

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

The May 9, 2011, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:40 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

Jennifer Oiler
Charles Porter
Eric Stahley

Paul Starr
Richard Steele
David Stellfox (*Absent*)

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, Administrators; Timothy George, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; several employees, district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Yeager announced that all Personnel Items, and one Policy and Programs item on the agenda would be considered action items.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

1.) Mr. Reh asked Board members to complete and return the CSIU election form to the Board Secretary following the meeting.

2.) He announced that an executive session was held at the last Finance Committee meeting to discuss personnel moves that would be needed to get close to a balanced budget. One of the moves would be an alteration to the Wilson Reading program. The program is currently a pullout program, but would now be taught by the special education teachers. The alteration would result in the furlough of one special education teacher. There would also be a reduction of three paraprofessionals. The Middle School Art teacher who is retiring would not be replaced. One of the existing Art teachers would teach K-6 and the other would teach 7-12. The administration, along with the Art teachers, would work on developing the schedule. The high school social studies teacher, middle school math teacher, and the elementary 3rd grade teacher would be filled with existing staff. The social studies teacher would be filled by one of the present technology teachers. The middle school math position would be filled by the full-time English as Second Language teacher because of the reduced number of ELL students. The 3rd grade position would be replaced by a current Kindergarten teacher. The number of full-day Kindergarten teachers would be reduced from six to five. The Speech and Language teacher and the School Nurse would be replaced. Those position moves along with an increase in taxes above the index of \$180,000, which is equal to approximately one mill, leaves a deficit of a little over \$20,000, which presently will be covered by the Fund balance.

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Mr. Rodgers reported that a few weeks ago a budget with a \$435,000 deficit was presented at a public presentation. The deficit was down to \$345,000 last week. As a result of the executive session and the position moves, the deficit is now down to \$20,000. The proposed final budget has a tax increase above the Act 1 index of one mill, which equates to \$180,000. He stated that they were still working on the budget. They have two more Finance Committee meetings where they will be discussing the budget. They will be tweaking some areas to potentially minimize the impact to taxpayers or reinstate programs. Mr. Reh stated that there is the possibility of more money going into the Accountability Block Grant. If additional funds come into the district, the Board would need to look at the cuts that were made and possibly reinstate some of them depending on the funds received from the state. Mr. Rodgers reported that based on the current proposed final budget scenario, millage in Columbia County would go from 28.07 mills to 29.56 mills, which would equate to an increase of \$42 for the average property owner. Northumberland County would increase from 45.73 mills to 47.88 mills, which equates to an additional \$50 above what the average property owner is currently paying in real estate taxes. An average property owner in Columbia County is defined as a taxpayer with a fair market value house of \$102,000, and in Northumberland County; a fair market value house of \$108,500.

3.) Mr. Becker reported that a Band and Choral concert would be held Wednesday evening.

4.) Mr. Nunkester reported that the Middle School held a very successful "Penny Wars" two weeks ago. The students brought in pennies and raised \$1,093 for Relay for Life. Mr. Nunkester also reported the Band and Choral concert held the previous week.

5.) Mr. Shirvinski reported that K-4 students raised \$6,672 during the St. Jude Math-a-thon. He also reported that over 1,000 volunteer hours were logged through Hartman Helpers.

Mr. Porter asked if anything had been worked up regarding a "pay to park" plan. Mr. Reh replied that it would be something they would look at when the building project is complete.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Paul Starr, Chairperson, reported that the committee will be meeting with the Winter sport coaches on May 18th at 6:00 p.m., and the Spring coaches on May 15th at 6:00 p.m. Upcoming events include: May 25 - Senior Awards Banquet; May 28 - Prom, Caldwell Consistory; June 25 - Baccalaureate, 7:00 p.m.; June 8 - Graduation, Haas Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Stahley asked for the cost of use of Haas Auditorium. Mr. Becker agreed to provide that information. Mr. Porter asked if they discussed the Assistant Athletic Director position. Mr. Starr stated that they would need to discuss it in executive session. They agreed that there would be an executive session following the meeting to discuss personnel.

