

**Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools
Board of Education
Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2008**

Opening

A meeting of the Board of Education of the Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools was convened in open and public session at 7:30 p.m. on 15th day of December 2008 by President Suzanne Sapp.

Present

The roll was called and the following Board members were present: Randy Beranek, Melvin Cerny, Kevin Garner, David Lutton, David Nygren, and Suzanne Sapp. No members were absent.

Notice

Notice of the meeting was posted in advance in the Superintendent's Office, 1225 Clay Street, Ashland, NE. Notice of this meeting was given in advance to all members of the Board of Education. All proceedings of the Board of Education, except as may be hereinafter noted, were taken while the convened meeting was open to the public.

Public Participation

No public requested participation in the agenda.

Call to Order

The meeting was duly called to order.

Announcement of Open Meetings Act Posting

At the beginning of this meeting, President Sapp announced and informed the public that a current copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted on the north wall of the meeting room, behind the board members.

Agenda Change

Superintendent Pease reported that there were no additions to the agenda that was previously mailed to board members.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Lutton with second by Cerny to approve all of the items on the consent agenda. After discussion and on roll call vote, the board voted as follows: Voting yes: Beranek, Cerny, Garner, Lutton, and Nygren. Member Sapp abstained and did not vote or participate in the motion. Voting no: none. Motion carried.

Visitors and Communication from the Public

There were no visitors or communication from the public.

Administrative and Practitioners Reports

Sarah Pearson presented to the school board about the K-8 Spanish Program. Sarah created the program a couple of years ago when she was hired by the school district. Sarah talked about why we are teaching a foreign language to elementary students. She also spoke about what she teaches and how she teaches. Several examples were provided for the board including video clips, photos and school work created by and for students.

Board members were impressed by Sarah's presentation and the program. Member Lutton asked if the district had considered expanding the program at the middle level to possibly include a Spanish I class. Superintendent Pease reported that it had not been considered but certainly was worthy of consideration.

In lieu of reports Ray Bentzen, Teresa Bray and Jill Finkey provided holiday treats for all of those in attendance at the meeting.

Supt. Pease told board members that his office is still operating short handed with the absence of Office Manager Carrie Holz but so far there had been no major difficulties. Appreciation was expressed for patience with his staff as many are learning new jobs and cross training into different aspects of the office. Supt. Pease indicated that the cross training is one benefit from staff absences.

Pease also reported that he had attended a Capitol Conference Superintendents meeting last week and changes in the conference in the future were discussed. It is anticipated that Bennington will be leaving the conference as their enrollment grows and they become too large for the remaining members. Bennington may be considered for membership in the Eastern Midlands Conference. Capitol Conference has previously been approached about membership by Falls City, Auburn, Boystown and David City. Another possibility is Concordia High School in Omaha which is seeing growth that could move it into Class C-1 in a couple of years.

He also indicated that he had learned that Arlington was adding high school baseball in 2010 and that it is expected that Bennington will also be adding baseball in 2010. That will mean five of the eight conference schools will have baseball in 2010. They will include Arlington, Bennington, DC West, Raymond Central (Coop with Wahoo), and Wahoo. Yutan, a non-conference but neighboring school district, has also added baseball for 2010. The Curriculum Committee has baseball as an agenda topic to be discussed at a future meeting.

Finally, Pease reported that the cold and snowy weather had brought out problems in the operation of the district. The school district had at least four different heating problems it was dealing with on Monday. And although the route buses did not have any difficulty in the cold weather, because they are garaged, the district did have problems with spare buses starting that are stored outside.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Planning

Paul Kelly of BCDM was present and discussed work that had been done by the facility committee. Paul explained the process in developing the plan and presented drawings and cost estimates. He also presented some thoughts on facility issues that would be resolved by the plans.

Members asked questions about the drawings including: What was the plan for the Superintendent's Office? Why the Head Start and Kitchen locations were chosen in the drawing? How the high school cafeteria might be used for other activities? And how the project would work with the community resource center?

Paul shared his thoughts on each of the questions but indicated to the board members that the plans could certainly be adjusted and were meant to be conceptual.

Members also asked questions about financing such a project. Superintendent Pease indicated that there are many options to financing and it depended on decisions the board would want to make. Included among these options are the ability to wrap the debt payments around current bond payments and considering a valuation growth factor.

Pease indicated that he felt that the district could issue \$5,000,000 and perhaps \$6,000,000 in bonds without a tax increase. Pease then indicated that the presentation was to begin to provide information to the board and let them think about a possible project. The Board will discuss the issue at future meetings.

Data Connection Between Schools

Supt. Pease reported on issues related to the data connection between the Elementary and High School buildings. He told the board that the data connection is a fiber optic line with 6 fibers. The line is owned by Charter Communications but that it is solely dedicated and paid for by the school district.

The district has had concerns about the lack of redundancy for the line. The possibility had been explored to establish a wireless connection between the two buildings. The cost of such a project would be about \$10,000. Board members asked the administration to provide them with more information on the impact of the loss of a connection between the two schools and the priority for the school district on this line for technology spending.

RUS Grant and District Participation

Supt. Pease reviewed the ESU#2 RUS grant and the options for the school. He indicated that the district would be able to use 50% of the purchase of the data switches to match the grant. Pease recommended that the board approve the switches and that they be used to match against the distance education classroom upgrades and distance education/video conferencing cart. He explained that he was hesitant to recommend the making a match against the second video conferencing cart as the district has not used the current distance education room extensively.

A motion was made by Beranek and seconded by Lutton to approve the purchase of the data switches as a match against the RUS grant classroom equipment with one video conferencing cart. After discussion and on roll call vote, the board voted as follows: Voting yes: Beranek, Cerny, Garner, Lutton, Nygren and Sapp. Voting no: none. Motion carried.

School Calendar

Supt. Pease presented a school calendar for 2009-2010 and a summer calendar for 2009 for the board's approval. Pease indicated that most of the comments from faculty about the suggested calendar centered around December 23. Staff who commented did not want a staff day on the 23rd preferring January 4th. Pease indicated he was not recommending the 4th as a staff day as he felt that many parents would be ready for their children to return to school and would have an expectation that their kids would be back in school on January 4th.

School Calendar (continued)

A motion was made by Beranek with second by Cerny to approve the calendars as proposed, except that January 4th would become the optional staff day instead of December 23rd and that December 23rd would become a student day with an early dismissal. After discussion and on roll call vote, the board voted as follows: Voting yes: Lutton, Nygren, Sapp and Beranek,. Voting no: Cerny and Garner. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

New Teacher and Reassignment

Superintendent Pease recommended to the board the hiring of Philip Onwiler as a Middle School Social Studies teacher beginning January 5, 2009 and that Matt Flynn be reassigned as the Technology Integration Specialist.

Motion by Nygren with second by Cerny to approve the hiring of Philip Onwiler and approve the reassignment of Matt Flynn effective January 5, 2009. After discussion and on roll call vote, the board voted as follows: Voting yes: Nygren, Sapp, Beranek, Cerny, Garner and Lutton. Voting no: none. Motion carried.

Capital Outlay Plan

Supt. Pease presented the 2008 Capital Outlay plan and discussed progress made on the plan to date. He indicated that the administration would begin work on the 2009 plan next month and that he was interested in any input or concerns that board members may have about facilities.

Member Sapp mentioned the locker rooms, specifically ventilation in the boys locker and other issues related to appearance. Pease mentioned that work had been done on the ventilation system and he thought that was improved but that the district continues to deal with issue of paint chipping in the showers and with the storage of athletic equipment. Beranek mentioned that in his experience working with wrestling that our lockers are no better and no worse than other schools.

Supt. Pease mentioned that the old science room at the high school had been on the list as a priority #3 for upgrade last year but that through work with the facility planning he thought the project should be moved up in importance. He indicated that he desired to work with ILS of Ashland on upgrading the facilities and because of the time lag between approving a plan for upgrading the room and getting the materials, he recommended that he be allowed to move forward with that ASAP.

Members were in agreement to begin working with ILS and that the facility was due for some upgrades.

Board Policies related to ADA (1300, 1301, 1302 and 1331)

Supt Pease shared with the board policies recommended by the district's legal counsel related to ADA. Pease indicated that the definition for children with disabilities had been broadened and that the district needed to get policies and procedures in place to comply with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Members will review the policies and consider them for adoption at their regular meeting in January.

Information Item

A letter was presented from the Saunders County Clerk certifying the results of the November school board elections. Members Garner, Nygren and Sapp were reelected to new four year terms beginning in January of 2009.

Other business presented for future considerations

No other items were presented for future consideration during this session.

Adjournment

President Sapp adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m. The next Regular Meeting will be held 7:30 p.m. on Monday, January 19, 2009 in the Library of the High School at 1842 Furnas Street, Ashland, NE. An agenda for the meeting, kept continuously current, is available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Superintendent's Office, 1225 Clay Street, Ashland, NE 68003.

Minutes submitted by:

Secretary