

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

The January 16, 2006, 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 (*Absent*)

Hugh Jones

Karl Meyer

Charles Porter

Ronald Savitski

Paul Starr

Michael Yeager

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Dr. Alan J. Lonoconus, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; James Becker, Paul Caputo, James Dunkelberger and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

**AGENDA HEARING PERIOD**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Lonoconus' report included the following topics:

1.) The Facilities/Finance Committees discussed the possibility of purchasing a server. Solicitor Roberts reported that the equipment would have to be a Capital expense if purchased through Capital Reserve funds. He noted that the Board could authorize the purchase at the present meeting and wait to determine the account. Mr. Rodgers noted that there is approximately \$85,000 in the budgetary reserve. President Meyer asked for the cost of a new server. Dr. Lonoconus replied that it would be approximately \$11,000. Mr. Yeager recommended that the purchase of a server be made an action item at the next meeting.

2.) There are still seats open on the CSIU Board of Directors and the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee.

3.) Dr. Lonoconus asked the Board for permission for he and Mr. Caputo to teach courses through Alvernia College and Wilkes University as they have done in the past. He reminded the Board that they do not receive any extra remuneration for teaching the courses. The Board granted permission.

4.) Mr. Terry Sharrow's Athletic Director contract with the district is due to expire. If both parties are agreeable, the contract could continue. President Meyer noted that Dr. Lonoconus mentioned at a previous meeting that possibly the position could be more efficient, and asked for an explanation. Dr. Lonoconus noted that if there are any complaints or concerns, he wants to know about them and make appropriate changes.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Facilities - Mike Yeager, Chairperson, reported that the committee met on Thursday. They discussed the high school gymnasium bleacher replacement and backboard renovations. They also discussed the baseball field and improvements to the lower road. The plan is to advertise for bids and get the projects on the list for completion. The items are included on the agenda. The

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need for a mobile lab with 25 computers and Middle School Office options were also discussed. The first item on the list of summer projects is to drill a new well for drinking water. There would be enough drinking water for two days in one of the wells if one of the wells would go down. Mr. Porter noted that a water filtration system should be looked into prior to drilling a new well. Dr. Lonoconus noted that it was a point well taken and added that Mr. Campbell has already been looking into the project.

Finance - Karl Meyer, Chairperson, reported that under Act 72, adoption of the tentative budget has been moved up to February. The budget will be developed with the maximum allowable increase prior to referendum, approximately 5 percent. The committee discussed the timeline. The deadline for submitting a tax change would be February 20, 2006. Mr. Rodgers reported that the preliminary budget is based on a 3 percent increase in expenses and a 5 percent increase in revenue. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Yeager noted that insurance costs have only increased approximately 7 percent. Mr. Rodgers noted that the upcoming meeting would be a very important meeting in the budget process. Mr. Porter asked if the Budget Summary that was distributed at the Finance Committee meeting could be distributed to all Board members. Mr. Rodgers responded affirmatively.

Policy - Hugh Jones, Chairperson, reported that the committee discussed the following new policies:

- 137.1 Extracurricular participation by Home Education Students - requires school districts to allow all home schooled students to participate in extracurricular activities
- 140.1 Extracurricular Participation by Charter/Cyber Charter Students - requires school districts to allow students enrolled in Charter/Cyber Charter schools to participate in extracurricular activities.

If the district adopts either of the new policies, Policy 123 Interscholastic Athletics would require a change. The first reading of the new policies would take place in February. A new code of conduct was also discussed (011 Board Governance Standards/Code of Conduct). It is more extensive than the current policy. It remains to be seen if the Committee is recommending adoption of the new policy. Also discussed were the following policies: *249 Bullying, 702 Gifts, Grants, Donations* and *109.1 Library Endowment Fund*.

President Meyer asked what brought about looking into the extracurricular activities policy. Solicitor Roberts replied that it was because of Act 67. The State passed legislature requiring schools to allow home schooled students to participate in extra curricular activities. Dr. Lonoconus noted that PSBA came up with a form for weekly eligibility reporting.

Mr. Porter noted that the endowment fund could not only be used for scholarships, but also for items like a track or synthetic field. He asked if a board would have to be set up to deal with the funds. Solicitor Roberts noted that a foundation is a separate entity from a school district. Mr. Porter asked if the school could be a depository and if a separate fund would be allowed. Dr. Lonoconus replied that he is not that familiar with foundations. Those questions will be part of his investigation. Mr. Jones noted that individuals donating to student awards would be allowed to take a tax deduction through a foundation.

Mr. Yeager questioned the status of the Wellness Policy. Dr. Lonoconus reported that a lot of things needed to be determined by the State before the district could proceed. Mr. Yeager reiterated the importance of developing a School Health Council. Dr. Lonoconus noted that information might not yet be available for the February meetings. Mr. Yeager recommended that the framework be established. Dr. Lonoconus explained that the policy would address that. Mr.

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Yeager noted that an Activity Board would be a challenge. Dr. Lonoconus agreed that it would be very difficult if the State requires a certain amount of activity per day.

CSIU - No report.

Vo-Tech - Amanda Bell-Perry reported that the Joint Operating Committee (JOC) met on December 20<sup>th</sup>. They accepted the resignations of three administrators. The CMAVTS budget will come to Southern for Board approval in March. Dr. Lonoconus noted that they are very busy trying to find a Director. He will be explaining the timeline to the JOC at the next meeting. They plan to hire a director first to allow that individual's input in hiring the other administrators. He noted that the Automobile Mechanics Department is already exposing students to the new technology of hybrid electric vehicles.

Mr. Porter questioned the enrollment at CMAVTS. Dr. Lonoconus replied that it was currently around 666. Mr. Porter asked if there was a chance of combining positions. Dr. Lonoconus replied that they haven't discussed that because of the nature of the positions. Mrs. Bell-Perry reported that the job descriptions would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORTS**

On a motion by Yeager and second by Savitski, the Treasurer's Reports were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

#### **MINUTES AND INVOICES**

On a motion by Jones and second by Yeager, the minutes of November 14 and 21 (as amended), 2005, and December 5 (Reorganization meeting) and December 5 (Special meeting/as amended), 2005, were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Jones, General Fund invoices in the amount of \$819,554.83 and Capital Reserve Fund invoices in the amount of \$5,645.35 were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

#### **ITEMS – FISCAL**

On a motion by Yeager and second by Jones, budgetary transfers in the 2005-2006 budget to ensure proper accounting (**per Exhibit A**) were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Jones, to pay the following invoice from the Capital Project Fund was presented for approval:

- Howard Organization, Inc. (Final) - \$94,000.00

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Jones, to authorize the administration to solicit bids for improvements to the baseball field to include a sod infield and improvements to the road to the lower fields including widening to two lanes and improvements to drainage, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Savitski, to authorize the administration to solicit bids for High School Gymnasium Bleacher Replacement and Basketball Backstop Renovations was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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On a motion by Yeager and second by Bell-Perry, to establish the rate for Substitute Maintenance Worker at \$9.00 per hour was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

**ITEMS – PERSONNEL**

President Meyer was unable to obtain a motion to approve a Bus Starter position effective January 17, 2006 therefore no action was taken.

On a motion by Jones and second by Yeager, employment of Ryan Mensch as an After School Tutor effective January 17, 2006 (pending completion of all employment requirements) at a rate of \$10 per hour, which will come from proceeds of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Grant, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Bell-Perry, the addition of the following individuals to the 2005-2006 Substitute List effective as listed (pending completion of all employment requirements) was presented for approval:

- Brian Leffler (Maintenance) - effective December 9, 2005
- Susan Griscavage (K-12) - effective January 17, 2006
- LuAn Keller (K-12) - effective January 17, 2006
- Rebecca Neyhard (Elementary) - effective January 17, 2006

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Yeager, the resignation of Paul Starr from the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee effective January 16, 2006, was presented for acceptance. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Savitski, the appointment of Michael Yeager as a Representative on the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee to complete the unexpired term of Paul Starr through November 30, 2006, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Bell-Perry, the appointment of Karl Meyer as an Alternate Representative on the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

**ITEMS – POLICY AND PROGRAMS**

On a motion by Yeager and second by Savitski, the Southern Columbia Area School District Professional Education Plan (September 2005 to September 2008) and its various action plans (A, B, C, D, E and F) were presented for approval. Mr. Porter noted that he would not approve the plan if PULSE were part of it. Mr. Yeager noted that all PULSE related items were to be eliminated from the plan. Mr. Porter also asked how 4-MAT training would be handled. He stated that over a two-year period, Southern had lost approximately 300 instructional teacher days for 4-MAT training. He noted that one of Southern's administrators was hired by the CSIU