Facilities & Services - Tim Vought, committee member, reported that they discussed the building project. They met with Larry Bowers and an updated schedule was included in the Friday Letter. They went over the Priority Projects List with Mr. George. They agreed to redo the high school gymnasium and locker room floors. Mr. George will also provide a list of summer projects, and they discussed summer student workers.

Mr. Porter asked if they heard anything from the electrical engineer regarding his questions about the change order. Mr. Rodgers stated that it was his understanding that the recommendation from the Finance meeting was to move forward with the change order. Mr. Porter stated that he had some objection to moving forward with the change order due to the potential for additional savings. Mr. George stated that the contractor can charge whatever they want. Mr. Porter stated that someone should be looking out for the district's interest. Mr. Vought stated that that's why Mr. Stellfox stated that if they wanted that, they should have hired a construction manager.

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Mr. George noted that there is also an upcharge for going from four inch conduit to five inch conduit. Mr. Porter stated that he thinks they need to do a price check to see where they stand. Mr. Rodgers stated that they need to keep in mind that they are paying the architect to review and sign off on change orders. Mr. Porter stated that he would like to hear the architect's justification, and if there was money left on the table.

Finance - Eric Stahley, Chairperson reported that the committee met April 25th and May 2nd, both primarily dealing with the budget. At the first meeting, Mr. Rodgers gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the state of the 2011-2012 budget. The budget deficit as of that meeting was \$435,458. They discussed the Pennsylvania state final budget passage. Mr. Rodgers also provided a handout showing tax increases of \$200,000, \$400,000 and \$600,000 and how those tax increases would affect an average value home in Northumberland and Columbia Counties. At the second meeting, they discussed the disposal of some vehicles in the transportation department. The Columbia-Montour Area Vo-Tech School budget was discussed. The district's contribution was down \$30,000 from the first version of the budget presented to the Board in March. The 2011-2012 Capital Reserve and the athletic budgets were presented for review. They discussed the Assistant Athletic job description and how that position would fit into the budget. A cost analysis for substitutes was provided to the Board. Transportation costs associated with driver salaries for field trips were discussed. Another draft of the preliminary budget was presented to the Board. The deficit was reduced to \$344,542. The final budget will be presented for approval next month.

Policy - Rick Steele, Chairperson, reported that the committee met prior to the regular meeting and continues to work on several related policies around issues of volunteers and field trips. They are currently gathering information from other districts. They are coming to some conclusions regarding certain types of volunteers and trips. They are currently looking at standard field trips and chaperones and what types of clearances they would need.

CSIU - President Yeager asked again if there was anyone who would like to volunteer to serve on the CSIU Board. No one indicated an interest.

Vo-Tech - John Yocum reported that the Joint Operating Committee met on April 19th. The meeting began with an executive session for personnel. They approved various personnel, and a recommendation to phase out the Travel, Lodging and Marketing program by the end of the 2012-2013 school year, and replace it with another high priority occupation program. They approved a policy on Family and Medical Leave for administrative employees, and they tabled action on several other policies. They approved the Business Manager report, training center supply bids, revision of the budget and approved to send the budget to the sending districts for their vote. They tabled the Act 93 Agreement. The administration has volunteered to take a pay freeze for the next school year. They plan to bring in 172 students next year. They usually graduate between 155 and 160 students each year. Twenty-four percent of the students would be special education.

ITEMS – TREASURER’S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

Mr. Stahley asked for clarification on several invoices. Mr. Porter asked if any of The Architectural Studio (TAS) invoices included subcontracted invoices for Architerra. Mr. Rodgers replied that two of them include charges for Architerra. Mr. Porter stated that he contacted Solicitor Roberts regarding the issue of TAS hiring Architerra to do the track and also collecting a fee, plus Architerra collects a fee and TAS puts ten percent on top of it. He asked Solicitor Roberts to report on the matter. Solicitor Roberts stated that if they were going to discuss legal views of what could potentially be litigation, he recommended that it be done in executive

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session. President Yeager announced that the executive session following the regular meeting would also be to consult with counsel concerning potential litigation.

