

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

The October 8, 2007, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:43 p.m. with Vice President Michael Yeager in charge of the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

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

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Elsie Bittner (*Absent*)  
Hugh Jones  
Karl Meyer (*Absent*)

Charles Porter  
Ronald Savitski  
Thomas Slusser

Paul Starr  
Michael Yeager

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles Reh, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Roy Clippinger, Joseph Shirvinski, Roger Nunkester, James Becker, Robert Mehalick and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

**AGENDA HEARING PERIOD**

Vice President Yeager announced that all Personnel Items, as well as the board vacancy item and one fiscal item on the agenda would be considered action items. Mr. Slusser requested that Personnel Item B pertaining to the Business Manager's salary be a discussion item only.

**BOARD VACANCY**

Two candidates for the Region II board vacancy, Ms. Annie Morgan and Mr. Timothy Benner, were present. A brief interview of each candidate was conducted. Ms. Morgan moved to Catawissa from Alaska approximately six years ago and has a daughter in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Benner stated that he has been affiliated with the Catawissa Redskins for ten years and has lived in the district for 17 years. He has two children; one is 15 years old and the other is 12. He would like to become a member of the board to enable himself to look at both sides of issues and determine which is best. Ms. Morgan reported that she has worked with special needs children and has had a lot of training in that area. Mr. Benner stated that his greatest sense of pride in the district was learning that a large number of the football players were on the honor roll. He noted that he stresses to his midget teams that education comes first. Ms. Morgan stated that she feels that a lot of changes have been made over the past few years and she feels the district is moving in a positive direction and would like to be part of facilitating those changes. She stated that the exceptional education provided at Southern is her biggest pride. Mr. Benner stated that as president of the Redskins organization, he gets things thrown at him from all directions and he has to consider the pros and cons and make decisions that are best for the organization. Both candidates were made aware of the time commitment involved in serving on the board.

Mr. Porter asked the candidates to share their thoughts on the budgetary process and their feelings on the end result. Mr. Benner stated that once he would have all of the information, he would be more than willing to give his input and listen to input of others. Ms. Morgan stated that

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it is important to listen to expert opinions as to what is needed and what can be done. Mr. Porter asked how the candidates would balance between taxpayers and requests for more money. Ms. Morgan stated that the most important issue is the kids. She noted that taxpayers are never happy about taxes. The directors have to respect that they are dealing with others money. Mr. Benner agrees that the most important issue is the kids. The directors need to determine what is in the best interest of the district.

Mr. Jones asked if either Ms. Morgan or Mr. Benner were candidates for the upcoming election. Ms. Morgan replied that she ran a write-in campaign in the primary election. Vice President Yeager called for a motion.

On a motion by Savitski and second by Porter, to appoint Timothy Benner to fill the Region II vacancy on the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors effective October 8, 2007. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote. The board secretary administered the oath of office to Mr. Benner and he was seated on the board at 8:04 p.m.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

- 1.) He welcomed Mr. Benner to the board.
- 2.) District Magistrate, Mr. Craig Long, stated that he was planning an event that would hopefully take place on May 8, 2008. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the celebration of Law Day. The celebration has been held at the Bloomsburg Fair grounds in the past. Lunch and transportation were issues; therefore he would like to bring the celebration to the campus of Southern Columbia this year. There would be numerous law enforcement agencies present. He would like to combine this event with the CTC Community Safety Day. He would like to invite various agencies, such as fire companies, poison control center, DCNR, etc. There should be no cost to the school district. A lot of corporate sponsors are involved. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students would go through the stations, but the other classes would have access to the resources throughout the day. Mr. Long stated that he would come in the day before to touch base with the students and let them know what to expect. The board agreed that it would be a great opportunity for the students.
- 3.) The Emergency School Safety Plan is on the agenda as a discussion item and would be acted upon at the next meeting. Mr. Reh thanked the administrators for their input and gave a brief explanation of the plan. He noted that if an emergency should arise, having a plan in place would be very beneficial to the district. Mr. Shirvinski replied that it took the elementary building ten minutes to evacuate to the football field during the drill.
- 4.) He announced that the negotiations meeting scheduled for Wednesday has been cancelled.
- 5.) Mr. Clippinger will report on PSSA results at the next board meeting.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Activities - The meeting was cancelled.

Facilities & Services - Michael Yeager, Chairperson, reported that the committee met the previous Thursday. Ms. Kristen Vitkauskus gave a presentation on Rain Gardens and a proposal to reduce some of the run-off water. The control systems for the high school gymnasium air handling units were discussed. The bid award is on the agenda. The high school hot water heater has some issues. Different options are being considered. The priority list was discussed. Estimates were received for filling and sealing the parking lots. It was decided that the high school

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lot should be done first to prevent further deterioration. The flashing traffic lights and well pipeline was discussed. The Classrooms For the Future project is consuming a lot of maintenance hours through installation of cameras and projectors. Abraczinskas Nurseries have offered to donate a bulldozer for the lower fields. The district would need to pay for the fuel and provide an operator. Replacement of the elementary windows and security cameras were discussed. Mr. Rodgers reported that the administration would like to take a tour of the Milton School District to see what they have done. The possibility of a five-year plan for facilities was discussed.

Finance - Charlie Porter, reported that Eric Dewald from Central Susquehanna Community Foundations gave a presentation to the committee. They have been talking about establishing a foundation by which people can donate and designate money above and beyond their taxes. The school itself does not need a foundation designation. Individuals can get tax breaks, but some corporations and organizations may receive advantages and additional tax incentives by donating to a 501C3 organization. The Central Susquehanna Community Foundation is a 501C3 corporation. If the district would become part of the Foundation, it would not lose any autonomy. Decisions would be made by an appointed group, but the Central Susquehanna Community Foundation would manage the foundation and take care of expenses. The district's cost would be one to two percent of the funds collected.

The Foundation also handles scholarship funds, but there are limitations. Scholarship funds may require a minimum of \$10,000. It will be the focus of next month's Finance meeting and they intend to bring it to the board in November. If a corporation commits a one-year donation for an educational project, they would get a 75 percent write-off on their state taxes. If they would commit for two years, they would get a 90 percent write-off on their state taxes. There are some huge incentives involved. The committee will be discussing bylaws and an advisory board.

Mr. Shirvinski gave a brief presentation on the "Science, It's Elementary" grant. There is a position available through the grant for \$3,500, which he will be undertaking after the school day. Mr. Shirvinski explained that the position of Support On Site (SOS) is defined in the grant as basically a coordinator for the program.

Mr. Porter reported that there will be a bulk surplus sale consisting of one used bus, two or three vans, the band truck and used shop equipment. They discussed grants for going green. He noted that there are grants available. The Pennsylvania Energy Harvest Grant has an average award of \$200,000. The application is due June 15<sup>th</sup> and he has a copy of last year's grant application. Mr. Porter noted that the district needs to prepare for energy deregulation. The Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority Grant is available to municipalities and school districts. The average grant is \$375,000 and the maximum is \$1,000,000. The Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant is also available. Some schools are going with bio-diesel.

CSIU - Mr. Porter attended the last meeting. When PPL came to the area, there was a lot of money set aside for PenCon Foundation Scholarships. School districts have not been taking advantage of the scholarships and students need to be informed. Another item of discussion was regarding a House Bill that Governor Rendell has put forth concerning paying for school employees health insurance. He noted that it could affect districts where employees are co-paying part of the health care costs.

Vo-Tech - Mr. Yeager reported that they had received no applications for the high school principal position.

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### ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

#### ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Savitski and second by Slusser, to award the bid for the High School Gymnasium Indoor Air Handling Unit Control Systems Replacement Project to N.R.G. Controls North, Inc., Sunbury, at a cost of \$19,800 (**per Exhibit B**) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Mr. Reh commented on the Commons Cents Program. He noted that most superintendents in the IU feel that it is something that the Heartland Coalition would handle. The feedback he is getting from other superintendents is that they view it as a political device that Governor Rendell is undertaking and that the Heartland Coalition is already meeting some of these needs. He noted that he will have more feedback after his upcoming meeting with area superintendents.

On a motion by Jones and second by Savitski, to authorize Kristen Vitkauskas to move forward and pursue grant money to initiate the Raingarden Project was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

#### ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Jones and second by Savitski, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. Salaries for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years for Administrators subject to the District's Act 93 Plan (**per Exhibit D**).
- B. Salary of Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager, at \$70,000 for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.
- C. Employment of Cassidy Shults as Head Varsity Wrestling Coach for the 2007-2008 school year with 18 points and a salary of \$3,430.
- D. To change Marc Longenhagen from Assistant Varsity Wrestling Coach to Head Junior High Wrestling Coach for the 2007-2008 school year with 16.25 points and a salary of \$2,321.
- E. Employment of James Geffken as Assistant Junior High Wrestling Coach for the 2007-2008 school year with 11.75 points and a salary of \$1,439.
- F. To accept the resignation of Tracey Boyer from the position of full-time Instructional Aide effective October 5, 2007. Ms. Boyer has served in the positions since January 2007.
- G. To change Maria C. Callahan from an Instructional Substitute to full-time Learning Support Teacher effective October 9, 2007 (pending completion of all employment requirements) at Step 1 of the Bachelor's Salary Schedule (\$34,519.00\*); benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

