

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

The June 12, 2006 Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Auditorium at 7:35 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

Thomas Slusser
Paul Starr
Michael Yeager (*Absent*)

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Alan J. Lonoconus, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Roy Clippinger, Pat Shultz, James Becker, Paul Caputo, James Dunkelberger and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; many 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.) Mr. Steve Walk, Director of Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School, presented a plaque to Dr. Lonoconus for his service to Vo-Tech as Superintendent of Record for the 2005-2006 school year and commended him for a job well done. Dr. Lonoconus commented that he learned a great deal about CMAVTS during his time as Superintendent of Record.
- 2.) Dr. Lonoconus noted that the graduation ceremony went well at Bloomsburg University. He commended the staff and administration for organizing the event.
- 3.) He attended a meeting during the previous week in Shamokin with representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection and Clean Ways. Senator Rhodes and Senator Gordner were in attendance. They are trying to get students more involved in mine cleanup projects. The program would fit in well with the Envirothon classes.
- 4.) Mrs. Lombardo reported that she was contacted a few months ago by Bloomsburg University to collaborate with a student on a grant application as part of a course assignment. The grant application was successful and the district would receive \$4,300 to purchase pedometers for the entire elementary student population, some educational materials and professional development for the Physical Education teachers. A motion to accept the grant would be included on the next agenda.
- 5.) Dr. Lonoconus received information from the Governor's office concerning a possible influenza pandemic. There will be a meeting on June 22 at Williamsport. The discussion will focus on how buildings would be utilized should an influenza pandemic occur.

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6.) He reminded the Board about a professional development opportunity that he had previously discussed with them. A three-credit graduate course could be offered on campus at a very reasonable cost. With the Board's approval, he would make arrangements to proceed with the course offering. The Board gave approval.

President Meyer thanked the administration for closing the year well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Paul Starr, Chairperson, reported that some residents have expressed an interest in having access to the weight room during the summer. Coach Roth said that it would be manned with volunteer supervisors. Dr. Lonoconus reported that many alumni would also like to use the weight room. A time would be set aside when it would only be open to alumni and the rest of the building would be secure. Volunteer supervisors would be appointed. A certified individual requested it and he is willing to donate his time. The weight room would be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. June through August. He noted that Mr. Rodgers would clear it with the insurance carrier. President Meyer commented that use of the weight room should be offered to the public.

Mr. Starr also reported that the "pay to participate" issue resurfaced, but there was little interest. The Cheerleaders have requested new uniforms. Mr. Sharrow will check the budget. Uniform styles were approved by the Activities Committee members. The committee met with representatives from the various Booster organizations to get an update on officers. The booster organizations were informed that they should have their books audited by an outside source and report to Mr. Caputo. President Meyer asked if that was a requirement. Dr. Lonoconus replied that it had been a gentlemen's agreement and had worked well. There has been a good relationship between the booster organizations and the district.

Facilities & Services - Dan Rodgers, Business Manager, reported that the committee discussed the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds position. No bids were received for the baseball field improvements and two bids were received for the roadway. Preparation for gym bleacher project is underway. The company has removed the partition. The old bleachers would be removed by a volunteer group. A list of summer projects was provided and would be discussed further in July.

Solicitor Roberts reported that an executive session would be held following the meeting to discuss personnel

Finance - Charlie Porter, committee member, reported that the committee met on June 1st. Fuel oil prices increased from \$1.54 to \$2.09. The committee questioned whether fuel oil could be purchased in the open market. Mr. Rodgers contacted CSIU and the district is already locked in. Two bids were received for fuel oil; \$2.32 fixed and \$2.09 fluctuating rate. The committee discussed using the Fund Balance to purchase a large quantity of fuel oil, but the district would not have storage capabilities.

The committee was presented with a budget that was approximately \$700,000 in the red. A millage increase could take the deficit down to \$400,000. The Board was not satisfied and asked the administration to prioritize. At the next committee meeting, Mr. Rodgers presented revised figures. A pay to play fee was presented. Board members were not in favor. A pay to park fee was also presented and the Board was in agreement. Dr. Lonoconus reported that the administration tried to protect the academic side. There is a parking problem. The pay to park concept would also give the administration a better idea of who is in the lot.

A total increase of \$7,000 was included in the athletic budget for salaries. The Board agreed to cut the increase to \$3,500. Two custodians would not be replaced. Hiring an acting

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superintendent could save approximately \$50,000. There is still a question of State funding in the budget. The Board was not comfortable with taking \$143,000 out of the Fund Balance. They are anticipating an additional \$185,000 from the State if Governor Rendell's proposed budget is passed. The first priority would be to replace a custodian and any remainder of funds would go to supplies.

