

MSD OF NEW DURHAM TOWNSHIP

School Board Meeting

Minutes of November 8, 2017

Executive Session: 5:30 p.m.

Those in Attendance:

Board Members

Lynn Wilson
Mark Parkman
Vicki Hannon
Karen Jedrysek

Staff

Dr. Curtiss Strietelmeier

Absent:

None

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Lynn Wilson, Mark Parkman, Vicki Hannon, and Karen Jedrysek were present.

Approve Minutes

Action

Motion to approve regular school board meeting minutes of September 21 (draft form), September 24, October 11, and October 25, 2017, as presented was made by Ms. Hannon and seconded by Ms. Jedrysek. Motion carried.

Approve Financial Report

Action

Motion to approve the Finance Report as presented was made by Mr. Parkman and seconded by Ms. Wilson. Motion carried.

Correspondence

None

Student Good News Report

Morgan Shreves presented the Student Good News Report for the middle school and high school. It has been a busy couple of weeks with parent-teacher conferences and a presentation on cyber-bullying, and then fall break where everyone had a chance to rest. Other activities included a band and choir concert and celebration of Red Ribbon Week. Students participated in many events to pledge they are drug-free. At the end of October we had the trick or treat around the track and had a great turn out despite the cold. Last week A.K. Smith celebrated the opening of their career café. It helps students learn everything from food prep to cooking to serving customers and counting their change.

Mr. McKibben and Mrs. Bunch traveled to Indianapolis to receive the gold star counseling plaque. It's in the lobby of the high school. Tomorrow 8th and 10th graders will participate in Junior Achievement Day, and on Friday, there will be a Veteran's Day Program at 1:30 in the upstairs gym. November will be a busy month as some will attend a Mental Health Workshop on Monday to gain a better understanding of how to work with students and help with related issues. Next Wednesday and Thursday, select juniors will be taking the Accuplacer test followed by Thanksgiving break. At the end of the November, there will be a Career Fair with A.K. Smith, and students from South Central, Wanatah, and Westville will attend. There is also the English ECA test, and the month will wrap up with the Sports Awards Program.

Congratulations to several students for receiving distinct awards from the conference. Nick Childers and Cloe Fortune were named First Team Winners and Kelsey Nichols received Honorable Mention. Dakota Detrich won the PCC Mental Attitude Award. Morgan Shreves and Trent Heisik were named All Conference PCC in Volleyball, and Nichole Alvarez was named All Conference PCC in Cross Country. Last week was the winter sports parent meeting, and most teams have started games already. We hope to see everyone at the games.

Brooke Skalka gave the Student Good News Report for the elementary school for the month of November. She is a fifth grade student council representative from Mrs. Sittig's classroom.

On Monday, our PTO sponsored their first Elementary Science Fair. We had 29 students do experiments, share their findings, and bring their evidence to the cafeteria. All participants are going to Legoland with Mr. Ton in December to celebrate their accomplishments. The PTO also held a Butter Braid sale and made \$3,400!

The fifth graders took a Study Trip to the Field Museum in Chicago last Friday thanks to those butter braid sales! They researched Native American tribes, spent time in a Pawnee Lodge and explored the many parts of the museum. The sixth grade will be visiting the Merrillville Planetarium on the 17th to research astronomy!

Many clubs are meeting again this month including the Little Einstein's Club, the Name that Book Team, Brain Boosters, Student Council, Science Olympiad, Little Fish, Little Guppies, the Westville Reads Book Club, and our Drama Club continues to practice for Willie Wonka.

Student Ambassadors taught about self control yesterday and continue to meet weekly to learn how to be effective in the classroom.

It might be cold outside but cheer practice and indoor soccer are happening all month long. Boys basketball for fifth and sixth grade is also underway with practices and games happening throughout the week.

Sixth grade will host their own grade level Science Fair on Tuesday the 21st from 8:30-9:30 in the Westville Gym. You are welcome to join them!

We'll have a break here at school for the Thanksgiving holiday, with no school from the 22nd through the 24th.

We are very excited to welcome the Indiana State Poet Laureate, Shari Wagner to our school on November 27th. She will be speaking with our fourth through sixth graders and her visit will kick off a Young Author project sponsored by the PTO. Our ambassadors will share her lesson with our Kindergarten through third grade students in the days following her visit.

On the 27th we'll also be having a Penny Race for Juvenile Diabetes Research that will last throughout the week.

On the 28th our sixth graders will attend a Middle School Career Fair to learn about the career options our community offers.

On November 30th the 1st graders will have a "Look, I Can Read" event for their parents and grandparents here at the school from 6 to 7pm.

That sums up the month of November in the Elementary! Thank you so much for having me this evening! Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

Blackhawk Pride Award Winners were introduced. They each read about the most important lifelines to use in school and why they are proud to be a Westville Blackhawk. They included: Cutler Nims from Kindergarten in Mrs. Allen's classroom, Claire Pavkey from first grade and Mrs. Armstrong's classroom, Avery Stiles from second grade and Mrs. Freese's classroom, Madison Gonzalez from third grade and Mrs. Green's class, Mackenzie Rust from fifth grade and Mrs. Jones classroom. Unable to attend were Caleb McCewen, and Jonas McCewen, both from fourth grade and Mrs. Ton's class. Cole Swanson is busy playing basketball from fifth grade and Mrs. Jones class, and Allie Unger is busy cheering down there at the basketball game. She is from sixth grade and Mrs. Shoaf's classroom.

Public Forum

None

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Strietelmeier reported the following:

- 1) La Porte Health Care Foundation awarded a grant of approximately \$25,000 throughout La Porte County to increase health benefits of the community. The Early Childhood Program was targeted simply because that program has been shown to make direct

impacts on student health, student growth, and also because the program works closely with families and brings some of those benefits into the household as well.

- 2) The Graduation Gateways continue. That was posted on the last weekly posting. It was included as the Graduation Gateway update 4.0. We are now on 6.0, which is supposedly the final version. Starting in 2023, they are going to change how graduation looks for students. They will have a different criteria, in three different areas: 1) diploma, 2) testing, and 3) work or volunteer type service as well. It will continue to be posted on the website as it moves forward.
- 3) There is a weekly posting for the Board as well as one for the Community every Friday. There will be more public notes and postings on the strategic plan, mission, vision statements, and along that line.
- 4) Dr. Strietelmeier will host his first Town Hall meeting. He will meet once a month with the general public who don't attend board meetings. The first one will be November 18 at 9:00 a.m. in the library. It will be an informal setting to answer questions the public may have that normally don't come to the board meetings. He is trying to be more open with what is going on in the school districts so he can communicate all of the good things that area happening.

Old Business

A. NEOLA Policy 6605, Crowd Funding

Action

The first reading was done. We were waiting on Mr. Kaminski to confirm. The question was, who can approve the crowd funding and what resources can we use first? We had to approve that staff could use crowd funding, which was the first option, they couldn't, and we said, yes they can, and secondly, who approves what resource they use. It was either the Superintendent or the Superintendent with the Board's approval. I believe we chose to just do the Superintendent at that point. That is the current policy, which still needs to be approved at this point. It is one of the remaining ones from 29.1. Motion to approve NEOLA Policy 6605, Crowd Funding, as stated was made by Mr. Parkman, seconded by Mrs. Jedrysek. Motion approved. Dr. Strietelmeier will work with Mr. Kaminski on the proper guidelines.

B. Viridian Bill Approval

Action

Dr. Strietelmeier has asked that this item be tabled since there are still questions for the architect.

New Business

A. NEOLA Policy Updates

Information

We have reached the end of Volume 29.1. We are now on Volume 29.2, and actually Volume 30.1. We get a policy update every six months. Dr. Strietelmeier has decided to include 29.2 and 30.1 together as much as possible. He tries to do them in sections. He

has 0's and 1's, the new ones from these two updates. Policy 0100 basically covers definitions and comments. The real changes are just language at this point. Policy 1220 is Employment of the Superintendent. With the state law this year, it was changed that when the Board and Superintendent came the point where they were going to cease their contract, the buyout is different. They've now limited it to a maximum of \$250,000 or one year of superintendent's contract. They also change the term limit of what a superintendent can be hired for, a minimum of one year and not to exceed three. The contract can be extended for no more than an additional five. They put more constraints on the superintendent contract and the superintendent language, along those lines. Policy 1521 is just deals with background checks. They've added a word, references, there. We would like to move towards approval of these items at the next board meeting. This is information that they are there and we are working towards new policy.

B. 2018 Tax Anticipation Warrants Resolution

Action

Most years the district ends up taking a Tax Anticipation Warrant. It allows the corporation to take a one-year loan. It is added as a supplement to funds. Usually what happens is we receive funds from the County in December and June. So there is money there, but because you are waiting six months and you are getting close to running out of money before you get your next tax draw, so all the TAW does is add a little bit of funds to your account so you can make sure you make it to your tax draw. The amount we are requesting this year has decreased from last year. There are still areas that need to be covered to make sure to make it through to June. It will not exceed beyond year if we receive the funds we're expecting. The general fund will be for a total amount of \$328,000; capital projects for \$213,000; transportation \$109,000; and bus replacement \$43,000. It is a decrease for the current year. The long-term goal is to be able to have enough resources so that we don't have to keep doing this. We did not do a TAW for debt service. The general fund this current year is \$558,000, nothing for debt service, \$10,000 for pension debt, \$222,000 for capital projects, \$108,000 for transportation, \$88,000 for bus replacement for a total of \$986,000. This year it is \$693,000.

Motion for approval of TAW's was made by Mrs. Hannon and seconded by Mrs. Jedrysek. Motion carried.

C. Board Member Resignation

Action

Mr. Gurpreet Singh notified of his resignation from the Board of Directors two weeks ago. There is currently a Board position available. If there is any interest in being part of the Board, please contact Bill Kaminski through a letter or email. The actual closing date is the end of November. That term would be up for election in fall of 2018, so they would be serving through December 2018. Dr. Strietelmeier noted that Mr. Singh did a nice job and was very involved and hard worker and he will be missed.

Motion to approve the resignation of Gurpreet Singh was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mrs. Jedrysek. Motion carried.

D. Snow Removal Bids

Action

We put out request for bids for snow removal, and we received three, one from D&M Excavation, one from Smith Fence, and one from Signature Lawns. The least expensive was Signature. They have been the corporation contractor for the past 2-3 years and has done a nice job, so we are recommending approval of the bid from Signature Lawns to do our snow removal for the 2017-2018 winter snow season.

Motion to approve snow removal bid with Signature Laws was made by Mr. Parkman and seconded by Mrs. Hannon. Motion carried.

E. GO Bond Projects

Action

There are several GO bond projects for approval so funds can be dedicated: 1) Baseball and softball field, upgrading and maintenance work on fields for \$9,670; 2) Soccer field at \$5,775; 3) Mobile unit removal and purchase of storage container for \$2950, and, 4) Sewer sanitary drainage, which is the replacement of the pipe underneath the elementary school for \$41,193. The baseball and softball teams also contributed to that project. Coaches and teams fund raised to contribute towards their own fields.

Motion to approve four GO Bond Projects for soccer field, softball/baseball field, sewer/sanitary, and removal of mobile unit and purchase of storage container was made by Mr. Parkman, seconded by Mrs. Jedrysek. Motion carried.

F. 2017 High Ability Grant

Action

Every year the High Ability Grant requires approval. It services children that quality through COGAT testing and other ways that are considered high ability within the school district. They do specialized projects like the Challenger Project, Maker Space, and it also helps pay for items like the Book Club as well as some things with Project Lead the Way and some of the things that the high school does with Todd Debreese?? at the level as well. Virginia Jones does a nice job putting this grant together each year. She has reviewed it with Dr. Strietelmeier, Alissa Schnick, and Brian Ton, we are in agreement with what's been approved. Ms. Wilson noted that the monies that Mrs. Jones has been working on, she is one of our 5th grade teachers, and the monies are spread through the high school, middle school, and elementary school. She has been a grant writer for this for ten years. Her efforts are appreciated.

Motion to approve the High Ability Grant was made by Ms. Hannon, seconded by Ms. Wilson. Motion carried.

G. ELearning Day Presentations: Alissa Schnick & Brian Ton Information

Dr. Strietelmeier reported that in October the first ELearning Day was done. Ms. Schnick gave a short presentation. This year is a pilot year for the program. ELearning Days will begin next year, so once we have accumulated all of our snow days, we would go into an ELearning Day. A Committee was established to write the procedures so that it was

consistent though the middle school and high school. It was decided at the secondary level that Google Classroom was going to be required for every class as far as logging on and doing their assignments, and then teachers would post their assignments and then communicate with their students. There was training for the teachers on how to add assignments in Google Classroom, how to add a class to Google Classroom, etc., so that teachers who were not familiar with Google Classroom could have some time to experiment, work together, and create that for the students. We discussed expectations of students, time for students to turn in assignment, time that teachers would be available for people to contact, etc. Sent a survey to all middle school and high school students through their English class so the completed the survey at the end, and then we sent a survey to the staff after the student surveys were collected to get feedback as a committee to prepare for the next ELearning Day in March. She presented data from the surveys. Teachers could give any type of assignment they wanted, from reading and writing to a workout video and a math resource guide. Then encouraged staff to communicate with students, so over 96% of staff communicated with one or more student. It's like a Google Chat. They can message back and forth. The Special Ed Department called every student that had an IEPA communicated with that student to make sure we were providing services. Most of the staff thought they were prepared as best they could. There were six that felt there could be some improvement and those improvements will be discussed so that everyone is feeling as best prepared as possible. Over 80% of secondary students could access Google Classroom correctly and complete the assignment. Then teachers were asked for input for improvement. Students need to be familiar with programs so it's easier for them to access. Talked about length of time and decided that three days would be sufficient for students that didn't have access to a computer to complete that at the secondary level. Most teachers thought that was too much time. The further you get away from the due date, the less likely students are to turn that assignment in, and so they discussed shortening that length of time. We asked teachers to keep assignments at 30 minutes or less for each class because that can add up throughout the day. A few teachers gave them over that time limit, and then at 22% none of the teachers gave them over that time limit. That was within range of what we decided as a staff. Students said that 49% all of their teachers explained everything and they felt very clear, and then the next one was most. On a scale of 1-5, most students were between 4-5, and 280 kids responded, and then how easily accessible the Google Classroom was, knowing how to get onto it, and then having the technology, which all of our students do not have, so some had to come back to school and complete the assignment. There was a lot of great feedback from students. Everything from, they wanted a video recorded for the lesson to go along with it, which I thought was a great suggestion for the teachers, math and biology specifically, to too many essays from the English Department. They felt that everyone's assignment was similar, so if you have multiple English classes, it was too much. I think that's a great suggestion so that we know departments need to talk before they do their assignments. It was very successful. All teachers submitted documentation of their contact with students or parents on that day. Some key things to improve moving forward: 1) Discussing assignments as departments; 2) Length of assignments; and, 3) As a district,

attendance. If they don't do the work at all, technically they are getting credit for being here, is that something we need to consider for them being absent that day?

Mr. Ton passed out his presentation to the Board. The group started similarly, meeting as a grade level. They discussed procedures and took back to the grade levels and discussed any tweaks that might need to be made and also discussed the amount of days, starting with five days, to end on the actual quarter end date. We felt like that wouldn't give enough time in case the student wasn't completed to make sure we had a chance to contact parents so they could at least get partial credit for completing before the end of the quarter. That helped with a very good return on all assignments. They discussed procedures with teachers. A letter was sent home to all families letting them know that all teachers were going to be sharing their expectations, and talking about this in their classrooms, and if there were any students who didn't have access or had spotty access in their home, they could always request from their teachers a hard copy of all of the work that would be shared as well. We are working with K-6th grade, so we aren't able to go completely with Google Docs or Google Classroom, so there was a little more of a range of flexibility on what we were expecting from the students and from the families at home. He provided Kindergarten, 2nd grade, 4th grade, and 6th grade actual work that was assigned. Sixth grade was completely done electronically, and Kindergarten had a mixture where they didn't have some things on the computer. They made more accommodations if they didn't have a computer. There is a list of 17 activities, and they can choose 5. If they do on-line work, they can choose 2, so they still had the work going as well. At the end of each of the grade level packets, they shared the communication from one of the teachers in each grade level of all of the contacts that were made either whole group email blasts or through newsletters. Students were also contacting their teachers, checking in. At the end they provided for Mrs. Fansen because from the Special Ed Cooperative to make it legal for the service hours that are provided, they have to make contact, so Mrs. Fansen made contact and if she had a message, she attempted to make contact with all of her students. The percentage completion of all work was shown. There were 22 students for whatever reason did not complete the work. Those 22 students, who probably should be an attendance issue, because they aren't showing up for the work or doing anything at home. We didn't just count it on that Friday, but we counted it until that Wednesday, and then still if they turned it in Thursday, it was a late grade, but would have still been counted present for that day. We had 95% complete the work for the ELearning Day. Overall they received a lot of great feedback. Mr. Ton believes it should be used sparingly. He believes it is a good alternative.

H. Donation

Action

We received one donation from Dennis & Sons. They are the group that did the soffits around the building. Once the project was completed, they donated \$500 back to the school. Motion to approve \$500 donation from Dennis & Sons was made by Mr. Parkman and seconded by Ms. Wilson. Motion carried.

I. Roof Project Bid

Action

Earlier this year the Board approved Dr. Strietelmeier to get a bid on the roof project. That process was completed as of November 3. Five groups said they would provide a bid. Three groups ended up giving bids. The low bid was Corelis Roofing at \$859,405. We also had a bid from Babella Roofing at \$887,816, and McGuff Roofing at \$1,469,670. The \$859,405 that was quoted by Corelis is approximately what we had estimated for that job. Again, that is the roof leading basically all the way down the high school hallway all the way down to the elementary hallway. It is actually two roofs, and not one. This was based on the recommendations from both Moisture Management and the architect that the roof itself had maybe 2-3 years left in good shape. At this point Dr. Strietelmeier is looking for approval to move forward with the project or to deny the bids at this point. Mr. Parkman believes that if there is still 2-3 years left on the roof that we should wait for a little while. Dr. Strietelmeier contacted Moisture Management to see what they thought. Viridian quoted us 10%, which seemed fairly high. Moisture Management suggested the yearly increase was more in the 3-5% range. Ms. Wilson is not in favor of moving forward with it at this point. Mrs. Hannon suggested re-evaluating in a year or two if it's necessary. Motion to not accept the bids as presented was made by Mr. Parkman and seconded by Mrs. Hannon. Motion carried.

Personnel

Action

A. Resignations

Recommend approval of the following resignations:

- **Mark Dineen** **Middle School Softball Coach**
- **Cynthia Toth** **Varsity Softball Assistant Coach**

Motion to approve resignations as presented was made by Mrs. Hannon and seconded by Mr. Parkman. Motion carried. Ms. Wilson understands the time and commitment to coaching and she would like to recognize Mark and Cynthia for their efforts.

B. Appointments

Action

Recommend approval of the following appointments:

- **Chris Piasky** **Varsity Baseball Coach**
- **Brandi Ammons** **Cafeteria Employee**
- **Jeff Cunningham** **Varsity Softball Assistant Coach**
- **Sue Hale** **Cafeteria Employee**
- **Jessica McCuen** **Middle School Girls' Basketball Coach**
- **Heather O'Malley** **Cafeteria Sub**
- **Cynthia Toth** **Middle School Softball Coach**

Motion to approve appointments as presented was made by Mrs. Jedrysek, seconded by Ms. Wilson. Motion carried.

C. Professional Leave Request

Action

Recommend approval of the following professional leave request:

- **Erin Sharpe** **Indiana Music Education Association Professional Development Conference**

January 13-14, 2018

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Motion to approve professional leave of Erin Sharpe was made by Mr. Parkman, seconded by Ms. Wilson. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: **December 13, 2017**
 Regular School Board Meeting 6:00 p.m.
 5:30 p.m. Executive Session

Vicki L. Hannon, Secretary

Date