

## BOARD NOTES

NOVEMBER 22, 2010

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, November 22, 2010 with Rich Shail, Bernie Baltus, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Dale Groves and Al Williamson present. Jim Dermody was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION**

- The Board recognized the New Prairie High Spell Bowl Squad which placed second in state competition. The New Prairie Middle School Spell Bowl Squad was also recognized for placing third in the state. Each team member was presented a certificate.
- Angie Hambling introduced Rolling Prairie's Green Energy Initiative sponsors – John Slater, Lisa Smiertelny and Janie Slater. Students Max Mender, Alejandra Puentis and Haley DeMartinis discussed the following initiatives the school is involved in:
  - Environmental Trail
  - Jr. Conservation Club
  - Garden Club
  - Composting
  - Recycling
  - Project Turn-it-Off

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

- The Board approved the Consent Items as follows:
  - Minutes – October 18, 2010
  - Financial Reports
  - Claims
  - Payroll
  - Personnel as follows:

### **CERTIFIED**

- Employment – Extra-Curricular
  1. Jim Schwingendorf – Assistant Wrestling – NPHS
  2. Jeff Meinhard – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball

## **NON-CERTIFIED**

- Employment – Extra-Curricular
  1. Don Stoner – Assistant Wrestling – NPHS
  2. Andrew Bashaw - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball
  3. Daniel Bellinger – Assistant 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys Basketball
  4. Kristen Freitag – Assistant Varsity Girls Basketball
  5. Chris Vogeler – Assistant 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball
  6. Joel Hostetler – Head Girls Tennis
  7. Teresa Hostetler – Assistant Girls Tennis

## **REPORTS**

- Oak Tree Group – Gene Jonas

Gene Jonas reviewed the progress of the Oak Tree Group that is working to implement a sewer system in the Rolling Prairie community. Local businesses like Family Express and the Rolling Prairie branch library have experienced immediate concerns with their existing septic systems. Mr. Jonas indicated there are various grant opportunities that exist. There is also approximately \$17.4 million available through Major Moves. The Oak Tree Group would like the support of the School Board when they approach the LaPorte County Council. On a motion by Baltes and seconded by Groves, the board voted to draft a resolution supporting the sewer project.

- Superintendent's Report

- Mr. Dermody advised that our Director of Health Services and Health Aide, Amy Mullen and Rhonda Smoroske, have been working diligently to get the 6-12 immunization requirements completed. We were up to 821 students at the start of the school year and we are down to 8 students that are not compliant.

- Make-a-Difference Day

This is a Middle School community service project. They received some donations, although this program is designed to give back to the community. Students raked leaves at various sites, created gift bags for children in the pediatric wards, created Christmas decorations for residents at the nursing homes and assisted living and pulled weeds at the New Prairie Schools.

- 2010 Adequate Yearly Progress and PL 221 Report

Mr. Dermody reviewed the preliminary report and stated that NPHS did not make AYP for 2009-2010 and was placed on academic probation. All other NPUSC schools achieved AYP status for 2009-2010. He also advised that many secondary schools around the state will not meet AYP and will be placed on probation. Bernie said he appreciates the fact that we are addressing the different learning styles for students. That has not always been the goal in the past. Mr. Dermody said the administrative team has been very open to that. We are working hard with the administration and staff to reach this goal.

Bernie said in reference to the immunizations, he wanted the general public to know that these are requirements placed on schools and staff that are not reimbursed by the state.

The board suspended the regular meeting to hold a public hearing for the High School and Rolling Prairie remodeling project. Lloyd Condon from Fanning/Howey and David Wimmer from Hillyard Lyons were present to discuss the project and the financing.

- Lloyd Condon of Fanning/Howey reviewed the proposed renovation of the cafeteria area at the High School and Rolling Prairie Elementary School. They will also address the storm water leaks at the high school. At the high school, they are looking for better serving lines for students and an upgrade to the preparation kitchen. There are also some code violations that need to be addressed. At Rolling Prairie, they will also address some code violations and change the serving lines. They will also move the dry storage area that is in the mechanical room. Also being addressed is the ventilation and mechanical system upgrades at the High School and Rolling Prairie.
- David Wimmer presented information on the federally subsidized Qualified School Construction Bonds. These bonds provide funds to the school at near zero percent interest rates. The school corporation is authorized by the Indiana Department of Education to issue \$1,990,000 of these bonds.
- Keith Dennis explained the process to get us to this point. The school corporation presented 12-15 projects for review by a citizen group. We had about 25 community people involved in 7-9 meetings. At the end of the process, we polled the group to submit a recommendation. These are the three priority projects recommended by the committee.

There were no comments from the board.

## Community Comments:

- Ty Bancroft asked the board who had established the rule of only speaking for three minutes. Mr. Shail advised him that this is a corporation policy. Mr. Bancroft indicated that three minutes was not sufficient time to get information when you are talking about rates. He made allegations that there was a board member sleeping during this presentation.
- A patron asked if these are the only two projects that will be addressed. Mr. Dennis said they will look at technology in the high school if there is any money left over after the two projects.
- A patron asked if there was any labor study done on the projects. She asked if this will increase efficiency. Tammy Watkins said their goal was safety for the students. Students are packed in the cafeteria and the staff could not get through the lines of students. This was proposed for safety and security.
- A patron asked how the \$2 million will be paid for. Will our taxes go up? Then will there be another \$2 million project? Dave Wimmer said we will borrow the \$2 million and it is government subsidized. The patron asked how it will be paid back. Dave Wimmer said the CPF Fund will increase by approximately .017 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.
- A patron said we are seeing a rise in inflation. If it goes up, does this increase? Are we at the mercy of the market? Dave Wimmer said as the market adjusts, the federal government adjusts the rates so it is little or no interest back to the taxpayers. If the cost of borrowing becomes high, could the project be canceled or scaled back? Dave said that would be the decision of the board. Rich Shail said it would be addressed if it becomes a concern.
- A patron asked the age of the facilities we are trying to renovate. The high school was built in 1968 and is the original facility. Rolling Prairie was built in 1956 and has incurred some renovations.
- A patron asked when competing for students, is there a plan to publicize to draw more students to come here? Rich Shail said this project was brought to their attention because of safety and health violations. We are just trying to get a safe environment for our students.

- Dave Wimmer said this financing will not be available here next year if Congress chooses not to support it. It could go away next year.

There was a motion to close the hearing and return to the regular meeting.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- The board approved the Project Resolution – Exhibit “A” as read by Rich Shail. Bernie said when he came on the board 12 years ago, we had a \$2.6 million CPF Fund that could be used for this type of project. Since that time, the state legislature has instructed schools to take certain general fund expenditures out of the CPF Fund like technology, copy equipment costs and technology salaries that total \$1.8 million at New Prairie. Our CPF is \$2.2 million. We have less than \$1/2 million to do upgrades. We must use that money for snow removal and emergencies because the state could not fund the General Fund. New Prairie is one of the lowest in the state in per pupil expenditures. That is what drives these decisions to be made.
- The Board approved the Appropriation Resolution – Exhibit “B” as read by Rich Shail. Bernie said there was a comment made by one of the patrons that a board member was sleeping during the hearing. Bernie said he sits on the board and sees no one sleeping. He wanted that noted for the record.
- The Board approved the Conflict of Interest Disclosure for Dale Groves.
- The Board accepted donations as follows:
  - Olive/Little League Ball Diamond Upgrades
  - Middle School Make-a-Difference Day Donations
  - High School Boys Locker Room Renovation
- The Board approved the appointment of Fanning/Howey as the architect for the High School and Rolling Prairie Elementary Project at the cost of \$130,000.

### **DISCUSSION**

- The following policies were introduced for first reading:
  - Board Policies #0167.3, 2260.01, 3122.02, 3160, 3362, 3419.01, 4122.02, 4160, 4362, 4419.01, 4430.01, 5335, 5517, 8120 and 8500.01

- Mr. Dermody advised that Memorial Hospital signed a contract with the New Prairie Schools for services for the 2010-2011 school year at a cost of \$14,000. We received information two weeks ago that they were going to increase those fees by \$10,000. Clara Clark and Brian Williamson were instructed to seek another service. We are in the process of canceling Memorial Hospital's contract. We hope to have more information by the December meeting and have another service in place by January 2, 2011.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Rich Shail wanted to thank the administration and teachers for everything they do. The AYP does not demonstrate the ability that our staff has and the amount of time the administration and staff put into educating our students. Thank you very much for what you do.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.