Mr. Rodgers reported that the total revenue is projected at \$14,233,000 and total expenses at \$14,376,000 for a 3.4 percent increase. The budget includes a 1 mil increase in Columbia County and .51 mil increase in Northumberland County. A conservative 2 percent increase in basic subsidy. The original proposed use of Fund Balance was \$359,000. The administration and Finance Committee proposed cuts of \$216,000 resulting in a new proposed use of \$143,000 from the Fund Balance to balance the 2006-2007 budget. Dr. Lonoconus noted that there were two major items that lead to the increase, the huge increase in fuel oil costs and the decision that the Board made last August to hire an additional elementary teacher. President Meyer asked what the millage increase would mean for the average household. Mr. Rodgers noted that based on quick calculations, the average household with an appraisal value of \$80,000 would increase \$30 in Columbia County and \$15 in Northumberland County.

ITEMS – TREASURER'S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

ITEMS – FISCAL

Mr. Porter noted that Dr. Lonoconus asked the administrators to purchase some of next year's supplies in this year's budget. He asked if that could be tracked for future budgeting purposes. Dr. Lonoconus asked if they could also track the cuts and the supplies that they didn't purchase to see what kind of impact that has made on the budget. They took a 10 percent decrease in supplies and have had a zero percent increase for the past three years. Mr. Porter noted that he is not questioning the process and also stated that Mr. Clippinger indicated that there are some discounts offered for purchases made prior to July 1st.

Mr. Porter asked if requests for proposals are put out for banks. Mr. Rodgers noted that he inherited the accounts. President Meyer noted that the Board tries to distribute business throughout the community.

Mr. Slusser asked if the Board was still looking at two new buses. Mr. Rodgers replied that he spoke with the Transportation Department and the administrators and they are recommending new buses. Dr. Lonoconus added that there was not that much difference between the new and used buses.

Mr. Rodgers reported that two bids were received for the roadway project; HRI - \$15,795 and Pennsy Supply, Inc. - \$14,000. There was a question as to whether the project could be done in house. The cost would be approximately \$11,000 not including time for two employees. The administration is recommending that the company perform the work. The company is bonded and would guarantee their work. Solicitor Roberts noted that the district would need to get a mandate waiver.

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ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Bell-Perry and second by Slusser, to accept the resignation of Alan J. Lonoconus as Superintendent effective July 7, 2006, was presented for approval. Dr. Lonoconus has been with the district since August 1980. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote. President Meyer thanked Dr. Lonoconus for his service and dedication to the district, which was followed by a standing ovation.

On a motion by Porter and second by Bell-Perry, to accept the resignation of James Becker as Middle School Principal effective July 4, 2006 was presented for approval. Mr. Becker has been with the district since August 1993. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Slusser and second by Bell-Perry, to accept the resignation of James Dunkelberger as Director of Special Education and Student Services effective July 21, 2006, was presented for approval. Mr. Dunkelberger has been with the district since June 1999. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bell-Perry and second by Porter, to accept the resignation for retirement of Patricia Shultz as Elementary Principal effective January 2, 2007, was presented for approval. Mrs. Shultz has been with the district since May 1974. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Savitski, to accept the resignation of Maurice L. Earley as Head Golf Coach effective May 11, 2006, was presented for approval. Mr. Earley has been with the district since September 1995. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bell-Perry and second by Slusser, payment of a \$500 stipend to Louise Baran, Dramatics Club Advisor for her assistance with the Encore production was presented for approval. (The stipend would replace the \$1,161. stipend approved July 11, 2005.) The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Starr, to designate Dr. Francis Bobek and Dr. James Joseph (Elysburg) as School Physicians for the 2006-2007 school year (**per Exhibit G**) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bell-Perry and second by Slusser, Dr. David J. Leshock (Bloomsburg) as Consultant to the Dental Hygiene program for the 2006-2007 school year to include a \$50 consultant fee was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Porter, personnel (per Exhibit H) for the Southern Columbia 2006 Summer Fun-da-Mentals Program (pending completion of all employment requirements) were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Starr and second by Slusser, the first reading of Policy 246 Student Wellness (per Exhibit I) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Slusser and second by Jones, the donation from the Southern Columbia High School Gymnasium to the Ralpho Municipal Gym of as many bleacher sections as they want was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Mrs. Dana Lucas, asked about allocating funds to the Capital Reserve fund. Mr. Rodgers replied that the projected balance for July 1st would be \$530,000. Mrs. Lucas noted that possibly the Board could use the Capital Reserve funds instead of a tax increase. She also asked if anyone has looked at revising the bus routes. She reported that her child is on the bus for one hour. President Meyer responded that the routes are looked at every year. Dr. Lonoconus noted that a kindergarten student could walk 1.5 miles to a bus stop, but Southern tries to get the buses door to door whenever possible.

District resident, Mr. Rick Swank, thanked all of the administrators. A standing ovation followed in their honor. Mr. Swank referred to the Code of Ethics for school directors and noted that Board members are expected to represent all taxpayers as a whole, not just a certain group. He noted that he is really upset because the administrators are leaving and he doesn't want to see the trend continue. He doesn't like to see the media feeding on issues, as it is affecting the image of the school. He noted that in certain aspects some Board members are bullying the administrators.

District resident, Mr. Carl Mowery, noted that he had heard that a 6th grade teacher would be moved to 5th grade and the 6th grade teacher would not be replaced. Mr. Becker replied that there are some changes being made, but they are interviewing for a 6th grade teacher.

District resident, Mr. Blaine Madara, thanked the Board for donating the bleachers to the Ralpho Gym. He stated that he realizes that the Board is trying to crunch numbers, but feels they are cutting down past bare bones by not replacing custodians. The company came in and gave a presentation and showed the dirty condition of the buildings. He noted that the Board should already know and expect the buildings to be dirty because they are short-handed. He asked how far the Board intended to go. He noted that from coming to meetings, he realizes the Board is doing its best, but he feels that they are only worrying about money and not the students' education. President Meyer asked if people are willing to pay increased taxes. The public responded with applause. Mr. Madara stated that the Board seems to be "nickel and diming" everything and missing the big picture. He asked the status of the ethics investigation into the camera issue. President Meyer deferred to Dr. Lonoconus and gave him the option of answering the question. Dr. Lonoconus replied that he was notified by the Ethics Commission that the investigation was closed. President Meyer stated that it was a cowardly act on someone's part. Mr. Madara stated that unfortunately, the Board was partly to blame for what followed. The district would pay considerably more for the equipment than the original quote. He noted that it takes three top-notch administrators to resign before people come to Board meetings.

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District resident, Mr. Tim Adams, stated that he is sorry to see the people leave, but they need to focus on the good things. He noted that Southern is one of the best districts in the area and everyone needs to work together to keep it that way.

District resident, Mr. Curt Stellfox, reported that he has been a coach for 21 years. He is not in it for the money; he does it because he loves the district and the students. He noted that the district has become a circus in the newspaper. The district has great students that have done great things. His team had 21 wins this past season, but that is not the important number; it is the 19 students on his team that are on the honor roll and over half of them are on the distinguished honor roll. He is very glad to hear that the Board is not cutting any teachers. He noted that the Board members are here to represent the people who voted for them, but they are also here to represent the students.

District resident, Mrs. Lori Swank, stated that it is not so much that the Board has different opinions, but the way they present themselves. She noted that the media circus needs to stop.

District resident, Mrs. Leslie Bryden, asked if the Board is considering cutting AP and college courses. Dr. Meyer responded negatively.

District resident, Mr. Terry Faust, reported that he gets around to a lot of other school districts, and it seems that cuts are always made in the custodial department. He feels that those are positions are some of the most important. He asked the Board to reconsider cutting the custodial positions.

District resident, Nathaniel Green, noted that he was curious as to how the district would get top-notch individuals to fill the vacancies. Dr. Lonoconus replied that the positions have been advertised. Previously CSIU and PSBA have been involved in the search process.

District resident, Mr. Karl Hansen, noted that an entire administrative unit needs to be replaced. He recommended that the Board look at increasing the budget to pay for experienced individuals.

District resident, Mr. John Conaghan, asked who would be in charge of the school district after Dr. Lonoconus' departure. He noted that there may be a time when no one is running the district. Other districts recognize the quality of the administrators that are leaving.

Mrs. Swank asked if a citizen advisory committee could please be involved in the superintendent search.

District resident, Mr. Linda Kreischer, asked if the deadline had passed for the positions and how many applications were received. Dr. Lonoconus replied that the deadline was June 6th. Two applications were received for Superintendent, four were received for Director of Special Education and Student Services but one withdrew and at least seven were received for Middle School Principal.

Mrs. Lucas noted that if agencies are available, the Board should consider using their services.

Mr. Swank asked when the administrators would be leaving. President Meyer responded that Mr. Becker's last day is July 1st, Mr. Dunkelberger's last day is July 21st and Dr. Lonoconus' last day is July 7th.

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ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Jones and second by Slusser, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary