

**REGULAR MEETING - BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET
OCTOBER 27, 2008**

Board Member Brian Moulton, filling in for Board Chair Tim Witzmann, called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. at the Somerset Middle School where board members toured the recently updated HVAC system. The meeting moved to the Somerset High School IMC, where roll call was taken. Present were Brian Moulton, Catherine Cranston, Sharon Germain, Robert Gunther, and Mike Connor. Absent were Marie Colbeth and Tim Witzmann.

Cranston moved, with second by Connor, to approve the agenda. Rosburg brought Item VIII, Point C to the board's attention stating the need for this position arose that week, therefore, it did not come through committee as it normally would have done. Rosburg stated the members could take time to review the issue and bring back to committee in November, or they could address it this evening. Board members agreed to address the concern at tonight's meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The Groups or Individuals Wishing to Be Heard segment rules were reviewed by Moulton. No one came forward.

Staff from Safe-Way Bus Company was recognized during the Positive Recognition portion of the meeting as part of National School Bus Safety Week. Rosburg thanked the staff, stating they are doing a great job for the district and the drivers' concern about safe student transportation was appreciated. Safe-Way staff spokesperson Vicky Java was present on behalf of the Stiles family, whose father had passed away that week. She said the staff appreciates working with the district and is thankful for a good working relationship. She then introduced Safe-Way staff present at the meeting. Cranston thanked the staff for their good work, and presented them with Somerset t-shirts.

Rosburg then introduced Alan Alwin who was present to receive his high school diploma after recently completing his HSED. Rosburg gave a brief background of Alan's school work. Cranston then presented Alwin with the diploma. Alwin thanked school board and his parents for helping him achieve his goal.

The meeting was recessed at 7:15 p.m. Meeting was reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

Germain moved, with second by Gunther, to approve the Consent Agenda.

- A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Session of September 15, 2008
- B. Approve payment of September/October Board Bills
- C. Approve .50 FTE District Bilingual Aide position for the 2008-2009 school year
- D. Approve 1.0 FTE CD Teacher at the high school for the 2008-2009 school year
- E. Approve hiring of Diane Baillargeon as 1:1 special educ aide at Somerset High School for the 2008-09 school year
- F. Approve hiring of Terri Erdrich as short term, part-time substitute guidance position at Somerset Middle School
- G. Approve hiring of Kelly Walczak as long-term 3rd Grade substitute teacher
- H. Approve Youth Options Applications
- I. Approval of 403(b) Plan Resolution
- J. Approve winter coaching assignments for the 2008-2009 season

Motion carried unanimously.

Moulton reported for the Facilities Committee regarding building progress of the new varsity soccer field and two green spaces. He said the location of the varsity field was turned a bit from the original proposal to prohibit interference with the environmental water pond as well as minimal impact on water run off. Other two fields run diagonally alongside the main soccer field. All three are the same size, 300 feet. Moulton said the project should be near completion in about eight or nine days.

Rosburg reported for Witzmann on behalf of the Governance Committee and the Board of Education Self Assessment Tool. Rosburg stated Witzmann brought an instrument to the committee that is a tool that the board can use for self assessments. This instrument will be uploaded into Survey Monkey. Tim will do analysis in Feb March and have ready for results to go to board retreat in April. First run at using the tools so it may need to be modified. Governance wanted to get started on this. This is a newer one that Allison had pulled out of the convention about two years ago. No other questions.

Rosburg reviewed current district enrollment numbers, stating the enrollment has flattened out a bit. He stated tentative committee meetings to be held on November 3, 2008 include the Teaching & Learning Committee to look at high school course options, and Facilities Committee to review recent results of the community survey of school facilities.

Board members reported on community involvement. Cranston was unable to attend the CESA 11 meeting due to parent teacher conferences at her place of employment. Gunther attended the P.I.E. "Brats & Bingo" event stating it was a nice activity and fun for families. He said the Somerset High School football players helped call out bingo numbers, which the younger students enjoyed.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Ron Berg said a math committee has been reviewing the district's math program during last year in addition to looking at some new math standards; they have also started reviewing new math materials. The committee will come to the board in March for new materials needed in fall. In addition to math, other changes in curriculum include a movement towards digital journalism, and business education is getting re-vamped with two new courses. Students will undergo state testing soon. District will recognize Veterans Day with a commemoration service on November 11th; Berg invited board members to attend. Berg reported on the Strategic Plan, stating he meets with principals once a month to go over goals and action items. The elementary school is in the process of forming a foreign language committee.

High School Principal Shawn Madden reported on Teaching and Learning Goals, with state testing of high school students to begin in November. On October 16th a virtual school representative spoke to students, introducing the virtual school program. Madden applications are being taken for the program starting with Term 2. Madden also reported that the school Bench Project was complete; unveiling of the bench was held on October 18th at Larry Forrest Memorial Park. Madden shared a recent photo of Mark Barron's Construction Class work with Habitat for Humanity, stating it was a good hands-on opportunity for students and a good way to give back to the community. Madden also reported that drama students are hard at work with rehearsals for the upcoming play, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Coliseum," which will be held on November 13th and 14th.

Principal Rick Lange reported on Teaching and Learning Goals at the middle school, with continuation of study skills class, a new careers class, and continuing homework club. He said 5th grade is conducting homework club just for 5th grade students as part of the transition between 4th and 5th grades. All of the grade levels continue working on thematic units. Lange then reported on character education, stating all middle school classes start each day with Character Education lessons. One class is reviewing a booklet entitled, "Project Wisdom." Students also announce character education messages during announcements. Community involvement goal included the Linus Project; students completed 156 blankets which were donated to six different health care organizations in the area. Lange concluded his report with an HVAC project update, thanking those persons that came out earlier this evening to look at the project, stating the project is nearly complete.

Elementary School Principal Cherrie Wood stated many activities are happening at the elementary school including Red Ribbon Week and several scheduled field trips. Teachers continue to work on goals with infusion of technology. Staff reviewed results of recent MAPs testing along with Star testing. Staff is also looking at standards and benchmarks and how to translate them into report cards. The elementary school has added a pilot homework club for 3rd and 4th grade students two nights a week after school. Teachers are volunteering their time to help; 25 students attended the first night. Character Education is taught through morning announcement messages. A new forms survey is sent to field trip hosts asking how students behaved on field trips. Wood was happy to report that the school is 100% compliant on immunizations, and 98.2% of elementary school families attended recently held school conference.

Business Manager Robert Avery provided a Finance/Budget Update, highlighting items of the regular monthly report. Avery stated bids were received for short-term borrowing. This year the local bank was included in the bid. Its response to the bid was at 3.5 % with \$1,000 discount, which is similar to the rate the district received last year. Avery provided an update on lunch account balances which indicated families with negative balances decreased considerably with collections to date of over \$22,000. Avery then provided a brief update on the recent audit, stating the audit had been completed with no surprises. Auditors were pleased with this year's process and should have copies of the audit for the board at the November meeting.

Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Darren Kern focused tonight's report on special education, stating the district's special education department is undergoing a 25-indicator self-assessment, which is due December 15th. Kern stated this is an enormous undertaking; to date the indicators reported on so far to are compliant. Kern described some of the indicators, stating the bulk of work has been in Indicator 15 which is deals with compliance and evaluation. Kern stated the IEP review indicated the district needs to elaborate more on academic levels and achievements in special education. Kern said the department's strength, however, is parent satisfaction with 100% of parents indicating the district is communicating well on behalf of their students.

Business Services Manager Avery continued his report with the Approval of 2008-2009 Budget and Tax Levy Certification. Cranston moved, with second by Connor to approve the 2008-2009 Budget and Tax Levy Certification. Avery reported on four different versions presented before the board members, and what the differences were. He stated version #4 encompassed all version components, with administration recommending Vs. #4. Avery stated a question remained, however, whether to use this dollar amount to offset Fund 39 levy now, or use it to pay down some of the bonds that are due in 2019. Avery suggested using the fund to offset current tax levy, stating vs. #4 for tax levy reduction would decrease be 29 ½ cents per \$100,000 value of property. After some discussion, Cranston amended her original motion, with second by Gunther, to approve Version #4 of the 2008-09 Budget and Tax Levy Certification. Motion carried unanimously.

Avery then presented a report for Approval of Designation of Fund Balance Funds. Connor moved to approve with second by Sharon Germain designation of fund balance funds. Motion carried unanimously.

Avery also brought forward the Cash Flow Resolution (Short-Term Borrowing) for board approval. Motion to by Gunther, with second by Connor, to approve the Cash Flow Resolution. Avery reviewed the document with members, which projected the cash flow chart. Avery stated at the end of November and May there are negative balances, which is common due to the district receiving revenue in small portions. The short-term borrowing allows the district to pay accounts on time. After some discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Marie Colbeth arrived at 8:35 p.m.

Human Resources Committee reported on the resignation of board member Sharon Germain. Cranston moved, with second by Colbeth, to accept the resignation of board member Sharon Germain. Moulton stated his appreciation of Germain and her many years of service on the board and to the community. Colbeth said Germain was a good example to all, as well as a good leader. Connor he has enjoyed working with Germain throughout the years and was appreciative of her great insight, vision and resolve, and that he learned a lot from her. Germain stated she has enjoyed being on the board for the past 15 years, however, she felt it was time to resign and participate in other future endeavors. Rosburg thanked Germain and supported members' accolades. Rosburg thanked Germain for her years of service, and added he has appreciated Germain's calm demeanor and thoughtful, insightful questions throughout the years. Germain was then presented with plaque. Motion on the floor carried unanimously.

Board members then discussed the request for a new 1.0 FTE Aide and additional school vehicle to fulfill special education needs of a student. Motion to approve a new 1.0 FTE Aide and additional school vehicle by Colbeth, with second by Cranston. Kern provided background information regarding special placement. Kern said the student is in need of attending a school in Woodville which is the only school in the area with a program for students with significant behavioral issues. The Woodville School will enable the student to flourish in an environment that is safe for him and staff, at a considerable cost savings to the district as compared to the only other school with a similar program in Minnesota. Avery added that a new vehicle was already in the budget, but the district would not retire a vehicle in kind, adding a vehicle to the current fleet. After some discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 by Colbeth with second by Cranston. Motion carried.

Tim Witzmann, President

Catherine Cranston, Board Clerk