

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

The December 7, 2009, special Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:07 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

Charles Porter

Jennifer Shoup (*Absent*)

Eric Stahley

Richard Steele (*Absent*)

David Stellfox

Timothy Vought

Michael Yeager

John Yocum

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles Reh, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Joseph Shirvinski, Roger Nunkester, James Becker, Administrators; Timothy George, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; Dana Carroll-Lucas, Grants Project Director; district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Yeager announced that all items on the agenda would be action items.

BOARD VACANCY

On a motion by Stellfox and second by Vought, Paul A. Starr of Region II (Catawissa Borough/Catawissa Township) to serve on the Board of Directors effective December 7, 2009, was presented for approval. Prior to voting Mr. Porter stated that Mr. Starr was the only applicant for the vacancy. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

The Board Secretary administered the oath of office to Mr. Starr and he was seated on the Board at 7:11 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

1.) He congratulated the new Board member as well as those members who were re-elected and he thanked Mr. Starr for offering to serve on the Board again. He thanked all of the members for all of the hours they have given to the community and the district.

2.) He introduced Danielle Latsha and Marissa Petrone, the finalists for the Special Education teaching positions.

3.) The district received notification from the Secretary of Education that it will be receiving the Keystone Achievement Award for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

4.) He requested an executive session following the meeting for personnel reasons.

5.) He noted that there will be an Act 34 Hearing to allow the community to voice their opinions on the project. He noted that the building project addresses increased programs and not increased enrollment. He stated that a lot of it centers around Special Education programs and least restrictive environment. They looked at the need to bring the Emotional Support students back to their home district. Learning support pull-out programs, occupational and physical

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therapy, social worker, Title I programs, Instructional Support, Wilson Reading are all programs that are over-crowded and need additional space. There are also three classrooms in the basement that are not handicapped accessible. The middle school students are separated into two buildings. By moving 5th and 6th grades out of the elementary building, room would be available for the aforementioned programs. The additional gymnasium is needed due to the additional middle school students in the high school building, as well as the number of competitive sports in the Heartland Conference. Many junior high programs have been added over the past several years. The elementary gymnasium is more of a multi-purpose room due to the glass wall. It really is not meant to be used as a competitive gymnasium.

He reiterated that there will be an Act 34 Hearing for public input. He also noted that there is confusion over the \$369,000 pay-back that has been mentioned in the local newspaper. A district can receive State reimbursement for a building project, but it can only receive it once every twenty years. The district received reimbursement for its building project in 1999. State reimbursement would be received on any new addition, but if work is done on any existing building such as heating or air conditioning improvements, reimbursement would not be received unless a payback would take place on the 1999 project. He noted that there would be time for public comment at the end of the meeting. Mr. Stellfox added that there is a severe over-crowding problem in the elementary building. President Yeager noted that full-day kindergarten was added, which also took three classrooms. Mr. Rodgers noted that the option to pay back the reimbursement would have a net effect over a thirty-year project of \$2.5 million in favor of the district.

6.) District Magistrate, Craig Long, addressed the Board regarding a second Law Day at Southern Columbia. The Board agreed to give permission for use of the football stadium for the event on May 13th with a rain date on May 14th.

7.) Mr. Nunkester reported that the Senior Citizen Dinner maxed out at 150 reservations. They had to turn away some people. The Twelve Twenty-Four concert will be held December 18th.

8.) Mr. Reh congratulated Coach Roth and the Football team for another great season.

9.) The in-service day on the past Wednesday was focused on Learning Focused Solutions and Extended Thinking Skills, which is the one facet of the curriculum that is proven to have the most impact on achievement. He thanked the Board for approving the Act 80 days, as they have proven to be very beneficial.

10.) Mr. Shirvinski reported that the elementary had ninety percent participation in parent/teacher conferences in November.

11.) Ms. Carroll-Lucas reported that attendance in the after school programs has been increasing. Parent reminders will go out with progress reports to remind parents of the after school tutoring programs offered. She reported on several grant opportunities.

MINUTES AND INVOICES

On a motion by Vought and second by Yocum, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. Minutes of November 9 and 16, 2009.
- B. General Fund invoices in the amount of \$572,776.63, Capital Reserve Fund invoices in the amount of \$54,840.00 and Athletic Fund invoices in the amount of \$25,805.41.

