 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students and she would like the Board to consider an additional 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for the 2005-06 school year to avoid large class sizes. Mrs. Shultz noted that as long as she is able to replace the retirees, 4<sup>th</sup> grade should not be a problem due to the shift in population. She would be able to shift a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. President Meyer asked what effect that would have on 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Mrs. Shultz responded that class sizes would be at 19, which is good at that level. The class sizes in 4<sup>th</sup> grade would be 21 to 22.

Mrs. Holleran noted that she met with the Finance Committee and requested that the breakfast and lunch prices be increased by 25 cents. The prices have not been increased in nearly ten years. Mr. Springer noted that basically, the cafeteria runs like a business. The cash flow was -\$710 for 2003-04. He expects the Cafeteria balance to decrease at the end of 2004-05 and again for the following year. He noted that it would be an appropriate time for a price increase. Some equipment needs to be replaced and the additional 25 cents would generate at least \$25,000 to \$30,000. President Meyer noted the fund balance of \$93,000. Mr. Springer commented that \$93,000 would not buy a lot of food service equipment these days. Mr. Jones asked if Mrs. Holleran is notified when an audit is going to be conducted. She noted that she is usually given two-weeks notice. The auditor observes the lunch line, examines the menus and recipes, does a nutritional analysis, checks every free and reduced lunch application, checks reimbursements and samples the food.

Mrs. Kreischer asked why the elementary students were not involved in the advisory group. Mrs. Holleran replied that she is planning an advisory group for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, but it has not yet been implemented.

Mr. Swank reported that Mr. Campbell gave an update on the bleacher dismantling. The steel showed signs of internal rusting. He noted that this was another indication that the Board made the right decision in going ahead with the bleacher replacement project.

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Mr. Yeager asked if any staff members were in jeopardy of not having enough Act 48 hours. Dr. Lonoconus noted that there are a few teachers that have credits that have not been reported by universities, but the problems are being corrected. Mr. Yeager asked if the substitute teachers have complied with Act 48. Dr. Lonoconus noted that it could be a problem for some of them. Mr. Yeager noted that he attended the Middle School Concert and it was a very good performance.

Mrs. Kreischer thanked Mrs. Lombardo for answering her question and apologized for putting her on the spot.

Mr. Yeager noted that Mr. Dyer has been teaching the Hunter Safety Course as a volunteer for 20 years. He asked if he could be recognized in some way. The Board agreed to do so at the awards banquet. Mrs. Kreischer asked if there would be some way to recognize our graduates who are serving or have served in the military. Dr. Lonoconus said he would look into it.

**RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC**

District resident, Florey Guarno, asked if Exhibit C (Resolution concerning Act 72) was available. Dr. Lonoconus replied that it would be available at the next meeting. Mr. Guarno asked if the demolition of the bleachers was done during regular work hours or after hours. Mr. Springer replied that it was done during regular work hours. Mr. Guarno asked if the Board was now considering hiring an English teacher. President Meyer replied that they would if the resources were available.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Jones and second by Swank, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch  
Board Secretary