

REGULAR MEETING - BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET
January 19, 2009
Minutes

Board members arrived at 7:55 p.m. from special session. Board President Tim Witzmann apologized for the session running over the regular board session time, and thanked everyone for their patience.

Moulton moved, with second by Cranston, to approve the agenda, with a change to move Item III regarding Executive Session to the end of the agenda. Board members agreed and the motion carried unanimously.

President Witzmann called the meeting to order and took Roll Call. Members present were Tim Witzmann, Catherine Cranston, Robert Gunther, Marin Hansch, and Brian Moulton. Absent members were Marie Colbeth and Michael Connor.

President Witzmann reviewed the procedures for Groups or Individuals Wishing To Be Heard. No one came forward.

Board members recognized High School Silver Ring award recipient Tim White. High School Principal Shawn Madden provided an overview of Mr. White's teaching career, stating White had also been recognized last year as Somerset's High School teacher of the year. Madden complimented White on his dedication to teaching and said White is committed to excellence, adding the school district is fortunate to have him. Witzmann presented White with a certificate, thanking him for his dedication and years of service.

Middle School Principal Rick Lange recognized the district's school crossing guards in response to State Adult School Crossing Guard Week. He introduced crossing guards Elizabeth Vazquez, Julie Schultz, and Dillon Schaeffer, stating that--in good weather and bad--they are extremely dedicated to making sure all traffic is stopped before students can safely cross the street. Board members thanked the crossing guards for their work and value of student safety.

Meeting was recessed at 7: 55 p.m. and reconvened at 8: 12 p.m.

Moulton moved, with second by Hansch, to approve the consent agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Session of December 15, 2008
- B. Approve Payment of December/January Board Bills
- C. Approve winter coaching assignments for the 2008-09 season
- D. Approve resignation of Elementary IMC Specialist Charlene Schwartz
- E. Approve hiring of Long-Term Elementary IMC Specialist Susan Sroka for the 2008-09 School Year
- F. Approve reducing contract hours of Spec Ed Bus Aide Kristi Witzl to afternoon bus route only
- G. Approve reducing contract for Kim Barta, M.S. Special Educ Aide to 4.0 hours per day
- H. Approve increasing contract for Brittney Johnson, M.S. Special Educ. Aide to 7-hours/day
- I. Approve renewal of transportation contract with SafeWay Bus Co for an add'l. 1-yr term for the 2009-10 school year
- J. Approve CESA #11 Shared Services Contract for 2009-2010 School Year
- K. Accept donation of \$1,650 from Bruce Larson for volunteer football coaches Chet Bangor, Dave Rivard & Joe Hutter
- L. Approve disbursement of donated \$1,650 to pay Chet Bangor, Dave Rivard & Joe Hutter

Motion carried.

Board member Moulton reported on the recent Facilities Committee meeting, stating the committee reviewed reports on the out-dated and non energy efficient middle school boiler and circulation pump. The committee, along with administrative staff, will be looking at alternative options in February. Witzmann felt this would be a good learning opportunity for students to be involved with researching energy efficiency data in connection with other school projects.

Witzmann reported for the recent meeting of the Business Services Committee, stating Business Manager Robert Avery presented an overview of the Budget Process. Documents were presented that lay out a time-line for the budget process, along with informational items on general school finance. The committee felt the information Avery presented was very beneficial and they asked that it be included on the district's web site.

Superintendent Randy Rosburg reported on current enrollment data, stating the column in the packet was erroneously reported as December 11th data, and should read as January 16, 2009. Rosburg stated administrators will look at these numbers to help determine staffing needs for next year. Rosburg also stated tentative committee meetings for February 2, 2009 include Teaching & Learning, Human Resources, Facilities, and Business Services.

There was no CESA 11 report for this month.

Marin Hansch attended a recent financial aid meeting, stating though it may not be thought of as “Community Involvement,” she felt the information provided by the high school counselors was very good and the meeting well attended. Witzmann thanked Hansch for her comments and reminded board members there are good opportunities for community involvement.

High School Principal Shawn Madden reported on student council happenings for absent council member Johanna Smith. Madden then read the names of current high school “Students of the Month,” commending the students and thanking staff for their continued support of Character Education. Madden also reported the high school continues to work on health and wellness initiatives at the direction of health care provider Patty Schachtner. He said many high school students have participated in the walking program and daily walking has become a good habit for many of them.

Middle School Principal Rick Lange reported middle school faculty continues to work on building goals, dedicating one faculty meeting each month to goals. Staff and students continue to work on Character Education skills. Students recently participated in a soldier drive, writing letters and collecting various items to send to soldiers overseas. Students participated in many holiday season activities including the annual Penny Wars with proceeds going to local food shelves. Teachers have been busy looking at Lexiles, (reading levels) of students for correct reading placement. Lange reported the middle school recently received a Doar Contribution of \$1,000 for the Middle School IMC and provided a historical background of attorney John Doar’s law career, involvement with the civil rights movement, and local connections.

Elementary School Principal Cherrie Wood reported the elementary snowshoe program has been very successful with the 3rd and 4th grade students. She stated Kindergarten students recently hosted their annual holiday program which was attended by many. Children’s author Katie McKai spent a day with students, starting the day with a large assembly, and then working with students on writing skills several classes at a time throughout the day. Wood stated the author inspired many students, especially those in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade who are working on their Young Authors project. The elementary school will be receiving the Star Lab soon through the CESA 11 program. Wood explained the Star Lab is a giant mobile facility kept up with air; students crawl into the Star Lab and get a 45-minute program to look at stars through the lab’s facility.

Marie Colbeth joined the group at 8:30 p.m.

Rosburg stated Business Manager Robert Avery was unable to be present for the report, but general business services information had been provided in the packet.

Director of Pupil Services Darren Kern reported on Special Education, stating that February 13 the district is hosting its annual early child development day for community three-year-olds. Kern stated he has been asked to serve on an autism board which works with families, organizations and agencies in local communities to partner with other communities to provide access to services they might not otherwise have. Somerset was chosen through an application process where nine other districts were selected. Kern also reported that the Gifted/Talented program will have two teams of 5th and 6th grade students participating in the State Music Listening Program this year. Kern finished his report stating the ELL department recently wrapped up the ELL Access testing and expects results to be received this spring.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Ron Berg stated the district is at mid point of the current Strategic Plan. He brought the board’s attention to the Strategic Plan document provided in the packet, stating the sheet represents a lot of hard work. Berg stated this is the district’s third Strategic Plan and has been the most difficult as the district narrows its initiatives. Berg then continued reading through the plan document, indicating which projects have been completed or are currently in progress. Berg commended the building principals, administrators, and staff on their hard work in getting to this point with the Strategic Plan.

Colbeth reported for the Governance Committee, which reviewed all proposed WASB 2009 resolutions brought before the committee. Colbeth asked board members if they had any strong feelings about the resolutions. Hansch stated concern with two resolutions dealing with tax revenues and would like to hear about the discussion at the WASB delegate meeting. Witzmann offered to take Somerset board concerns to the delegate assembly. Witzmann will report back to the full board about how he voted and how the delegate assembly voted. Colbeth moved, with second by Hansch, that the Somerset Board of Education support Board President Witzmann’s appropriate vote of the 2009 WASB Delegate Assembly Resolutions, reporting back the delegate assembly conversations to board members in February. Motion carried unanimously.

Moulton reported that the Facilities Committee met to review a fundraising request to support the expansion of the high school weight room. Moulton explained that high school physical instructor Bruce Larson came to the January Facilities meeting to discuss expanding the weight room, which is getting too small and not safe for students. Larson felt the school

has outgrown the current weight-lifting area due to student enrollment and high program participation levels, and he was looking at ways to raise funds to add on to the facility. Witzmann moved, with second by Moulton, to approve fundraising to support the expansion of the high school weight room. Colbeth wondered how this fits with fundraising policies. Rosburg explained this fundraising would be similar to what the athletic department is doing with the community soccer fields, and that approvals to receive funds would be guided by policy and brought forward for Board approval. The first motion failed and was replaced with a new motion. Witzmann moved, with second by Cranston, to approve fundraising to support additional facilities for athletic programs. Motion carried unanimously.

Moulton moved, with second by Witzmann to approve annexation of 40 acres of district property from Township of Somerset into Village of Somerset. Rosburg provided an overview for the reason for the annexation which includes the area for a proposed second driveway. Motion carried unanimously.

Cranston moved, with second by Witzmann, to approve construction of an additional or second driveway entrance into the district campus. Moulton provided background information, stating the approximate project cost, and that the second driveway would help eliminate congestion and provide a second entryway for emergency services, in addition to a potential cost savings with the possible elimination of a bus route. After no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Cranston moved, with second by Witzmann, to approve Cedar Corporation as the engineering firm for the planning, design, engineering, bidding, and construction services of the school district's additional driveway/entrance project. Rosburg stated Cedar Corporation will send in their construction timeline this week. Motion carried unanimously.

Witzmann moved, with second by Hansch, to approve the analysis portion of the Community Survey results for facility needs. Moulton reported that, after analyzing the results of the Community Survey, administration members felt four major themes were highlighted including personal finances and economy, taxes, need for space, and quality of education. Colbeth said she was not comfortable with how the motion was being approved stating it is perceived the district plans to approve solutions without approval of community members. Rosburg explained that the thought was to bring the analysis to the board for review so board members may work with the analysis piece to present it in a way they feel appropriate, adding the board has the option of pulling out the solutions from the analysis portion if they desire. Colbeth did not feel potential solutions should be included in the motion. Gunther felt solutions were presented as potential only, and not absolute. Witzmann asked other board members for their input and discussion ensued. Motion failed.

Colbeth moved, with second by Cranston to approve the 2009-2010 Budget Timeline and Assumptions as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The board then moved to Item III of the agenda to Executive Session and reconvened in the Board Room at 9:44 p.m.

Tim Witzmann, President

Catherine Cranston, Board Clerk