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*\*Salary is subject to change due to current contract negotiations.*

- H. The addition of Amy Kauffman to the 2007-2008 Substitute List and to acknowledge that she will serve as Long-Term Substitute Learning Support Teacher beginning October 9, 2007, through the end of the 2007-2008 school year (pending completion of all employment requirements).
- I. To adopt a Memorandum of Agreement between Southern Columbia Area School District and Council 86 AFSCME, FL-CIO and Local 1864 pertaining to minimum wage requirements (**per Exhibit E**).
- J. Employment of the following individuals for the After School Tutoring program effective September 18, 2007, at their contracted rates, which will come from proceeds of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Grant (all employment requirements have been satisfied):
- Jean Atherton
  - Anthony Pecora
  - Nadeen Swab
  - Suzanne Harder
- K. The addition of the following individuals to the 2007-2008 Substitute List effective October 9, 2007 (pending completion of all employment requirements):
- Kelly Roadarmel (Aide)
  - Joy Fronk (Clerical)
  - Darlene Rairie-Thomas (Art K-12)
  - Gary Todd (Business/Computer Information/Technology K-12)
- L. To change Thomas Lauer from substitute Bus/Van Driver to Regular Run Bus Driver effective October 9, 2007, (pending completion of all employment requirements); salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- M. To accept the resignation of Michael Williams from the position of Ski Club Advisor effective October 4, 2007. Mr. Williams has served in this position since September 1992.
- N. To accept the resignation for retirement of Mary Ann Snarski from the position of 3-Hour Cafeteria Worker effective October 15, 2007. Mrs. Snarski has been with the district since September 2002.
- O. To accept the resignation of Steven Sirota from the position of Technology Education Teacher effective October 19, 2007. Mr. Sirota has been in the position since August 23, 2007.
- P. Employment of Christine Richard as Assistant Bowling Coach for the 2007-2008 school year with 4 points and a salary of \$627.

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Prior to voting, Mr. Porter requested an executive session following the meeting to discuss personnel matters. By roll call vote, the motion carried; 6-Yes, 1-No (Slusser voted No).

### **ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS**

#### **BOARD COMMENTS**

The board members thanked the candidates for applying to serve on the board. Mr. Porter reported that the numerous field trips in the spring affect the athletes who are involved in spring sports. A suggestion was made to spread the trips throughout the year. It was determined that the staff chooses the dates for their individual field trips.

#### **RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC**

District resident, Mr. Frank Hanley, expressed some concerns about the condition of the buildings, in particular the entrance of the high school gymnasium, broken lenses on emergency lighting, roof leaks in the elementary building, heating and cooling in the elementary and issues with the expansion joints. He also expressed concern over the surplus desks and chairs located in the kindergarten porch area. The board members encouraged Mr. Hanley to attend the Facilities Committee meetings which are held the first Thursday of each month.

District resident, Mr. Ron Dingle, expressed concern over students being harassed by a bus driver and asked how the situation can be corrected. He stated that they have had ongoing problems with a particular driver and noted that the driver was switched to another run. Mr. Reh stated that Mrs. Pheasant is currently switching some runs, but if she does not address his concerns, Mr. Dingle should contact him directly. Mr. Dingle stated that he already spoke with the middle school principal and he was not satisfied with the outcome. Mr. Nunkester informed Mr. Dingle that if he has a problem with a bus driver he should contact Mrs. Pheasant and she would set up a meeting with the bus driver and he would be more than happy to sit in on the meeting.

District resident, Ms. Shawna Splain, stated that she met with Mrs. Pheasant, Mr. Nunkester and several bus drivers. She stated that she went through the proper channels and the problem is still not solved. Mr. Reh stated that this is the first time he has heard about the issue. District resident, Ms. Sandy Bittner, also expressed concern over the same bus driver and read a statement regarding the driver's actions. Mrs. Bittner stated that she has filed a harassment complaint against the driver. Mr. Reh stated that he would contact Mrs. Pheasant the next morning, as this was the first he was hearing these details.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Jones and second by Porter, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch  
Board Secretary