

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

The January 11, 2010, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:37 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
Eric Stahley

Paul Starr
Richard Steele
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, Brenda Monick, Robert Mehalick (*Arrived 7:47 p.m.*), 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 Fiscal Items B, C and D, all Personnel Items, and Policy and Programs Item A on the agenda would be considered action items.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

- 1.) He announced that January is School Director Recognition month and he commended the board for the countless number of hours that they devote to the district.
- 2.) Nominations for the Distinguished Alumnus Award will be accepted through March 1, 2010.
- 3.) A Federal government initiative, Race to the Top, is making \$4.3 billion available to all fifty states. Pennsylvania would be eligible for up to \$400 million. It may not be financially feasible to participate. The funds received may not be sufficient to provide the required activities of the initiative. At this time, no school in IU 16 is planning to participate. The Board will be hearing more about the initiative in the future.
- 4.) The district held an H1N1 flu clinic on campus. A second clinic will be held January 25th from 4pm to 6pm for those children who needed a second dose of the vaccine.
- 5.) Barry Brobst and Heather Rizzetto Schmidt of The Architectural Studio were present to provide input on Fiscal Items B and C. Mr. Brobst explained that PlanCon D and E serve as backup information for the Resolution that is on the agenda for approval. Mr. Porter asked how Mr. Brobst arrived at the site development figure. Mr. Brobst replied that it was a construction estimate from the civil engineer. The entire site development is \$3.5 million. Once they have PlanCon A costs, they are asked to break out the site development costs for new and existing site development. Mr. Stellfox stated that all of the site work involved in the project; the earth moving, the storm sewers and the new blacktop, is included in the cost. Mr. Brobst also noted

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that the sidewalk, curbing, electrical and utilities that serve the water run-off are also included in the site costs. Mr. Porter noted that the site costs were critical in determining whether the district had to go to referendum. Mr. Porter asked if there was anything included in the site costs for a new track. Mr. Brobst replied negatively.

Mr. Stahley asked what would happen if the bids are opened and the costs would exceed the limit for going to referendum. Mr. Brobst replied that the bids would need to come within eight percent of the \$8.6 million. At that point, another public hearing would be required before going to construction. If the bids come in at fifteen percent higher (for example) than the cost set by PDE, then public referendum would be necessary.

Several district residents asked for details regarding the building project. Mr. Brobst explained that the items on the agenda would authorize the district to schedule an Act 34 hearing. The public was informed that all of the details of the project would be presented at the hearing.

Mr. Rodgers reported that the average fair market value of a home in Columbia County based on county records is \$102,000, which equates to approximately an addition of \$24 per year for three years as a result of the increased millage. The average fair market value of a home in Northumberland County is \$108,500 and taxes would increase approximately \$31 per year for three years based on the increased millage.

6.) Mr. Reh requested an executive session following the regular meeting to discuss personnel.

7.) Mr. Mehalick reported on the activities of the Wellness Committee. He also reported that the 2nd annual Twelve Twenty-Four concert was a success with approximately 400 people in attendance. All proceeds from the concert go towards funding the annual Senior Citizens Dinner.

8.) Mr. Nunkester reported that the Senior Citizens Dinner was a great success with over 140 senior citizens in attendance. He also reported that 5th and 6th grades were involved in a bullying video. He will present it to the Board in February. Prior to the Board meeting, Mr. Nunkester attended an inclusion activity which involved the Gifted Program and special education students.

9.) Ms. Carroll-Lucas reported on the current grant programs and potential grants.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Paul Starr, Chairperson, reported that the committee discussed the Athletic Director position. Mr. Sharrow would like to step down to Assistant Athletic Director. The administration is recommending that the Athletic Director and Assistant Athletic Director switch roles. The committee will be meeting with the Fall coaches on February 2nd at 5:00 p.m.

Facilities & Services - Dave Stellfox, Chairperson, reported that the main topic of discussion was the proposed building project. PlanCon D and E were presented to the committee. The Safety Committee, Pest Management services, the Priority Project Listing were also discussed. Some items have been added to the Priority List.

Finance - Eric Stahley, Chairperson, reported that Mr. Rodgers began work on the 2010-2011 budget. It is anticipated that the district will not exceed the 3.8 percent Act 1 index. They discussed how the phased-in millage would affect Act 1 tax increases considering items such as the building project, PSERS increases, utilities increases, etc. Mr. Rodgers reported that RBC and PFM are working on a five-year model. They discussed the Act 32 county-wide tax collection. The state audit was completed with no findings. Some minor safety recommendations were received. Other topics of discussion were appointing bond counsel, placing a referendum question on the ballot pertaining to the building project. The teacher's union is ready to negotiate. They

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asked the district's insurance agent to come to a future meeting. A webpage will be placed on the district website to provide the public with information pertaining to the building project.

Policy - Rick Steele, Chairperson, noted that they had a conflict with other meetings and had limited time. They are reviewing policies pertaining to booster organizations and gifted education.

Transportation Services – Tim Vought, Chairperson, reported that the committee discussed a vehicle maintenance work order system, an electronic bus routing system and the bridge projects on Ashton Hollow Road and in Catawissa. A plan is in place, but some fine tuning is needed. An additional meeting will be held strictly for that purpose.

Vo-Tech – Eric Stahley reported that the reorganization meeting was held December 16th. The support staff contract negotiation was discussed. A new business manager was hired effective January 1st. The Vo-Tech won an award for participating in the Greensylvania Recycling competition. Dr. Rushton reported that the staff meets regularly with area businesses to stay current on industry standards. They received a donation of sand and lime from Central Builders Supply for a masonry project. The administration thanked Southern Columbia as well as other districts for their guidance assistance surrounding the recent tragic vehicle accident involving a student.

CSIU – a meeting would be held the following week.

Prior to the action items, the Board Secretary administered the oath of office to Mr. Steele as he was not present at the reorganization meeting.

ITEMS – TREASURER'S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Stellfox and second by Steele, to adopt a Resolution pertaining to the proposed Building Project (per Exhibit B) was presented for approval. By roll call vote the motion carried; 8-Yes, 1-No (Porter voted No).

On a motion by Stellfox and second by Steele, the Notice of Public Hearing (per Exhibit C) and authorize the administration to advertise accordingly was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Porter and second by Stellfox, to direct the Business Manager to prepare a proposed Preliminary Budget, the display of which will be authorized at a meeting to be held January 18, 2010, in recognition of the Board's intent to submit a referendum question pursuant to the Taxpayer Relief Act (Act 1 of Special Session 2006) seeking voter approval of a tax rate increase in excess of the applicable index to allow the implementation of the full tax millage increase necessary to finance the proposed building project in the next fiscal year, was presented for approval. Prior to voting, Mr. Porter stated that he feels strongly that the building project should go to referendum due to the impact on taxpayers, taking into consideration the projected pension cost increase. Mr. Stahley agreed that it should go to referendum because it would save \$150,000 to implement the tax increase all in the first year. He also noted that if the Board does its job and gets the information to the public, the public will use common sense and approve it at the polls. Mr. Steele stated that the problem is that the general public has not had the opportunity to see the depth or breadth of the issues the district is facing. He believes that the Board's responsibility is to the

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students first. Mr. Stellfox stated that the Board is responsible to the taxpayers and the students. It is a difficult decision, but he feels that to phase the tax increase in over three years makes more sense than to do it all in one year. By roll call vote the motion failed; 2-Yes, 7-No (Porter and Stahley voted Yes).

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

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

- A. To re-elect Charles A. Reh to the position of District Superintendent for a 3-year term beginning July 1, 2010, and ending June 30, 2013, at an initial annual salary of \$103,000, and to approve a contract with him for such position.
- B. To acknowledge that Julie Ridings will serve as a Long-term Substitute Elementary Kindergarten Teacher beginning on or about February 15, 2010, through the end of the 2009-2010 school year.
- C. To change Ronald Rohrbach from a Substitute Bus/Van Driver to Regular Run Bus Driver effective November 3, 2009; salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- D. To change Thomas Leffler from a Substitute Bus/Van Driver to Regular Run Bus Driver effective December 14, 2009; salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- E. To change Susan Krock from a Substitute Bus/Van Driver to Regular Run Bus Driver effective January 12, 2010; salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- F. To designate the following as Volunteer Assistant Coaches for the 2009-2010 school year (pending receipt of favorable clearances and a negative Tuberculin test):
 - Jeffrey Blass (Softball)
 - David Fegley (Boys Basketball)
 - Shaun Gaul (Wrestling)
 - Nathan Richard (Wrestling)
- G. FMLA qualifying leave on an intermittent basis for employee #1341TK effective December 1, 2009; not to exceed 12 weeks in the next 12-month period.
- H. The addition of the following individuals to the 2009-2010 Substitute List effective as listed (pending completion of all employment requirements):
 - Tonya Scherer - (Elementary/Special Education), eff: December 22, 2009
 - Meredith Michael - (Social Studies), eff: January 12, 2010
 - Zane Simpson (Citizenship/Middle Level Math), eff: January 12, 2010
 - Lydia K. Spurr (Elem./MS English/MS Social Studies), eff: January 12, 2010
 - Zachary Stone (Elementary), eff: January 12, 2010
 - Juanita Helwig (Registered Nurse), eff: January 12, 2010

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- I. To accept the resignation of Todd Jones from the position of Elementary Girls Basketball Coach effective January 4, 2010. Mr. Jones has been in the position since August 2004.
- J. Employment of Tricia Hoffman as a Tutor for the After School program effective December 3, 2009, at a rate of \$22/hour, which will come from proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant.
- K. FMLA qualifying leave for employee #1814JS effective on or about February 15, 2010, through the end of the 2009-2010 school year; not to exceed 12 weeks in the next 12-month period.
- L. FMLA qualifying leave on an intermittent basis for employee #1904AP effective on or about February 16, 2010; not to exceed 12 weeks in the next 12-month period.
- M. Employment of Shannon Manetti as a student worker for the Middle School Office effective December 7, 2009 (pending completion of all employment requirements). The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Shoup and second by Stellfox, Homebound Instruction for a high school student (#79548) beginning February 1, 2010, until further evaluation by a physician, for a maximum of 5 hours per week, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Tom Levan, asked if the building project included items from the energy audit, such as replacement windows. President Yeager replied that those items are part of the priority list and some of those items might be fit into the project. Lonnie Emmons Snyder asked how much of the building project cost would be for special education. She noted that a lot of the public is blaming the project on the special education students. She noted that it is important for people to understand how important it is for these students to be in their home district. She noted that the students have enough challenges without their own community going against them because of the cost. Mr. Stellfox explained that it would be difficult to put an actual dollar amount on the specific special education costs at this time. Mr. Reh stated that it is his philosophy that every student who lives in the district deserves to be a Southern Columbia Tiger. Mrs. Shoup stated that she was very upset by the comments that have appeared in the local newspaper. She found them very insulting, mean spirited and cowardly for those who chose not to sign their name. She also noted that the district is required to keep students in the least restrictive environment according to regulations. If the district fails to do so, it is opening itself to litigation.

Mr. Gerald Zsido stated that the public is questioning the gym. Mr. Stellfox stated the gym is an educational space. President Yeager noted that it would be impossible to provide classes for eight grades in one gymnasium. Mr. Levan asked if the additional space will create a lack of maintenance. Mr. Porter stated that what the Board has been told so far is that there will be an

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additional \$196,000 cost for utilities and maintenance for the building project. Mr. Rodgers stated that he and Mr. George have been looking at different ways to address the additional areas without adding additional manpower. Mr. Stellfox stated that if the bids come in lower than anticipated, it does not give the Board a green light to spend money. He noted that it is a good time to be bidding projects. He anticipates that the bids will come in lower than estimated.

Mr. Shirvinski stated that there has been an issue of space in the elementary building since he began working in the district in 1996. He noted that teaching concepts have changed and teachers need to ensure that each student is learning what is being taught. At times, the confines of a classroom are not enough, so they have tables and chairs in the hallways. He noted that it is aggravating to see employees saying things that simply aren't true. There are students in the hallways every day. President Yeager noted that by moving 5th and 6th grades to the secondary building, twelve classrooms will be made available. Nine of them will have already been assigned. The remaining three classrooms are not handicapped accessible.

Joanne Stine asked if the existing building was going to be repaired. President Yeager replied that they purposely avoided touching the elementary building as part of this project, because it would start the twenty-year clock, meaning that they would not be able to touch it for twenty years as a reimbursable project. Mr. Stellfox stated that it does not make sense to spend \$3 million and not get reimbursed when you could include those items in the project and receive reimbursement.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Stellfox and second by Stahley, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary