

**HADLEY-LUZERNE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUDGET WORKSHOP
Monday, February 3, 2014
STUART M. TOWNSEND MIDDLE SCHOOL - LGI @ 6:30 PM
27 Hyland Drive, Lake Luzerne**

MINUTES

Meeting Place: Stuart M. Townsend Middle School, LGI
Members Present: Mr. Othmer, Mr. Hanlon, Mrs. Visscher, Mr. Novotarski,
Mrs. Lombardi
Members Absent: None
Others in Attendance: Superintendent – Paul Berry, HS Principal - Beecher Baker, MS
Principal - Patrick Cronin, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment/PK-2 Principal -
Elizabeth Hayes, School Business Administrator – Timothy Hilker, CSE Chair-
Brianna Martin, Athletic Director- Rich Trowbridge and 40+ others.

CALL TO ORDER

President Othmer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CORRESPONDENCE

None

DISCUSSION

Athletic merger with Lake George regarding football was led by HL Athletic Director, Rich Trowbridge and HL HS Principal, Beecher Baker.

Representatives from Lake George Central School District included: Jeff Bennett, LG Head Football Coach, and assistant, Kyle Manny, LG School Board Vice President, John Murphy and LG Board Member, Clark Perkett.

History - Mr. Baker noted that we were approached by Lake George to share football. Since 2008 we have a shared wrestling program with Lake George that has been very successful. A meeting was recently held between the athletic director's and principals. The result of that meeting is to offer to Lake George, our student athletes, one coach, a bus (one way to Lake George), half of referee costs. This would be at a cost (detail attached) totaling \$6,900 for Hadley-Luzerne.

The board members had questions regarding insurance, student numbers, how many students have signed up, the effect on the soccer teams, parent concerns regarding play time, that history doesn't repeat itself as HL cut football in the past, the enrollment of both schools, injuries that might affect winter sports, the effect on the three year budget plan and the opportunity to improve district offerings and to stop the flow of families out of the district which results in decreased enrollment.

PUBLIC/STUDENT COMMENTS

Jeff Bennett, LG Head Football Coach talked about the health of the league, stating that this move will put us in section C, allowing for a full game schedule and allow for the health and safety of all players. Rich Trowbridge noted the league will be waiting for a decision on the merger to finalize schedules and confirmed that without the merger that Lake George will be a "D" school and with the merger, Lake George will be a "C" school. Mr. Bennett stated the youth commission of Lake George is already on board and willing to accept Hadley-Luzerne youths into their football program.

Mr. Bennett personalized the conversation, noting how he was originally attending Hadley-Luzerne but moved due to the anticipated cut of football at HL, and he moved and played football and received a college scholarship for football. He noted that he plays the BEST player, and frankly does not get involved with parent concerns over playing time. He noted there is a lot of room for many football players and there would be no cuts in football. There was a discussion regarding tryouts, and holding them earlier so that students who want to try it wouldn't then quit after the season started. Mr. Bennett noted that kids usually don't quit until after the first week of full suit practices. He is fine with that, so the students can see if they want to play, this allows students to try it out and we can be flexible in that area. Football will also help the other sports as the students are in great athletic shape after playing football.

Todd DeMarsh, a parent in Lake Luzerne, noted that this merger would allow students of all sizes to play a sport. There will be some students who will play football instead of going home on the bus in the afternoon. He feels this would be a big missed opportunity if not approved and noted that it is not a big deal for parents to travel as they currently travel for a variety of sports.

Duane Moulton, a parent, previous board president in Lake Luzerne, noted that the most valuable point made tonight is that our enrollment is dropping and that we need to support the improvement of these types of programs as we have supported the improvement in academics. He noted as in the past; the board set a trend to talk about how we can do things, not why we can't do things. A board member noted they are asking questions in order to make an informed decision. Mr. Moulton continued that we had talked with Corinth and they did not want to merge sports. He said there are no finer people than the Bennett's - we have the right coach, the right kids and the money in the budget. Now is the time to merge before budgets start increasing.

Students inclusive of Ryan Brooks, Jonathan Coppola, Tanner DeMarsh, Chad Harris, Jonathon Fraser, Shamus Fraser, Michael Fuss, Carter Springer, and Hunter Weiss. The following letter was read aloud:

To the members of the school board, I Jonathan Coppola am here on behalf of myself and my friends of the Hadley-Luzerne school district. I am asking that you please give us the opportunity to merge with Lake George so we can play football. The past 2 years I have watched my brother work hard at a sport he loves in a different school because the chance was not given to him here. I do not want that for me. I love football. Not all of us kids are interested in the sports that we have here and therefore go somewhere else to play. Other school districts have given us the chance to play with them and we thank them for that, but when we can no longer play because our time is done, why is that fair to us when we have put so much of our self into that sport. I have a strong love for football and know that with hard work and dedication we could make a great team.

Jean Romer-Cieslik, Hadley, noted that this is a great opportunity but is concerned for the kids in soccer. The concern is that this opportunity is at the expense of those dedicated to soccer. There has to be a need on both sides.

Michele Bourdeau, Hadley, asked the Lake George coach what the parents in Lake George feel about the merger. We all have children here who sit the bench while others play. Mr. Bennett responded that the Lake George parents want their children to play at the appropriate level. For example they do not want an 8th grader playing JV, due to the safety of their children. With the larger pool of students this will not be an issue.

John Murphy, Lake George BOE VP, stated that everything you are hearing from Mr. Bennett is what he is. Lake George is worried about the longevity of the program. He is asking us to give the kids this opportunity. This merger is supported by Lake George.

Amy Sutliff, Hadley, acknowledged that the wrestling parents of the War-Eagles support all the kids, no matter what school they are from and the merger in wrestling has created a phenomenal team.

Dan Lescault, Corinth (Pee Wee Football Coach), he emotionally stated he had opened the door for the Hadley-Luzerne students to play football in Corinth. He stated that our loss is Lake Georges' gain. The students from here are amazing, the parents are amazing. He noted that parent Amy Sutliff raised over \$12,000 for the program. I've talked to the Corinth board but it is there loss.

Sonja Harris, Lake Luzerne; Lake Luzerne has seen enrollment go down and she has had close friends leave the district to give their kids more opportunities. She does not want to hurt the soccer program but asks that these boys be given a chance.

Thomas Fuss, Lake Luzerne; this is about opportunity for kids, parents, community, for miniscule funds, he feels the number of students who would be able to play the sport of their choice is 35-40. Currently his family is involved in Corinth football, soccer, and youth wrestling. This is how you develop a program and let students make their own decisions. The coach wants to develop a great team. The community will come together. He has seen an increase in the attendance at wrestling matches over the past six years with the merger. Please give these opportunities.

Rich Trowbridge was asked for the number of student sign ups.

The following numbers signed up for the football:

29	7-8 th grade
14	6 th grade
15	9-12 grade

New Parent, There was a brand new parent who inserted that they can count one more 6th grader as he is new to the district and that his son will be playing.

Leonard Coppola, he emotionally stated he has coached these kids. He took his oldest son out of our school because he wanted to play football. He plays at Spa Catholic and watching his older son is great and this is what he wants. He asked the board please do what the kids want.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

The attached Budget Report was presented by Mr. Berry and Mr. Hilker.

Discussion points included, the governor's proposal, the revenue side not available yet, the athletic budget does not include the merger of football. The Athletic Budget, Special Education Budget, Technology Budget, Buildings & Grounds Budget, Transportation Budget and Contractual Increases were all presented. There was a discussion on budgeting for only what we need, the budgeting of anticipated outside placements in special education, the technology budget will see increases as we will begin to pay for the free services received this year from BOCES and additional technology including the DL. The buildings and grounds budget includes the tractor and the transportation budget includes the equipment requested from that department. There was a discussion on the tax cap calculation that needs to be submitted to NYSED in early March. There was a discussion on Matrix health insurance and ERS reserve. Mr. Hilker noted the copy of the attached email he had sent out in October regarding Gap Elimination Restoration.

PUBLIC/STUDENT COMMENTS

Duane Moulton, Lake Luzerne, noted that athletics is a very small portion of the budget. The Tax, ERS and unemployment reserves were discussed and they will not be used, so that money should be either moved or used to off-set the budget. Mr. Hilker explained that a move in these reserves was offered last year but the direction was not given, to move. These reserves are the same as last year and he noted this conversation can take place when the revenue side of the budget is discussed with the board. Mr. Moulton continued to explain that the budget was

decreased in 10-11 yet was followed by increased programming. There is a trend since then, to increase budgets by about 5% and this is dangerous. He stated there needs to be a spend-down and stated the reserves need to be looked at.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Visscher to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Seconded by Mrs. Lombardi and unanimously approved by all.

Respectfully Submitted by Regina York, District Clerk