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to provide 4-MAT instruction to Shamokin and Mt. Carmel teachers during the summer, and asked why it wasn't offered to Southern faculty in the same manner by the same administrator instead of pulling teachers out of class. Dr. Lonoconus noted that the main reason is because the teachers at Shamokin and Mt. Carmel were paid to attend the training during the summer. Mr. Porter noted that if Act 48 credit is offered for what the district feels is needed, that is acceptable. Dr. Lonoconus agrees that Act 48 opportunities could be offered through the summer. It is not the administrators' intent to pull teachers out of the classroom, but it is not always possible to avoid it. Two or three of the non-instructional days are already used for parent/teacher conferences and other purposes. Mr. Porter mentioned Act 80 days. Mr. Yeager noted that Act 80 days are unfair to the students because they do take away instructional time. Dr. Lonoconus agreed that the administration likes to avoid using Act 80 days. Dr. Lonoconus noted that professional development takes place every time teachers get together to work on issues, but they do not usually get Act 48 credit. He noted that there is a time factor involved. If they would pack all professional development into the non-instructional days, they would not get other things done that need to be accomplished. Dr. Lonoconus assured the Board that he would check the Professional Education Plan prior to Board approval. Mr. Porter noted that he would like to see professional development conducted during faculty meeting time if not being used for a faculty meeting and he would also like to see it stressed on professional development days. Mr. Caputo reported that he holds a faculty meeting following the second Board meeting each month. At the next meeting, Mr. Davis is going to demonstrate a new program regarding online field trip permission forms. The meetings are utilized to disseminate information to the faculty. On a motion by Porter and second by Savitski, to table the motion until the next meeting was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Savitski, the Hearing Report and Adjudication pertaining to Student Disciplinary Matter 2005-1 was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Jones, the 2006-2007 Course Selections for grades 9-12 (**Exhibit B**) were presented for approval. Prior to voting, Mr. Caputo explained that Accounting I or II would be offered as an additional math credit. In the past, Accounting was offered as a math credit. In the future, a fourth math credit will be required. Accounting I or II would be an excellent choice for students who are not going on to further education and are taking a career path. Mr. Jones questioned the foreign language courses through distance learning. Mr. Caputo explained that Latin I and II are offered through Distance Learning with Berwick Area School District. The district has been participating in Distance Learning courses for the past six or seven years. Mr. Jones asked how many students would be required for the course. Mr. Caputo noted that the instructor would be interested in a single student. Mr. Porter asked if the district is participating in the ACE Program. Dr. Lonoconus replied that the program has been offered, but noted that if it doesn't meet a student's time schedule or if enrollment is full, students cannot get into a class. Mr. Porter asked if advanced placement classes consist of one or two students, and commented that other districts have minimum class size requirements. Mr. Caputo noted that the need for an advanced placement course may be dictated by the Gifted Program. Mr. Yeager added that if a course were written into an IEP, then the district would need to offer it. Mr. Porter asked if disclaimers are provided to notify students that if there are not enough students enrolled in a course it will not be offered. Mr. Caputo replied that the students are told that throughout the process. Some courses have to be dropped because of low

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enrollment. Mr. Porter asked if it would protect the district to offer the disclaimer. Mr. Caputo replied that it would not hurt to include it. Mr. Porter asked if dual enrollment could be part of a Gifted IEP. Dr. Lonoconus noted that in some cases it fits into the schedule, but it doesn't work for all students in the Gifted Program. It can take away from some of their high school experience because of night classes. Travel can also be an inconvenience. That is why Distance Learning courses have worked so well. Mr. Dunkelberger noted that if parents request that we provide a program for a child with an IEP, it is our responsibility to provide it.

Mr. Caputo also pointed out that seniors who were not proficient on the PSSA Math test were required to take a PSSA remedial course. They have decided to take a proactive approach and also make the course available to juniors. Mr. Porter noted that he has some aversion to teaching to the test. Mr. Caputo explained that the assessment must be aligned to the standards. Everything that goes on in the classroom is teaching to the test as long as the curriculum is standards driven. Mr. Porter asked if stickers are placed on diplomas. Mr. Caputo replied that students receive certificates if they are proficient and seals on the certificates if they are advanced. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Yeager commented that he thought that the grading system was approved last year. Mr. Caputo noted that it was discussed but he could find no formal Board action. The necessity of Board approval for the grading scale would be determined prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Yeager reported that the topics for the Curriculum Committee discussion during the next Board meeting would include the Science Curriculum and Assessment Anchors.

### **RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Yeager and second by Jones, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch  
Board Secretary