ITEMS – FISCAL

Mr. Stahley stated that he doesn't think they are getting a lot of shared sacrifice when it comes down to balancing the budget. He stated that he was disappointed in the reluctance of the unions to agree to a pay freeze and their unwillingness to work with the Board in hiring a healthcare consultant. He also noted that the debt service is almost \$290,000 more than last year.

There was some discussion regarding the budget. Mr. Porter expressed concern over the increased debt service due to the building project. Mr. Rodgers clarified that the district did not receive an increase in state subsidies over last year, and the building project compared to last year's budget equates to a \$200,000 net increase in debt service; not a \$290,000 increase as earlier reported.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Oiler and second by Steele, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. To correct the effective date of resignation for retirement of Linda Ciongoli to June 9, 2011.
- B. To change the employment status of Regina Reigle from Elementary Assistant Head Cook to Elementary Head Cook effective August 23, 2011, at an annual salary of \$18,300; benefits per the Non-union Support Staff Handbook.
- C. To accept the resignation for retirement of Debra J. Varano from the position of 6th Grade Mathematics Teacher effective June 9, 2011. Mrs. Varano has been with the district since August 1993.
- D. To accept the resignation for retirement of Charles E. Rhoades, Jr. from the position of Middle School Art Teacher effective June 9, 2011. Mr. Rhoades has been with the district since August 1987.
- E. To accept the resignation of Valerie A. White from the position of 3-Hour Cafeteria Worker effective May 5, 2011. Ms. White has been with the district since September 2002.
- F. To re-appoint Richard J. Roberts, Jr. as School Solicitor for the period July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012, at a rate of \$105.00 per hour.
- G. To appoint Richard D. Steele from Region I (Ralpho Township) as Board Treasurer for the term July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012, at an annual salary of \$240.
- H. To acknowledge tenure for the following employees effective the end of the 2010-2011 school year:
 - Megan Habowski

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- Rebecca Maley
 - Holly Serafini
 - Erin Spotts
 - Jennifer Stine
 - Bethany Varano
- I. Motion to approve providing four (3) students with on-the-job clerical training and five (5) students with on-the-job maintenance/custodial training in the district during the summer months at minimum wage (maximum of 35 hours per week for approximately 9 weeks).
- J. Motion to approve employment of Marissa Petrone as Assistant Varsity Football Cheerleading Coach for the 2011-2012 School Year at an annual salary of \$712.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Yocum and second by Oiler, Homebound Instruction for a high school student (#88784) effective May 5, 2011, until further evaluation by a physician; not to exceed 5 hours per week, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Porter stated that he would like to talk about the possibility of a “pay to participate” program. He noted that they may be looking at some of the same issues next year. It was agreed that it would be considered in the future, but not at the present time, due to the busy budget season. Mr. Rodgers suggested that the Activities Committee begin looking at some criteria to give him some direction in the process.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Frank Berger, again requested a special education utilization chart. He asked if the administration had reported back to the public regarding their willingness to take a pay freeze. Mr. Becker replied that they agreed to a pay freeze. Mr. Berger asked if actual expenditures on cost centers could be provided. Mr. Rodgers replied that the software does provide that information. He also noted that the budget document also includes that information.

District resident, Brandi Drucker, asked if the Board considered eliminating junior high sports programs that are offered in the community. She noted that she already pays for her children to participate in those sports. President Yeager replied that they have discussed it.

District resident, Florey Guarno, asked if the furloughs would be done by seniority. Mr. Reh replied affirmatively. Mr. Guarno asked for some clarification regarding the proposed tax increase. He also asked about the increase from CS Trust. Mr. Rodgers replied that the preliminary figure for the PPO is still at 15 percent and the affirmative increase for the GHP plan, which took effect January 1, 2011, was 6.8 percent. Mr. Guarno asked if they used healthcare costs as one of the exceptions. Mr. Rodgers replied negatively, and stated that the district was not eligible for that particular exception. Mr. Guarno asked Mr. Becker for clarification on Mr. Roth’s salary and position. Mr. Guarno asked who decides what is included in the minutes. The Board Secretary stated that she is responsible for the written minutes and noted that they

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contain much more information than is required. Solicitor Roberts stated that the minutes only need to contain who is in attendance, what action was taken, and a record of the votes. He added that all the discussion is not required to be included in the minutes. President Yeager stated that they have discussed minimizing the minutes to what is required several times. Ms. Oiler stated that she would like to request that the issue be discussed further.

District resident Lori Kreibel, asked if cuts to Band and other programs would not take place. President Yeager stated that those cuts are not included in the tentative proposed budget, but it is still in progress. Mrs. Kreibel asked if the parents and students should continue to attend meetings to defend the programs. President Yeager replied that it would probably be in their best interest. Mrs. Kreibel asked what an individual would need to do if they were interested in running for the School Board. Several Board members gave her information on how to proceed.

District resident, Barbara Splitt, commented on Mr. Roth's salary and position.

District resident, Victoria Bodnar, commented on the importance of parents attending School Board meetings. She also asked for clarification on the bowling budget. President Yeager explained that in the past, the district paid for the students' bowling shirts and the students paid for the lane rental. The Board decided that it was too much for the students to pay and reversed the expenses. Mr. Rodgers stated that the bowling budget still contains \$6,000 and if it were to change, it would be presented at a public meeting. Mrs. Bodnar asked how the public would be notified of any changes to budgets or programs. Mr. Rodgers replied that those items are discussed at regular Finance Committee, as well as other committee meetings; all of which are discussed publicly, with the exception of the Personnel Committee. He summarizes the recommended cuts or proposals and presents them the following month. He noted that the ongoing budget changes are posted on the district website. Mr. Porter stated that the Board meeting agendas are typically posted on Friday prior to a Monday meeting.

District resident, Bruce Rosenbaum, asked the Board to seriously consider the cut to junior high programs, as some families cannot afford to pay the registration fees for sports offered in the community. He also noted that the junior high programs add to the success of the varsity programs. Mr. Rosenbaum commented on the building project and the Clerk of the Works.

District resident and employee of the district, Derek Stine, referred to the discussion regarding cutting junior high sports and asked, as a coach, when he was going to be notified of it. President Yeager stated that he had asked about it at several meetings. Mr. Reh stated that when it was discussed, there was never enough support for it.

District resident, Lyonne Snyder, stated that there have not been enough participants at the U14 level in soccer, and asked what option those students would have. Mr. Stine agreed that most of the area school districts have developed a junior high program, so there is probably not going to be a big interest at that level in the community.

District resident, Joan Willhoit, asked for clarification regarding the cleaning of the uniforms. Mr. Rodgers replied that all uniforms are cleaned at home, but there is an annual reconditioning of the football equipment.

Mr. Porter asked if the athletic budget could be included as part of the budget packet. Mr. Rodgers replied affirmatively.

Ms. Oiler asked if a motion regarding the minutes would be included on the agenda. It was agreed that three Board members were in favor of it and it would be included on the next agenda.

District resident, Jeff Mausteller, commented on the importance of sports, but noted that it seems that every district has put sports ahead of academics. Mr. Becker stated that the district has made AYP every year, and all of the teachers and administrators work hard to make the students successful. Mr. Becker asked if a pay to participate program is implemented, what would happen

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to those students who cannot afford it. Mrs. Monick stated that there is direct correlation between students' participation in sports and extra-curricular programs and the academic programs. Mr. Stine stated that last year he had 26 girls on the soccer team and 25 of those girls were honor students.

Mrs. Splitt stated that things should not be taken away from the students. Mr. Rosenbaum stated that athletic programs do keep kids off the streets. He also applauded the administration for taking a pay freeze.

President Yeager announced that there would be an executive session following the regular meeting to discuss personnel and consult with counsel regarding possible litigation.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Porter and second by Oiler, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary