

MSD OF NEW DURHAM TOWNSHIP

School Board Meeting

Minutes of August 31, 2017

Those in Attendance:

Board Members

Lynn Wilson
Mark Parkman
Vicki Hannon
Karen Jedrysek
Gurpreet Singh

Staff

Dr. Curtiss Strietelmeier

Absent

None

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

New Business

A. 2018 Budget Workshop

Dr. Strietelmeier reported that it is a requirement of the state to have a budget workshop prior to the approval of the budget. The budget was reviewed. They reviewed actual numbers for 2017 and estimates for 2018. The first two pages of the DOE 54 Reports show the tuition payments from the state. There is one for 2016-2017 and one for 2017-2018. In order to figure out the dollars for 2018, we have to look at half of 2017 and half of 2018. There are two different scenarios: The first shows January 2018 – June 2018 at 890 students, which is currently where the state has us listed. That is the number the state used to prepare our budget. We are currently at 901 students, and count day isn't until September 15, so we will err on the side of the low number until we know the actual number. The second shows July 2018 – December 2018, at \$5,352 per student, which reflects an increase of approximately \$100 per student as of July 1, 2018. Dr. Strietelmeier set the number for 2018 at 870 students. We expect to receive a total of \$5,709,901 in state tuition. On top of that we also receive miscellaneous income from items such as: transfers from the cafeteria, summer school, driver education, and other miscellaneous fees in the amount of approximately \$40,000. Dr. Strietelmeier believes it will be roughly the same amount this year.

It was asked where the Blue Chip money is added in. Dr. Strietelmeier advised that Blue Chip money is a whole separate fund, with the majority of that money going towards *Project Lead the Way*. It pays for all the materials and items required for *Project Lead the Way* as well as costs associated with start up, which was a very expensive program to start.

Technically it can pay for computers and other things. We get assistance from AHAC for teacher training for *Project Lead the Way*. We're not paying for teacher training. There is a county person stationed at Purdue who works for the state, and we've solicited for funding for her to pay for different things, and one of the things she can pay for out of her fund is training for our teachers, so it's saving us a huge amount of money, \$3,200 each time someone is trained, and we're also hoping to utilize her to teach as many levels of *Project Lead the Way* as possible. She does this on her own time over the summer. She is not provided any money or comp time for her services from the school corporation. The Blue Chip money goes for the actual physical items used in her classroom including start-up supplies, everything from centrifuges, and tubes, to skeletons, as well as consumables. The current Blue Chip money available is \$26,878, and may be closer to \$20,000 as a purchase was just made for the current class. It was asked if Blue Chip money could be used for furniture for her classroom. Furniture for the room was already purchased through capital projects. Technically Blue Chip money is supposed to be used on technology, but since this is a STEM type of program, it is believed that the funds are being utilized appropriately. The software for the program is also being paid for out of the Blue Chip monies. The PLTW software is all encompassing and the curricula is already written by the state. They teach the teacher to teach the curriculum and the curriculum already includes state based standards. There is a start-up cost for the curriculum and a continuation fee. I believe we spent roughly \$20,000 last year and \$20,000 this year on just the start-up costs. We are making money through students registering for our classes, either \$300 or \$500 per student. Discussion continued regarding the *Project Lead the Way* class.

If you look at the DOE 54, one of the line items is the Vocational Education Grant, in the amount of \$135,650. That money goes straight into the general fund and is used for vocational classes. We pay the Career Center, so we lose that money, but we're investing it in our students. We pay approximately \$3,000 per student per vocational class. The monies we currently receive for vocational programming will potentially be reduced in 2019 due to monies given to unions for their own training. Funding is based on high, medium, and low workforce needs. So healthcare, which PLTW does, is benefiting us. They were trying to move away from levels to actual pathways, where you wouldn't get reimbursed for the first two classes, only after three or four classes, but that is currently being fought off. There will be approximately 15 students at A.K. Smith next year. We will be spending approximately \$250,000 on the vocational program and bringing in approximately \$135,000. We won't break even, but it's worth doing.

The budget of \$5,709,901 includes three retirements and two resignations. Dr. Strietelmeier advised that he would like to look at the possibility of giving a raise on the base and a raise on the stipend for all teaching staff. It does not include administrative staff. We could also do it for the aides as well if we needed to. The budget also includes one full-time nurse. For example, Penny Nelson was making \$66,000 per year. Her replacement is making \$36,000 per year. We have two of those at the elementary and one

at the high school, so we're already saving \$90,000 before raises and number of kids. It was asked what the benefit of the percentage increase in the stipend and not just a percentage increase would be. Dr. Strietelmeier would rather not have it on the base simply because in the next two years he might not be able to pay it, where the stipend he would have more opportunities to pay it. The budget also includes another teacher at the elementary. We will need to be up to three teachers in the 6th grade next year or 5th grade, three across the board for every grade level. I'm not budgeting for another teacher at the high school. With deficits in the math department, it was asked if we should be looking at something else there. Dr. Strietelmeier agreed. We will have approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 in the fall of 2018 to invest in the teachers, so we will need to make that decision in the spring. It is very important to get another math teacher or maybe even a curriculum coordinator, somebody to help with that side of things.

At the September board meeting we will go through the budget. A comparison to 2017 was provided to the Board for review. Dr. Strietelmeier would like to include an increase for aides. The budget is allocating \$80,000 for the aides right now. We recently raised the starting rate for an aide from \$7.60/hr to \$8.10/hr. The aides who have been here longer aren't even on the scale. Aides hours had been reduced from 40 to under 30 but their rates stayed the same. The Board requested a cost comparison. That information is available and a column will be added to show an increase. It was noted that a big concern is getting the special education stuff paid off in the next couple of years and increasing the general fund surplus, even if it's \$5,000 or \$10,000 or \$15,000. By the end of 2019, all money owed for special education should be caught up.

There was additional discussion regarding the wage of aide. The Board agreed at a prior meeting to increase Ms. Morgan's pay to \$9.10/hr.

The budget also includes a 2% increase for custodians. Someone asked who made up the custodial staff. They include Todd, Roxy, Arlene, Leana, Ryan, and Jacob. Sometimes Larry McEwen will work extra hours, and he gets paid out of there as well. There might be a couple of one hitters who might work a couple hours a week or a couple hours a night, but that's the basis of it, those six. The only ones receiving insurance and are full time employees are Todd, Roxy, Arlene, and Leana. Dr. Strietelmeier reported that on one page, it lists the last five years of expenditures so you can see a comparison. He advised that \$5.7 million is a reasonable budget.

B. School Nurse

Dr. Curtiss Strietelmeier likes the idea of having two nurses on staff, which would make support, coordination, and coverage easier. Our biggest problem at the moment is being able to keep a nurse on staff. He would like to consider the idea of going back to a full-time nurse simply because he wants to have stability in that position. The full-time nurse currently makes \$50,000 plus insurance, for a total of \$60,000 annually. One of the main draws that help with retention is benefits. Nursing is a very competitive market, so it may

be difficult to hire someone. Most likely it would need to be a parent that is a nurse who wants benefits as well as being off in the summer with their kids. The ratio for the nurse is non-stop. There are times when the nurse isn't even taking lunch. It was suggested hiring a health aide or medical assistant to assist the nurse. The current budget is for a full-time nurse. It's possible to get a part-time aide/assistant, but you're using the budget up on the full-time nurse. It was also suggested bringing in a CNA student from A.K. Smith or a nursing student from Valparaiso University or Purdue University to assist with things like hearing and vision testing and lice checks. Dr. Strietelmeier believes we ought to look at the full-time position and advised action will be taken at the next meeting.

C. School Counselor Work Days

Dr. Stietelmeier advised that this is for information only. This is regarding Dan's discussion about extra days. Every year we end up paying him for five extra days in the summer, so he is just asking to make that a permanent part of his contract. We agreed to a little more than \$100 a day for the extra days. It would be an addendum to his contract to be paid for 205 days. Everyone else in the office is paid for 205 days except him. We had a long discussion today and I asked if he had support if he would need all that extra time in the summer. He felt like if he had the right support, he would probably be okay. I advised Dan that I would ask for both. I think the most positive impact for our students would be for Dan to have extra help during the day to free him up to do what needs done. If we provide a helping position during the day, that person can answer phone calls, take care of transfer requests, all those things he gets bogged down doing, and he could actually spend time counseling and meeting with kids and looking over schedules. Dan also does lunch room duty, which he enjoys, but it doesn't seem like a good use of time. He can interact with students and pass out material during that time. As a result of our focus groups, there is concern that students don't have appropriate class schedules, are not being properly prepared for college, and are not prepared for the new school year. It was also suggested that available secretaries could do some of the duties rather than hiring an additional person. Is there an opportunity to re-align tasks? Maybe we consider having Dan in the lunch room two days a week and the other three days he is processing things, running reports, those types of things.

D. Bus Driver Raise

Bus driver salaries was discussed at the last public board meeting, which included increasing salaries, going away from a daily rate and going to an hourly rate, so instead of being \$62 per day, which was \$15.50/hour x 4 hours, to a new rate of \$16.50/hour. Two emails were provided, one from Tim Summers, Superintendent at Tri-Township, and one from Linda Wilfong, Superintendent at South Central, showing their current rates. South Central's current rate is \$18.83/hr. They do their ECA's differently, and we will discuss ABC trips later down the line. They are doing the ABC trips by hours of driving vs. hours of sitting. South Central also pays 11.2% for PERF, the life insurance and LTD as well. Tri-Township pays \$20/hr and four hours at a time. Our wage is still below South Central and Tri-Township, especially when you include all the extras. We do not have PERF. Our

drivers didn't want PERF. Tri-Township pays \$20/hr but there are no contributions to benefits other than life insurance. Dr. Strietelmeier requests an increase in salary of \$5/hour effective next pay period. We are currently at full strength for drivers, and Linda is still driving special needs students, but we do have a couple who are interested in joining our crew as well. The increase would just be for the full-time drivers. It is a highly skilled position, a difficult license to get, and they carry around 60 of our kids every day. I believe it is reasonable and will be beneficial to us as we look to keep our drivers and hope to get new ones. A motion to recommend a \$1.00/hr raise for full-time bus drivers, beginning next pay period, was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Parkman. Motion carried 5-0.

E. Solar Discussion

E-Venture Connect Agreement – Dr. Strietelmeier reported that it is not necessarily an action item that the Board has to vote on, but he brought the Board up to date on the solar portion of things. The next step on moving forward with the solar is to do an internet agreement with NIPSCO. We will have to pay \$1,000, so he wanted to make sure everyone was aware and comfortable moving forward with the solar. It was asked if it would happen by the end of the year, and he indicated that it is still possible. They can make it happen if we are confident we are going to approve it because then they will start ordering materials and getting things ready in mid-September with the idea that they will have the materials here in October. It was asked if Superintendent Strietelmeier had a copy of the last proposal. He does but it doesn't include any costs or how much power they would be generating or how much would be taken off the bill. The goal is to go 100% solar, but the Board asked how close they are to that. It was asked if there would there still be a rental agreement for the solar panels. Dr. Strietelmeier advised that it is more of a lease payment or installment loan. He advised that before signing the paperwork he will have Kurt come in and go over everything one more time. Jerry is concerned with some things as far as how it affects our utility rate from the capital project fund. The whole idea was to complete it by the end of the year. If we aren't done by January 1, we are looking at 15 years instead of 30, and that is a big difference. Currently there is a question as to where the solar panels will be placed. They are currently looking at the secondary soccer field. It is not necessary to make a final decision on the location, but Dr. Strietelmeier needs to make sure that everyone is on board with him going ahead with the internet agreement with NIPSCO to keep the process moving forward.

F. Fees for this School Year

Jane has provided the high school fees for this year to the Board. Sherry has looked them over as well. These should be the fees for this current school year. Dr. Strietelmeier asked for approval of the fees. A motion was made by Ms. Hannon to approve the fees for the high school, seconded by Mr. Parkman, and motion carried 5-0.

Personnel

A. Resignation – Jerianne Koehm, High School Science Teacher

Dr. Strietelmeier was not aware if a resignation letter had been written by Jerianne, so he wrote up a memo stating that she had come in on August 11 and gave him her keys and told him she was resigning, so you would have a letter to approve for resignation. A motion was made by Mr. Parkman to accept the resignation of Jerianne Koehm, seconded by Ms. Hannon, and motion carried 5-0.

B. Appointment – Michael Paniccia, High School Science Biology Teacher

Dr. Strietelmeier reported that Mr. Paniccia’s degree is in anthropology. Previously, he worked for the Dunes Learning Center. He believes Mr. Paniccia will do a good job. Adam and Sam are working very closely with him to make sure he is up and running. He is working on his emergency license and transition to teaching. The Board would like to be able to check up on the licensure to make sure that he is indeed working on the transition for licensure as well as his emergency license.

Appointment – Linda Williams, Part Time Spanish Teacher

Ms. Williams will be filling in while John is on leave. Linda has been a Spanish teacher in Michigan City, and she comes highly recommended. It does say she’s hiring at \$200 per day, but it should only be \$195 per day, so we will work that out. She is only available until Christmas, but John believes he will be back in October, January at the latest. He’s in a wheelchair, but seems to be in fairly good shape. Linda Williams is aware that John may return in October. Is John allowed to return with restrictions? It is an HR situation, and Bill would be helpful on that. We will have to look at risk insurance and Worker’s Comp regarding re-injury, fall risk, if there are accommodations, etc. His hope is that he will be out of the wheelchair by October.

Motion was made by Mr. Parkman to hire Mike and Linda, seconded by Ms. Hannon, and motion carried 5-0.

Adjournment

Board President, Lynn Wilson, reported that the next school board meeting will be Wednesday, September 13, 2017. There will be an Executive Session at 5:30 p.m., and the start time for the public meeting will be 6:00 p.m.

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

Vicki L. Hannon, Secretary

Date