

BOARD NOTES  
OCTOBER 19, 2009

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, October 19, 2009 with all Rich Shail, Al Williamson, LuAnn Schwingendorf and Dale Groves present. Bernie Baltes was absent. Dr. Bender was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as presented.

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION**

- Nancy Niespodziany talked about the library at Olive Elementary School. Nancy said that every class has one appointed time visit at the library for 30-40 minutes per week. She orders and reads all the books in the library. She gives instructions to students on library manners, how to look up books on the shelf, etc. The automated library system has been great. The average age of the collection of books at Olive is 1980. Nancy

Bernie Baltes arrived at 6:06 p.m.

Rich said with technology and the emphasis on reading, where do you see the future of the library? Nancy feels people will always want to read. She does not think there is any way around that. A strong library is mandatory. Rich asked if it is expensive to maintain. Nancy said the budget at the elementary school is \$7,000 per year. They are able to maintain that. She does not feel pinched. She cannot get everything she would like, but there is enough that she feels students have a choice. There is so much literature out there and people are writing good stories for children. That has not been the case years ago.

Bernie asked if the technology today enhances the reading and gets them more interested. Nancy feels in a way it does. The children rush to the computers to look things up and type. Technology and reading have gelled well. She does not see one bumping the other out of the way.

**CONSENT ITEMS**

- The board approved the Consent Items as follows:

- Minutes - September 21, 2009
- Financial Reports
- Claims
- Payroll
- Personnel as follows:

**CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations
  1. Rachel Chelminiak - Kindergarten Teacher - Olive Elementary School - Leave of absence beginning January 25, 2010 thru the end of the 2009-2010 school year.
  2. Karen Schiele - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Rolling Prairie Elementary - Extend leave of absence to December 1, 2009.
  3. Lisa Smiertelny - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Rolling Prairie Elementary - Leave of absence beginning approximately December 19, 2009 to February 15, 2010.
  4. Nicole Bowen - P.E. Teacher - Middle School - Extend leave of absence thru January 1, 2010.

**NON-CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations
  1. Jane Bealor - Secretary - Prairie View Elementary School - Leave of absence beginning October 12, 2009 and continuing for approximately 4-6 weeks.
  2. Rhonda Smoroske - Health Assistant - Middle School - Leave of absence beginning October 28, 2009 and continuing for approximately 3-4 weeks.
- Employment/Transfers
  1. Karen Combs - Cashier - Olive Elementary - Effective immediately.
  2. Stephanie Bellinger - ESL Title I Stimulus Assistant - Rolling Prairie Elementary School effective immediately

3. Beth Eigenmann - Transfer from Cook/Dishwasher to Cook - NPHS
  4. Michele Stayback - Transfer from Olive Cashier to Cook/Dishwasher - NPHS
  5. Cammy Pittman - Transfer from Cook - Prairie View to Cook at Middle School
  6. Nicci Hart - Lunchroom Assistant - Prairie View - Effective immediately
  7. Dawn Janiszewski - Transfer from Lunchroom Assistant to Cook/Dishwasher - Prairie View - Effective immediately
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
    1. Kevin Brandy - Assistant Boys Basketball - NPHS
    2. Katlyn Reyes - Assistant Boys Basketball - NPHS
    3. Staci Mrozinski - JV Volleyball - NPHS
    4. Camille Burns - Math Bowl - Olive Elementary
    5. Greg Hulbert - Audio/Visual Club - NPHS
    6. Sheri Houser - Young Astronauts - 1/3 - Olive Elementary

## **REPORTS**

- Superintendent's Report
  - Dr. Bender advised that he, Rich Shail, Bernie Baltes and Dale Groves attended the ISBA Regional Meeting in Plymouth. They received information on the CAPS program for board members to work towards exemplary status. He wants to continue to get our attendance up on regional meetings.
  - Dr. Bender reviewed the cash flow. The \$9,900 represents monies returned to transfer tuition students following the final per/pupil count. We will go back to those cash transfer students at the end of the year if there is any money owed. It will be back charged according to law.

October expenses included the demolition of the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and the balance of the 08 special education fees. We still owe over \$100,000. They want \$200,000 for this school year.

We have made the second and final payment for textbook adoption.

Provisional tax bills went out for November and December. We hope for a distribution by December. St. Joe hopes to send out their bills by October. We received the #1782 notice from the DLGF. We received a forced reduction of \$1 ½ million in the CPF Fund. Our plans for the high school renovation will be put on hold unless we can find an alternative funding. Keith said we had three sessions with the architect. We have the high school administrative offices broken down in 3-4 phases. We are looking at the concession stand congestion.

Dr. Bender met with area superintendents at Michigan City to discuss the shortfall of 05, payable 06 taxes. Michigan City will lose \$8 million. They requested a meeting with Craig Hinchman, but he has been instructed not to meet with us. Michigan City has filed a suit against the county. The loss we had was made up by the levy, but if there is a reduction down the road, we may come back to the board to talk about this.

Dr. Bender announced that New Prairie participated in a video conference with the DOE on their Spotlight on Education. New Prairie presented information on the Activity Center. It is on the web if anyone wants to see the presentation.

Dr. Bender said in an effort to keep expenses under control, we received a bill from the NSBA membership in the amount of \$4,000. In the past, this membership averages \$3,200 to \$4,200. Dr. Bender does not feel we need to maintain this membership this year. We will not pursue this membership unless the Board feels otherwise. The ISBA membership is about the same, but he feels there are advantages with the state level versus the national level. Bernie feels we should send them a letter explaining why we are discontinuing membership.

Dr. Bender received the summary report for school funding. New Prairie is ranked 328 out of 333 school corporations in Indiana, which means only five schools receive per/pupil funding less than New Prairie. Charter schools receive more money than we do. We have talked to Tom Dermody about this.

H1N1 - Rolling Prairie was the first school in the state to be inoculated. They did over 360 students in less than three hours. When we first sent out the permission forms, we were assured by the LaPorte County Health

Dept. that all schools would receive the inoculation. Then we were told Olive would not be included in this and that it was St. Joe's responsibility. LaPorte was to inoculate the high school and middle school on Thursday, but then the county asked what percentage of those students are from St. Joe County. He wanted St. Joe to come in and help. St. Joe has not inoculated any of their schools - just at the health department. St. Joe wants to use the mist and LaPorte does not want to go in that direction. We do not know where the Health Dept. is at this time. Absenteeism currently is as follows:

- Olive - 22%
- HS - 18%
- MS - 20 %
- RP - 17%
- PV - has 95% attendance

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- The board approved the 2010 Budget and Resolution of Appropriations and Tax Rates as submitted.

Bernie asked how much of PERF and TRF do we pay. Keith said PERF is 11.25% and TRF is 10.5%. Bernie asked how much does that really amount to what the corporation spends? People look at the salaries, but fringe benefits are not recognized as part of the salary. Keith said PERF is \$158,000 per year and TRF is \$567,000. They both went up about ½ percent. Bernie said that is a raise.

- The board approved the tax neutrality for the School Pension Debt Fund with Bernie abstaining.
- The board adopted the Capital Projects Plan and Resolution for 2010-2011-2012. Bernie said with the AV you put in, is there a feeling it may be reduced? Keith said the rate will be reduced. We do not know what the AV will do in either county.
- The board adopted the Resolution to transfer interest earned to the General Fund.
- The board adopted the Transportation Bus Replacement Plan and Resolution for 2010.

- The board approved the discontinuance of accepting transfer tuition students for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. Bender said when we decided to accept students earlier, we said we would accept them up through the ADM. We need official action because we do not receive any state assistance for any student coming in at this time. We usually do not receive that many requests. We feel our numbers are adequate for the teachers we have. We will re-evaluate the situation next year.

## **DISCUSSION**

- Dr. Bender has previously discussed with the board the issues we have with the LEA and the South LaPorte County Special Education Cooperative. These issues have been around for years. We have come up against brick walls regarding the distribution of stimulus funds. We have no control over this. The LEA has received the money and applied those monies to the maintenance of effort and applied it back to the assessment. There was no discussion with the other Co-op board members. It is an issue with our schools because we have allocated monies for them to purchase items and we have no control over the money for them to purchase.

We are now at the point that we are going to do a financial study of how many people work in our corporation and the services we provide. We have almost all of our students here. We need to look at bringing all our students back and look at running the program from here. The employment is not the issue. It is the outside services like OT, PT, and speech. We are trying to develop relationships with Michigan City. We need options open to us. Whether this will work or not, we do not know. Jim Holifield is putting together some figures based on people working in our buildings now. Dr. Bender said he just feels we need to take a different look at this. We want to have control over our students that are in the program. The Co-op board only makes recommendations to the LaPorte School Corporation. We have no control over personnel. We would like to begin putting together some cost information to see whether we can have this program. Dr. Bender would bring information back to the board. We owe it to ourselves to look at this. The board agrees with the process to begin looking at alternatives.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Bernie said Congressman Joe Donnelly recently visited his home. Bernie asked Dr. Bender to give him information regarding the early elementary funding. Dr. Bender had suggested that when looking at student achievement that we measure the students against themselves and not take groups against groups. We need to have a plan in place to track the child. What progress are they making through their career? The second item was rather than providing threats to the education process, that we provide awards.

Bernie said Congressman Donnelly was very complimentary to the school corporation for the job we are doing. It would be to our benefit that we acquaint him with what is happening at the Activity Center and invite him to see what is going on.

Rich wanted to thank Bernie. He said there are not many people who would do what you do to think about us at New Prairie.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 23<sup>rd</sup>.