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The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Yocum and second by Starr, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. Budgetary transfers in the 2009-2010 budget to ensure proper accounting (**per Exhibit A**).
- B. The Single Audit Report from Schaeffer, Jones, Eichner & Wagner for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009 (**per Exhibit B**). The report contains no findings and no Management Letter was received.
- C. An Agreement with the parents of a student.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Yocum and second by Stellfox, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. The resignation of Kimberly Delbo from the position of Registered Nurse (High School) effective December 14, 2009. Mrs. Delbo has been with the district since August 2007.
- B. To accept the resignation of Lisa Long from the position of 4-Hour Paraprofessional for the Gifted Program effective December 23, 2009. Mrs. Long has been with the district since October 2008.
- C. Employment of Marissa Petrone for the position of Secondary Learning Support Teacher effective January 4, 2010 (pending completion of all employment requirements), at Step 1 of the Bachelor's Salary Schedule (\$38,457); benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- D. Employment of Danielle Latsha for the position of Middle School Emotional Support Teacher effective January 4, 2010 (pending completion of all employment requirements), at Step 1 of the Master's Salary Schedule (\$40,554); benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- E. Employment of Cheyenne Wilson for the position of part-time Paraprofessional for Kindergarten working 3 hours per day effective December 8, 2009 (pending completion of all employment requirements; salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- F. The addition of Kayla Greco (English) to the 2009-2010 Substitute List effective December 8, 2009 (pending completion of all employment requirements).

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- G. Shannon Gaul-Dickey as a Volunteer Assistant Girls Basketball Coach for the 2009-2010 school year (pending receipt of favorable clearances and a negative Tuberculin test).
- H. Job Description of Nurse (R.N. or L.P.N.) (per Exhibit C).
- I. To change Lisa Fleishauer from Half-time Paraprofessional to Nurse (Secondary Building) effective December 14, 2009, at an annual salary of \$23,160; benefits per the Non-Union Support Staff Handbook.

ITEMS – POLICY AND PROGRAMS

BOARD COMMENTS

President Yeager stated that there was an executive session prior to the meeting to consult with counsel regarding pending litigation, and an executive session would be held following the regular meeting to discuss personnel.

Mr. Porter asked Mr. Rodgers if he had received quotes for healthcare. Mr. Rodgers replied that he received Geisinger's quotes earlier in the day, but he is expecting Capital Blue Cross within the next week.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Mr. Joe Zsido, expressed concern over the building project and the increased property taxes. Mr. Larry Gilbert noted that the public is not aware of the Board's plans for the building project. Mr. Stellfox stated that the public only comes to meetings when issues come to a head. The Board has been discussing the proposed building plan for over a year at public Board and Facilities Committee meetings. Mr. Stellfox noted that there is a severe problem in the elementary building in regard to proper space for instruction. That problem would be solved by moving the 5th and 6th grade students over to the secondary building. President Yeager noted that several of the Board members are retired and in the same situation as many other taxpayers.

Ms. Marie Buriak asked if the final decision would be placed on the ballot. Mr. Rodgers replied that the district's investment advisors have told them that the district could do the project by phasing in the tax increase over a three-year period. If the district chooses that option, the answer would be no, however if the district chooses to increase the taxes all in one given year to support the increased debt service, then the answer would be yes. Mr. Ed Fransen noted that there is a large number of residents in the district who are elderly and on a fixed income. He noted that many residents are disgruntled since Act 50 is no longer in existence. He noted that some people are not able to make it to the meetings. He criticized the Board by stating that it has all the little meetings and then all of a sudden the public is hit with the information after the fact.

Mr. Stellfox stated that he takes offense to that statement. He takes full responsibility for what he does on the Board. A lot of information needs to be weighed and he has made a lot of sacrifices to get to meetings in order to get all the information needed. A great deal of time is spent in the process.

There was some discussion over the size of the gymnasium and mandated programs. President Yeager noted that Title I reading students are sometimes taught in the hallways. Those students should have as few distractions as possible and the hallway is not appropriate.

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Mr. Stahley stated that the district is faced with many unfunded mandates. He noted that the Board has been very fiscally responsible. They continually look for ways to save money, such as the recent transportation issue and healthcare.

Mr. Rodgers noted that the impact of the building project for an individual that lives in Columbia County in a \$150,000 fair market value house would be an approximate \$115 increase in property taxes over a three-year period. A \$75,000 fair market value house would result in an increase of \$60 over three years. An individual living in Northumberland County in a \$150,000 fair market value home would pay approximately \$126 more over a three-year period. The increase for a \$75,000 fair market home in Northumberland County would be approximately \$65.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Stahley and second by Stellfox, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary