

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

The February 11, 2008, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:56 p.m. with President Michael Yeager in charge of the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

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

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Timothy Benner	Thomas Slusser	David Stellfox ( <i>Absent</i> )
Charles Porter	Paul Starr ( <i>Absent</i> )	Michael Yeager
Ronald Savitski ( <i>Arrived 7:58</i> )	Richard Steele ( <i>Absent</i> )	John Yocum

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

**AGENDA HEARING PERIOD**

President Yeager announced that Fiscal Item C, all Personnel Items and Policy & Programs Item D on the agenda would be considered action items. He also announced that the board held three executive sessions since the last meeting, and an executive session would be held following the meeting. The purpose of all of the sessions was to discuss personnel matters.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

- 1.) Mr. Rodgers gave a "Finance 101" presentation on school finance.
- 2.) Mr. Reh reported that on the previous Thursday, he and Mr. Becker met with the senior students to discuss the graduation program. Policy #217 Graduation Requirements states that the superintendent shall plan and execute a graduation ceremony which fittingly marks this important achievement. He believes that he and Mr. Becker have provided a program that will fittingly mark with dignity a graduation program. It also states that a valedictorian and salutatorian shall be chosen and recognized at graduation ceremonies for each graduation class. With that in mind, they developed a program which included remarks from the valedictorian and salutatorian. They also included Distinguished Alumnus recognition as part of the ceremony. A student speaker and staff speaker will remain part of the program. A copy of the program was distributed to the board members with the Friday Letter. He believes it is a fitting and dignified program in accordance with board policy.

Three senior students, Marlena Casey, Meghan Duell, and Michael Joseph, read prepared statements, expressing their concern over the changes to the graduation ceremony. They requested confirmation from the board that the ceremony would go as Mr. Reh had reported and that it would include a student and staff speaker. After a lengthy discussion, the students were assured that the ceremony would go as reported. There was also discussion concerning the Distinguished Alumnus Award and the ceremony being held on a Sunday.

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Mr. Porter stated that he fully supports the Distinguished Alumnus Award. He stated that he thinks it is right to recognize individuals that have made their mark on society or upon other people. A person like that coming in to speak could be motivational to the graduates. He also commended the students for coming before the board. He assured them that they did not need to be put on the agenda as they have the right as residents of the district to attend all public board meetings.

3.) Mr. Ian McCoog received notification that Southern Columbia High School has been chosen by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Penn State University as one of nine Classrooms for the Future Model Site Schools. They were chosen out of 350 schools. Southern Columbia was chosen based on the following criteria: 1) student laptop implementation, 2) the Classrooms for The Future Coach working with teachers in the classroom, 3) teachers using technology with their students, 4) the Classrooms for the Future Coach's performance in regard to goals of the program and 5) administrative support for the program. He congratulated Mr. McCoog and the high school faculty.

Mr. Clippinger stated that he would like to have Mrs. Monick and Mr. Davis give a technology presentation to the board sometime in the spring. President Yeager asked Mr. Clippinger to make the arrangements and set a date for the presentation.

4.) Mr. Reh strongly recommended that the board approve the Resolution (Exhibit E) pertaining to the unfair attribution of PSSA scores. President Yeager announced that it would be changed to an action item and opened it for public discussion.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Mr. Becker announced that the Activities Committee would be meeting with the Fall sports coaches on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

Facilities & Services - Michael Yeager, Chairperson, reported that the meeting began at 6:00 p.m. with "Finance 101" presented by Mr. Rodgers. They discussed the Lowes grant and an appropriate timeline, a security system, the building roofs and the hot water heater in the high school building. There will be an alternative energy seminar at Bloomsburg Fair Grounds on March 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. They discussed wind power, but were advised that a consistent 10-12 mph wind would be necessary. Solar power seems to be more appropriate for the district. The board members were reminded to turn in their priority lists. They discussed contracting out for grass mowing. Mr. Rodgers reported that a paving company that did some work in the Catawissa Borough did a thorough walk-through with Mr. Geffken and would report back to him concerning their recommendations for sealing and top-coating the parking lots. The elementary gym/cafeteria windows were also discussed. Mr. Porter reported that they also discussed the possibility of hiring part-time help for mowing. President Yeager recommended that the possibility of contracting out to have all of the floors done at once should be considered.

Mr. Slusser asked about the road to the lower fields. Mr. Rodgers stated that he could contact the contractor that did the work, but he is not hopeful that they will do anything at this time. The committee discussed setting up a facilities walk-through with Mr. Geffken.

Finance - Charlie Porter, Chairperson reported that Mr. Mike Sokoloski came to the meeting and explained the Vo-Tech budget process. The overall increase to their budget is a proposed 2.82 percent. Southern Columbia's portion increased approximately 7 percent. The district could save approximately \$1,000 per month by switching to Service Electric for long distance service. The CSIU grant for increasing bandwidth was discussed. There was a consensus among the board that the district would not be interested in entering into an agreement with the Central Susquehanna Foundation unless the irrevocable clause would be removed. They would also like some assurance

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as to what would happen to district money if the Foundation would cease to exist. Some scholarship concerns were addressed, however some clarification is still needed. The committee agreed to go through the CSIU for fuel bids again this year. The budget calendar is moving along as scheduled. The district will be requesting proposals from waste removal/recycling contractors. The audit services were discussed. Proposals will also be requested for audit services on a 3-year basis. Other issues discussed were seal coating and hiring another Track coach because the threshold for participants will be reached. The biggest issue was that Mr. Reh brought a proposal to the committee to consider a building project. The district is currently educating 26 students for Life Skills, Emotional Support and/or alternative education outside the district. The district is currently paying \$325,130 for those services. The proposed building project would consist of classrooms and a gym as a way to bring those students back into the district. He pulled the plan that had gone to referendum. He also contacted E. I. Associates who had put the plan together. The committee discussed that if the board decides to go that route, it would need to look at several architects and a needs assessment would be done. Mr. Reh had asked Mr. Rodgers to determine how much money could be borrowed without reaching the threshold for going to referendum. Mr. Rodgers reported that the amount was approximately \$15 to \$17 million.

A two-prong approach of energy savings and alternative energy generating was discussed. Mr. Rodgers was going to contact PPL to see what type of increase the district should expect. Mr. Porter proposed holding an alternative energy seminar. He offered to make the contacts. He would like to attend the seminar being held at the Bloomsburg Fair Grounds, but possibly still put one on for the district.

Mr. Slusser recommended that the board consider replacing bus 7M which was involved in the accident. Mr. Rodgers stated that he could start that process if the board directs him to do so, but that would be getting away from the traditional budgeting process.

Negotiations & Personnel - Tom Slusser, Chairperson, reported that the committee met in executive session.

Vo-Tech - Mr. Yeager reported that he had a copy of their proposed budget if anyone was interested in reviewing it.

### ITEMS – TREASURER’S REPORTS

### ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

A correction was made under the Minutes and Invoices section of the January 21, 2008 minutes to reflect that the motion was made by Stellfox.

Mr. Rodgers reported that check #16835 payable to Master Chemical would be removed from the invoice list.

### ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Slusser and second by Yocum, a 3-year contract with Service Electric Telephone Company, LLC beginning July 1, 2008, was presented for approval. Prior to voting, Mr. Porter asked Solicitor Roberts if he reviewed the contract. Solicitor Roberts replied affirmatively. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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**ITEMS – PERSONNEL**

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

- A. An addendum to the Southern Columbia Area School District Supervisory Staff Handbook (per Exhibit C).
- B. To designate Kevin Yoder as a Volunteer Assistant Softball Coach for the 2007-2008 school year (pending receipt of favorable clearances and a negative Tuberculin test).
- C. Employment of Ryan Mensch as an After School Tutor effective January 15, 2008, at the contracted rate, which will come from proceeds of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Grant.
- D. The addition of William R. Greenly (English 7-12) to the 2007-2008 Substitute List effective February 12, 2008 (pending completion of all employment requirements).
- E. To accept the resignation of Becky Blass as an Aide for the After School Tutoring program effective January 9, 2008.
- F. Post-retirement employment of Penny Fetterman as an Enrichment Teacher to be paid a per diem rate of \$324.00 for a maximum of three (3) days per week to be determined by the District in coordination with Ms. Fetterman, for the period beginning February 18, 2008, and ending March 31, 2008; provided that Ms. Fetterman shall not be entitled to earn any credited service under PSERS and that no contributions may be made by Ms. Fetterman, the District or the Commonwealth on account of such employment. This action is necessitated by an emergency resulting from the fact that the District is unable to fill the vacancy in the position of Enrichment Teacher with a qualified candidate during the time period as aforesaid.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

**ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS**

On a motion by Savitski and second by Yocum, to adopt a Resolution pertaining to the attribution of PSSA scores (per Exhibit E) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Slusser and second by Benner, Homebound Instruction for a high school student beginning February 6, 2008, until further evaluation by a physician for a maximum of 6 hours per week, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Slusser stated that the trip money for sporting events and activities should be taken out of the athletic budget and not the transportation budget. Mr. Rodgers reported that there are specific account codes determined by the Department of Education that drive the budget. Mr. Slusser noted that there are expenses coming out of the transportation budget that he feels should

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be coming out of other budgets. Mr. Rodgers stated that when the administration analyzes the total transportation expenses, they will take into consideration the expenses that are not true transportation costs.

Mr. Porter stated that including the appropriate transportation costs in the athletic budget, would give a more accurate picture of what a specific sport is costing the district. Mr. Porter asked Mr. Rodgers if he contacted PDE regarding reimbursement for tutoring runs. He replied that the miles are being compiled and would be submitted to PDE.

President Yeager reminded board members to complete and turn in their Statements of Financial Interest. He also reminded board members to complete and return the Strategic Planning participation form, their list of goals and the Priority List ranking.

Mr. Slusser asked if the new tractor was received. Mr. Rodgers replied affirmatively.

### RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

Mr. Clippinger stated that he attended 21 out of the last 23 graduation ceremonies. Last year was the first year that he walked away from a Southern Columbia graduation and felt that there were things done and said that were inappropriate. In comparing notes with the other administrators, they all felt the same way. He took exception with some of the students' comments earlier during the meeting. He noted that this is a Southern Columbia graduation, not simply this class's graduation. He stated that he feels that it behooves the district to behave with some decorum and a proper attitude towards why they are there and to what they are celebrating. He noted that the program can have some personality of the class that is graduating, but it is also a reflection of the product this institution brings forth in 13 years of effort. He agreed that it is time to review what is being carried out in the graduation ceremony.

Mrs. Lombardo agreed with Mr. Reh concerning the valedictorian wanting to speak. She couldn't imagine anyone turning down that honor. She also reported that both of her daughters graduated from Bloomsburg High School. Prior to the graduation ceremony, which was pretty much set in stone, there was a student-run baccalaureate. The students were able to plan the service with little intervention from the staff. Mr. Becker reported that Southern does hold a student-run baccalaureate.

Mr. Mehalick stated that Mr. Becker is an exceptional principal who really cares about the students, and he hopes that the students realize that during their last few months at Southern. Mr. Becker stated that when he was speaking with the students, nothing was set in stone. He told them they were always welcome to address the board.

### ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Porter and second by Benner, the meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch  
Board Secretary