

**WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2006**

1. Opening Activities

A. Call to Order

The special meeting of the Warren County School District Board of School Directors was called to order by Mr. Freestone, Vice President, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Curwen Building, 185 Hospital Drive, North Warren, Pennsylvania.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Freestone led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

C. Roll Call

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Mr. Roger Dunham  
Mr. Kevin Freestone

Mr. Thomas Knapp  
Dr. Jack Martin

Board Members Absent:

Mr. Richard Lyle  
Mr. John Schwanke

Mrs. Jacki Nuttall  
Mr. David Wortman

Others Present:

Mr. John Grant, Superintendent; Mrs. Ruth Huck, Board Secretary; the Region II Candidates and one other member of the audience.

D. Reading of the Mission Statement – Mr. Roger Dunham

*The mission of the Warren County School District is to prepare all students to be responsible and productive citizens by providing them with the skills and education necessary to achieve academic and personal excellence.*

E. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. New Business

A. Interview Region II Applicants

Mr. Freestone stated that the interviews would take place tonight and during the next Board meeting a vote will take place to determine which of the candidates will be selected by the Board.

1. Donna L. Zariczny

My name is Donna Zariczny. I am sure most of you looked at the application and did not have any understanding of how to say the last name. I've been in Warren for, I guess about twelve years. My

husband and I, and we have two little boys, one of which is in the Warren County School District, and the other is not quite of age yet.

By profession I am an architect, and I have had 20 years in that field. Throughout that experience I have had at least seven years where I have dealt with various school districts and have worked with them on a variety of different capital improvement projects to improve their educational programs and building facilities. So I have worked with administrators, educators and sometimes students have been on committees to get a better understanding and Board members in order to help facilitate a design project that would improve a school district for their educational needs. We have done a variety of things such as renovation projects, where we have reconfigured existing classrooms and given them more space for better educational resources for data and technology. We have worked with districts where they have completely reconfigured their programs and shifted grade levels from different buildings and consolidated. I do have in a broad sense an understanding of some of the things you have been going through here from a periphery. Part of my daily job responsibilities at work involve dealing with different team members and outside consultants. So I get a lot of experience with communicating with a variety of different people, whether it is the public, whether it is government officials, employees, building owners and a variety of different users. So I do have a lot of experience with communication skills and getting a good understanding of peoples' needs.

From a financing standpoint, I have been involved with projects that vary in range from just a few thousand dollars up to over several million dollars, and I help owners budget the construction funds and make sure that the project makes its way through so that they have enough money to get the project done. So from an economical standpoint, I have a good fiscal sense of being able to budget money and keep a budget in line as well as coming up with ideas on how to, if there is a short coming, how to prioritize needs and come up with scenarios where you can get a project within budget.

From an educational standpoint, I have a high school diploma, a college degree as well as a professional degree for architecture. I have always felt that education is a very important thing to have and to continue, regardless of what field you are in, because everything is changing on a daily basis and you are needing to update your skills and abilities so that you can keep up with the times and that is a very important thing regardless of whether you are a teacher or a student or an administrator. I guess that sums things up with me. Do you have any questions?

Dr. Martin: So if we do not choose you, would you run for the position in two years?

Mrs. Zariczny: I have had thoughts for the past five years of running for the position. Things were pretty hot and heated over

the past several years, and there was a lot of controversy. I don't think I was in a position where I was ready to put my neck out there. I think that yes, depending on where things go, and the selection you make, and the direction that the Board goes if I am not pleased with that outcome, I may run in two years.

Dr. Martin: What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the Board right now?

Mrs. Zariczny: In just in being in the periphery, and seeing where things are going, it just seems to me like communication is a key thing with the public and keeping people abreast of the decisions that are going on. I know that there has been a lot of consolidating with the elementary schools, and that has been a pretty critical thing in the past here, and it did not really come to public light until things were so far along that people really could not have a say in anything. I think that was something that stuck in the back of my mind that made me have more of an interest in the school board and the whole education process here in Warren. I know that there have been a lot of discussions lately about consolidation and how to go about doing it and cutting back on programs, and I think that that is something that being able to get my teeth into it, I think I could help problem solve and get things resolved.

Dr. Martin: So if you were on the Board, and you have one goal, one goal, what would it be?

Mrs. Zariczny: I guess my one goal, especially with having two little kids at home and knowing that we are going to be in the school district for another 12 to 15 years, would be to improve the educational environment for these students. Being for an architecture background, a lot of that has to do with environment, building facilities, and giving the kids the opportunity with technology and the building structure, so that they can actually be in a learning environment that would improve their education.

Mr. Dunham: In my short amount of time sitting here with the Board members on this Board, I have come to realize how much is involved, how much time it takes in order to do the job properly. Do you realize how much time is involved?

Mrs. Zariczny: I have had involvement on other public boards and organizations and at one time I was serving both on the City Planning Commission as well as a daycare advisory board trying to help out the community on one hand and help out my son and the daycare on the other hand. I think being involved with both of the organizations,

especially with the city, we were going through reorganizing things and coming up with a new city plan and a whole new idea where things were going to go, gave me an understanding for the commitment that was involved with special meetings that had to be held and committees and things of that sort. Not sitting in your seat, I can't possibly understand all of the ramifications, but I do know a little bit about public involvement and volunteering time.

Mr. Dunham: I guess, from my standpoint, I consider this my fourth child, and how much responsibility there is with this position. I would just hope that if you were nominated that you would bring that responsibility to the table as well and understanding.

Mr. Knapp: I do not know how familiar you are with this particular board, but we have four standing committees. Are you familiar with the different committees?

Mrs. Zariczny: Yes.

Mr. Knapp: Do you have a particular committee that you would be most interested in?

Mrs. Zariczny: Just in reviewing on the website some of the different positions that everyone is in currently and the vacant Region II seat. I think my position, I would probably suit the Physical Plant and Facilities Committee probably better than any of the others, but I think that if I would be appointed to any of the committees I would bring some value to them regardless.

Mr. Freestone: Donna I think one of the things that can bring a little bit of clarity to the size of the issue that this is two and a half times bigger than the county budget. I don't know if we are the number one employer in the county, but we are very close to it. Then you look at the lives that are impacted. Now out of all of that, I have to share my check every week with Jack. You understand how much the school board pays?

Mrs. Zariczny: Absolutely, yes. One of the people at work said to me, "How much does it pay? Well then you will probably get the job."

Mr. Freestone: Well it's an opportunity to serve. Given that you have worked with a lot of governmental agencies, particularly in schools in your full time work, is that going to cause problems for you getting to meetings?

Mrs. Zariczny: No, I again am looking at the website and seeing the times of the meetings, I don't think that will be a problem.

On the off chance that you did have daytime meetings, and I did need to get out of work, I think that would be made available to me by my employer. So I do not think that will be an issue.

Mr. Freestone: We try to avoid daytime meetings.

Mrs. Zariczny: I do work in Jamestown, but even with the commute I could make it to Board meetings and committee meetings without a problem.

Mr. Freestone: You have answered several questions that I had down on my crib sheet and I think that as far as I am concerned you have answered all of them. Thank you. Are there any other questions for Board members? I want to thank you for taking the time to consider this and to apply and in two years when the position becomes open, I encourage you if by any chance you are not chosen that you run. Going through the election process is certainly a fascinating thing.

Mrs. Zariczny: Thank you.

2. Shirleyanne M. Ruland

Mr. Freestone: Thank you for being with us this evening.

Mrs. Ruland: My pleasure.

Mr. Freestone: Would you be so kind as to tell us about yourself.

Mrs. Ruland: I can tell you a little bit about myself. Probably not quite as elaborate as Donna, but I have a high school education. I graduated from high school. I also graduated from a music training course put out by our church. I am a church organist and choir director. I am still very active as the organist and choir director. I play for two churches every Sunday. I also can give piano and violin lessons. I worked with children; I think most of you might know that, I had twenty-three years in the Warren County School District in busing, as a bus driver and instructor. I kind of gave up on the school busing for a while with my artificial knees, but I have had a lot of contact with children and with instructors and meeting with the school. I can't say that I have stopped being in contact, because I have been in contact with things that are going on in the school district. I did enjoy working with the children very, very much. You have some good and some bad, but that is neither here nor there. It all works out. I feel that if I could be of any assistance on the school board to help with the children and with their growth and knowledge and their academic line that they want to achieve to help them achieve it. I would be delighted.

Mr. Freestone: I was once taught an old adage, "A dull pencil is better

than three sharp minds.”

Mrs. Ruland: Well, I’ve heard that.

Mr. Dunham: Give me one idea of how you might improve education for these students in this district.

Mrs. Ruland: I would like to see and help to achieve the school district so that the children are trained in a real exciting variety of ways so that they can achieve their goals. Some children may have a goal in sports, some might have a goal in a good education and go to college for a degree. I feel these opportunities should be made available to them so that their subjects will enlighten their lives and build up their knowledge so they can continue on, with the understanding they can add two and two and get four. There is too much of that going around now that kids can’t add. I have run into it, because I have worked in places where they can not add. They cannot make change, and it is sad. You have to really work with some of them. And I feel that maybe the classroom environment wasn’t right for some of them to achieve what they wanted and needed. I would like to be able to help in anyway to build their education.

Mr. Knapp: I would like to ask you the same question I asked Donna. Of the committees do you have one in particular that you think would be the best suited for you and maybe why.

Mrs. Ruland: Well, I’m not as familiar with all of the committees, but I think anything that has to do with classroom environment would be better for me. I definitely do not want to be in busing. I am going to stay away from that. Twenty-three years was enough. I feel that anything I can do to build up students to achieve the knowledge they need would be my goal.

Dr. Martin: You alluded to the fact that we may or may not be doing a good job. I guess you alluded to the fact that we are not doing a good job in teaching kids; they can’t add, they can’t make change and things like that, so in essence what you are saying is that the quality of our system isn’t as good as it should be. How would you measure or know or tell how good we are doing in terms of quality?

Mrs. Ruland: Well, I don’t know if I could measure what is going on, but I have run into the situation, that is why I did bring it up. I have run into it several times and it is frustrating to me to watch somebody do things and do it wrong. I have had it happen to me, where they made the wrong change or they can’t figure this out or that out. It is kind of frustrating, and I have asked them, “Didn’t you have math

in school? “Oh, I hated it.” I said, “What did you hate about it?” “Oh, I don’t know.” There has to be some reasons for these things and I think they need to be looked into.

Dr. Martin: Let me follow up on that if I can. What do you see as the Board’s role in that process? In other words you are alluding to that fact that we need to improve the quality of our programs and that happens to be very near and dear to my heart, but that is a big issue to me. What do see as the Board’s role in that process?

Mrs. Ruland: I would say looking into some of what is going on in some of the classrooms. Have a study or a group to kind of look in occasionally to see what they are doing and how they are doing it. Also to see how the children are reacting. They may not like the instructor. They may not like the course, or the way it is being taught. There are several different outlooks, and you can hear a lot of it too when you’re busing kids around. Things that they dislike, and then again you hear things they do like. It really stirred my curiosity. In a way that is why I decided to put my application in. I told my husband that I just feel that I should do something to help.

Dr. Martin: Let me just ask you, if you were appointed would you run in two years? If we chose you with a two year interim term, and then the seat came up for election, would you be inclined to run for election?

Mrs. Ruland: I think I would, I think I would, yes. I have no trouble coming to meetings, I am retired.

Mr. Freestone: What do you see, this may be kind of a rehash, but what do you see this particular School Board meaning and how can you help this School Board fulfill that meaning?

Mrs. Ruland: I would try to work with the School Board and committees involved in this. I would even be willing to do some research and that would be real exciting to me. I feel that there’s some lack somewhere and I feel that I would like to fill a gap that is not being filled for the kids. I really feel sorry for some of the kids, I really do.

Mr. Freestone: Sorry, why?

Mrs. Ruland: Ok. I feel sorry for them because they are going out into this world, and they just do not have the knowledge they should have. And why wasn’t it there when they needed it? Maybe we can build it up so that we don’t have children in the situation that some of them are in. I feel that I would like to build it up so that if a kid is going out to say, “Oh, I learned this and I learned that and I didn’t



care.” I would like to see a whole attitude change.

Mr. Freestone: I agree. I agree with you whole heartedly there. Particularly on some levels, we have some students that it wouldn’t matter if you told them to go study in the rain, they would go out and study. And we have others that are just what you are talking about. I agree.

I apologize to our Superintendent, I should have given him a chance to ask questions, but he is a non-voting member of the board. Maybe we can turn the tables for him. Are there any questions you would like to ask the Superintendent?

Mrs. Ruland: At this point I would probably say not, because it is just a feeling that I had and that is the reason that I decided to run for it. There is a need there, and I would like to be a part of helping.

Mr. Freestone: I am finished. Is there any other questions? I want to thank you for following up on your feelings with action. A lot of people have feelings, but it is the rare few that follow up with action. Thank you very much.

3. Gary E. Olson

Mr. Freestone: Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to come visit with us this evening.

Mr. Olson: I am retired now so have all kinds of time in my schedule.

Mr. Freestone: If you would be so kind as to just let us get acquainted with you in your own words.

Mr. Olson: Well, I think many of you have been acquainted with me in the past. I owned my own business here for 25 years and was heavily involved in the community. I was the mayor of the city, council, Chamber of Commerce, other non-profit charitable groups. I tried not to list everything on my application, I did an addendum page. I assume you all saw it. Along with my resume, I left here for an opportunity, after being here for 25, and moved to Michigan for employment, an opportunity that wasn’t available in this area, which was a challenge, because it was a nationally recognized company in the Detroit area, and it was a multi-level operation. Our intent when we went out there always was to come back to Warren. We sort of did things in reverse, Mom and Dad left town and children and grandchildren stayed put. So that is why our plan was to always come back. I kept in contact here through the newspaper and being back here periodically to see what is going on, because I knew we were coming back. We like this area and that was our intent all along.



We are fortunate to be able to retire. My wife just retired the first of the month and moved back. I have been here since September. So with what I have done, I have been involved at state level and national level, political aspects of it. To answer Roger's question on time, I have been there and done that so this does not concern me because now I have the time to do it without having other distractions. In the process of making the decision whether or not to do this, my wife said "Why?" and I said, "Well I just think it's something that needs to be done, and possibly my experience and talents will be of value to the board." I talked to a lot of people before I put my application in. Some friends of mine said, "Why do you want to get into the most thankless job in the world?" I said, "Well, you know my hobby all of my life has been community service and community involvement, I don't have other hobbies." One of my friends does woodworking and builds model airplanes. He has different things. Other people have that kind of hobby. My hobby has always been to be involved in the community. This goes back to why I am interested, my mother, when I was very young, taught my brother, myself and my sister that if you see things and you are not exactly happy with how they are going or what is going on, you have one of two choices, either do nothing and shut up or get involved and try to make the changes you see that need to be done.

One of the questions you have been asking is, "What do you see?" I see an organization which since I have been in the community in 1970 are facing many of the same problems that they faced in 1970 they are facing today. As mayor of the city we had to address a lot of the same issues within the city facilities. When I came in as mayor, our newest fire truck in the fire department was a 1949 truck. That was the newest one. We had a deteriorating infrastructure not only in buildings but in underground infrastructure, things like that. So I have the experience and the background and knowledge in things how these things have to be dealt with, the importance of them.

The most important, I had two children that went through the school system. I now have five grandchildren that are going to be involved at some point in the system, and I want to make sure that they get the best education that they can get to prepare them for whatever life choices they make. I know I came to talk to John before I made the decision, I wanted to sort of pick his brain of where he was at and what some of his thoughts and ideas were and I

think we had a very good meaningful discussion, give and take. For those of you who do not know or might not know, I do have a daughter as a teacher in the system. Her idea was that she was not very happy about it, if you want to do it go ahead. It was the fear of peer pressure. When I said something to my son he said well I just won't admit you are my dad, that's all. There is a lot of consternation in the community. I think one of the things that is most important that has been lacking both now and has been lacking for 36 years that I have been associated with the community is that there hasn't been a long range plan acceptable by the overall community. There's too much of a "fiefdom" mentality. What was interesting is the company I ended up going out to Michigan to work for, they had multiple stores and I was working in an organization that was family run and there were seven cousins that were running the company and I was the only outside executive of the company. And each one of them had their little "fiefdom" so I had to fight seven different battles all at the same time from time to time to accomplish anything within that. It made it very difficult to accomplish anything. I think our biggest challenge is to look ahead and put together a plan that is going to work in the best interest of all the students of the district regardless of where they live, what school they go to now. I think from my standpoint, I have no particular allegiance to any particular area at this time. When my children were in school, I had a little more allegiance to Warren, but yet even when I was mayor in the county, I was concerned more with the total aspect. I was working with a non-profit with myself and five other people had gone out to raise money for recreation. I went out not as the mayor of Warren, but as the president of this foundation to a community in the county, had money in my pocket for them that they had in their budget, but because I was the mayor of Warren, I could only be there because I was the mayor of Warren, not for any good reason for them, they were literally throwing me out of the meeting. I finally made them realize I had money for them with no strings attached and it didn't matter if I was the mayor of Warren or not. I was president of the Chamber of Commerce, involved in economic development trying to bring jobs and things into town. That is my background and why I am here. In answer to a question, would I run in two years, probably. I am one who is used to beating my head against brick walls and sometimes I make a hole and sometimes I fall down. I am not afraid to take on the challenge. Now I do not have a business to worry about

either that people will take repercussions which previously I had some experience with that. Being retired and having the time and interest I just think with my background and so forth I have a lot I can contribute to the board and overall goals and objectives that need to be done who are our number one concern.

Mr. Freestone: Thank you.

Mr. Knapp: Quite an impressive list of accomplishments and things that you have done. Looking back at this background, where do you think your best fit on a committee or which committee do you think you would prefer?

Mr. Olson: I do not really have a preference. I have had a lot of experience in finance. I have had a lot of experience in infrastructure and building. My weakest point would probably be in curriculum, but that doesn't mean that I couldn't be effective in that area. So I am happy to work in any one of the areas. One of the things I would very much like to be an integral part of the team of developing the long-range plan for the system. I think that is one of the primary things regardless of which committee.

Dr. Martin: What do you see as the one issue or factor in the world that will influence education most over the next ten years?

Mr. Olson: The single factor that will affect education will be the necessity of having an education that can compare or is compatible with an international marketplace, international opportunities, because as much as we would like to believe we can do it alone, we can't, and our students and everyone needs to be prepared with an education broad enough that they can understand, appreciate and be involved in the changes that are necessary to work in that environment.

Dr. Martin: You alluded to the "fiefdom" mentality and you said you have not been here since 1970? I have been here a little bit longer, been here forever. It is not going to go away. I am from Sheffield, you are from Clarendon, you are from Warren, I am from Eisenhower. That is a fact here.

Mr. Olson: No I just have been involved since then and whenever you take a group of anyone, it is not unique to this system, whenever you take the different entities and all of a sudden say that you are going to be under one group, you are going to have that type of mentality activity, and it just takes very big people with some forward looking thoughts, looking at the big picture, not just the smaller picture of my area.

Dr. Martin: We are one district. OK. What would you do as a board

member to build consensus given the fact that we have very diverse, and actually I can not even believe I said that, because this is without a doubt the most homogeneous population I have ever been around, but we have people that think they are very diverse. So what would you do as a board member to build consensus given that we are in fact one school district.

Mr. Olson: I think one of the things is to try to go out to the different areas and try to pick their minds and finding out what is important to you. What is your long term goal? What do you want for you children and grandchildren? What do you foresee? And try to build a support for an idea that we cannot do what we really need to do alone. We have got to do it together. Under the circumstances we have with declining population, declining tax income availability. All of these things need to be factored in so people understand that Ok you want your little thing, item here, Tidioute is somewhat an example, they fought, they are trying to something on their own, if they are successful, great. If they are not we are going to have to bring them and work them back into the system one way or another. You know, there is no easy answer, and no one is going to happy. I don't care where you are from or what segment you are from no one is going totally happy. When I was working on some projects, I had been working on deals and buying and selling things like that, a lawyer once said to me, "If both sides think they did not get a good deal, it must be a pretty good deal, because they agree." I think that is where you have to get people to understand. I am not going to get everything I want, I've got to give and take and that is what is hard when you have heels dug into the dirt.

Dr. Martin: Hypothetical question - There are two options, you have to pick one, raise taxes or cut programs?

Mr. Olson: Personally myself, I would raise taxes. Back in the '70's when the issue of the Career Center came up, the opinion of many people in the community was, we do not need a vo-tech, all of our kids are college material. When we are talking about eliminating AP courses and things like that, I just see a complete reversal of that saying the Career Center is more important than are college qualified students are and to me that is disturbing me and we must make sure what's going on.

Mr. Freestone: Any other questions? I'll ask a couple. You said you moved to Michigan. When did you move back?

Mr. Olson: Last fall.

Mr. Freestone: What month?

Mr. Olson: I physically moved into the house in September.

Mr. Freestone: Where do feel that efficiency in education could provide additional resources for education? Do you feel we can be more efficient in our delivery of education.

Mr. Olson: Yes, but it is going to take a lot of changes in the way or where we are providing those services. What they were going through with facilities and looking at percentage of use and things like that. It is not, you can't efficiently carry out programs and have poor utilizations of facilities. I went through this with the city. We had three fire stations. We had people spread out. When we decided as a council that we were going to centralize fire service, you know, everybody says the whole city is going to burn down, all of these people are going to die and get killed and so forth and the railroad tracks are going to block Pennsylvania Avenue so no one can get to the west side. To the best of my knowledge the city hasn't burnt down and no one has died because we have a central fire station. That was done thirty years ago. There are a lot of things that you sometimes have to do to be able to deliver a service better, whether it is centralization or technology, there are different ways to accomplish different things.

Mr. Freestone: Thank you, and thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Is there something specific that John would like to say or you would like to add?

Mr. Olson: John and I have already talked, that is one of the reasons I continued on and submitted my application. I think there are things that can be accomplished. Now I have the time, prior I did all of these other things and it is kind of shocking, when your daughter at 12 years old says when am I ever going to see you and you realize you are a little over committed. I was only president of four different things at the time, including my own corporation, the city and the chamber and the foundation and now I do not have other distractions. But I will take time out to enjoy my grandchildren. The meetings should not be a problem, I will just have to plan my travels around them. That's our hope.

Mr. Dunham: One of the sentence in you "interested description" says you "observed the actions of several boards and found them lacking in developing long term goals and direction for the district. What have you observed and give me a couple of instances that gives you the impression that they were lacking long term goal or direction? And I agree with

you that the administration cannot do their job properly without the direction from the board.

Mr. Olson: The simple fact they have never developed a long term goal. I have never seen a long term plan, let's say a ten year out plan, this is where we want to be in ten years, this is where we want to be in five year. These are some ideas of how we might want to get there, this is what we want to work towards, so that as a board and a group, you are all working to that same goal and this is part of the consensus building on the board. I've seen people get on the board because they had one issue here or there. One issue people do not last long and they didn't last long on the board. Same thing happened on city council, we had a lot of people that were single issue people that came on board. If your issue gets addressed or you find out it can't be addressed, just like you have been told, then they lose interest. We have to have a goal for everybody to work towards and everybody has to be on the same page. If you do not have that you are not going to be able to develop a comprehensive program that's going to work because everybody is going to be trying to pull in their own directions to get their own little "fiefdom" ways for lack of a better term.

Mr. Dunham: I see in my time here a constantly evolving process and ten years ago I do not know if we could have predicted there would be 5800 students versus 13,000 students.

Mr. Olson: I could have told you that back in the 1970's. Just by trends and things like that, crunching the numbers, watching what was going on. Having been involved in the business community to see what was going on. What businesses were doing, where they were at. If you look at the whole northwestern Pennsylvania, southwestern New York, everyone is pretty much in the same ballpark. Back when I was in the Chamber and the mayor, that's what we knew and that is why we were trying to change and change direction. It wasn't going to happen because things were not going to change. Warren's top population, the county's top population was in 1914, and it has been declining since.

Mr. Freestone: Anyone else? Thank you.

4. Nathan Lindberg

Mr. Freestone: Tell us about yourself.

Mr. Lindberg: Well, my name is Nathan Lindberg. I am sure some of you know my parents. I am an educator's child. My father has been teaching in the Warren County School District for



34-35 years now and is a teaching coach. My mother is the secretary at Sheffield Elementary. I have aunts and uncles who are educators all throughout my family and I was almost an educator myself up till about two or three years ago. I have a degree from Clarion University in computer science. That was my second trip to college, the first time through I was not generally prepared to go for personal reasons as well as educational reasons and dropped out. After working the hard life for two or three years in the lumber mill, I went back to college, realizing I needed to get a degree and chose education. I spent two and a half years following in my father's footsteps and in that time a learned a good deal about education and curriculums, planning, basically what it takes to be an educator. In the meantime started dabbling in computers, and it all kind of went downhill from there. So I currently work at Northwest Savings Bank in technical support. At this time along with ten other people manage an enterprise network across five states. I am sure a lot of you have read in the paper lately. Working for the bank has a lot of responsibilities that go along with it. I spend a lot of time looking at figures trying to keep total cost of ownership down, trying to get more out of our investments, in terms of technology. I deal with the public on occasion. I deal with nearly 2,000 end users on a daily, I don't want to say daily, I hope it is not daily, but I deal with 2,000 end users. I administer end user network resources. I am constantly working to make things run better in the midst of troubleshooting every single thing that comes down on us. I enjoy my job, I enjoy troubleshooting and problem solving. I like to listen to a variety of topics. In regards to technology, in terms of politics, in terms of anything I like to sit down and figure it out, put puzzle pieces in the puzzle. Overall I would say my interest in this position is geared toward education. I have a soft spot for education. Having grown up in a household that all my dinner time conversations were about what happened at school today. From the time I was a little kid, I was hearing what it was like to be an educator, and I think that has brought me into a variety of different opinions that I have about the educational system. My fiancée is seeking to be an educator, and so I spend a lot of time talking about education. I'm very involved without being involved. So that's a little bit about me.

Mr. Freestone: Thank you. Who would like to go first?

Dr. Martin: You mentioned technology, what do you see as the role of technology over the next five years in education?



Mr. Lindberg: Anything you want it to be. I think technology has grown to be so powerful that should you want to provide a cyber school, you could provide it. If you want to be able to provide access to things from home, you can provide it. I hear from people on a daily basis that they want to work from home. If they have what it takes to get it there, you can make it happen. There really isn't a boundary at this point in time for where technology can go. I think it will go as far as it will let you, and right now at the pace it is growing there is really no boundary.

Dr. Martin: From a context of a seat on the Board, I was going to ask you what are your strengths, but that is too easy, tell me what your weaknesses are.

Mr. Lindberg: One that I am young, two public speaking - when I start out I am not very good at it. I usually get into it after five to ten minutes, I get more comfortable. But the fact that I am young, I think that I get sometimes a little overboard. I have a lot of vision. I know where I want to be in twenty years, in ten years. I know what I want to have for my kids in the future to have access to. Sometimes I want to go after it right now. So being young can be a good thing and a bad thing.

Dr. Martin: I know this might be hard to imagine, but we were all young once too.

Mr. Knapp: Even me.

Dr. Martin: In all seriousness, why should we pick you?

Mr. Lindberg: Because I am young, because I want to stay here for the next thirty to forty years, because I love it here. My fiancée is starting to like it here, she is from Pittsburgh. Now that she is starting to like it here, I want to stay here, but at the same time I cannot stay here with not being sure where the education of my children is going to be at. And I see in Warren County more and more people like me move out and go somewhere else. There is a brain-drain in Warren County that is killing it. So I think I want to be part of the solution and being able to provide something for my kids in the years to come.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

Mr. Knapp: Being a relatively recent graduate of the Warren County School District, you probably have a lot closer feel to the type of education the students today and the ones in your era got, what's the one thing you would change or try to change to make education better in the district if you were on the Board?

Mr. Lindberg: I would want to see the board work towards a vision or setting goals that no child is left behind. I've known a number of kids over the years that are kids that have just graduated in the last four or five years that can't find jobs because they cannot read at a second grade level. And over the years, they were just passed through the system and bumped on along because no teacher wanted to take care of it or deal with the problem. So for me I would like to see the board and administration encourage the idea that no child get left behind. My best friend, who is 25 years old, can't read at a fourth grade level. So I spent quite a bit of time when he was a junior and senior in high school tutoring him in English and it just did not work. He cannot read and can hardly write, can hardly spell and adding is a challenge. I'd like to see the Board and administration work toward a common goal that students can manage in this society, especially as we get into a global economy where kids are going to have to compete with kids from all over the world for jobs, which in my industry, maybe not be doing what I do, but in the programming world, there's no way for Americans to compete as programmers any more, because you can get cheaper labor overseas and American kids are not educated in that kind of technology as well as they should be.

Mr. Knapp: Thank you.

Mr. Dunham: Nate, when I came to this Board, I have a civil engineering degree and background, I thought maybe I could help a lot with facilities, and at the moment I do not even sit on the facilities committee. I actually sit on the finance and personnel. I am learning an unbelievable amount. Do you see yourself having a problem maybe sitting on a different committee other than technology or learning the different aspects to well round yourself?

Mr. Lindberg: No, I wouldn't have any problem with that at all. I just told my boss not too long ago that part of what I like about my job is that learn on a daily basis, so sitting on any committee two things I do have experience with is curriculum and the technology. I love to learn. I enjoy it. I think that is one of greatest lessons, one of the things in my character that my father gave to me was that learning is something you never stop doing and that you always want to keep doing. I love being educated. I love learning new things on a daily basis. So I would enjoy learning something else.

Mr. Grant: Do you have any questions you might like to pass on to a

superintendent at this point?

Mr. Lindberg: Do you have four or five hours?

Mr. Grant: Yes, I do. I am serious, anytime. I would offer that to any of you. One of you did take advantage of setting an appointment with my secretary, and we spent some time. People want to talk about what we are doing, it is very, very important to me. A lot of people walk around thinking, well you won't be able to get to see him. I am here to see people. So yeah, I've got whatever time you need. That goes for everyone. Thank you.

Mr. Lindberg: Thank you.

Mr. Freestone: How long have you been back in the county?

Mr. Lindberg: I've been back living here full time for a little bit over two years. I was away at Clarion for three and a half years and lived here my last semester.

Dr. Martin: When you came back were you living at the same residence the whole time?

Mr. Lindberg: Yes, in fact I commuted my last semester everyday.

Mr. Freestone: I guess I have all of my questions answered.

Mr. Dunham: I have one question, not directed at him, just something to throw out there, if somebody, in his case, marry and move out of the region, how does that affect the seat?

Dr. Martin: Done. You must live in the region throughout the full term, not only that but prior for a year, at least to run in the primary or general election. I do not know if the rule is different for an appointed seat.

Mr. Freestone: Don't hold your age against yourself.

Dr. Martin: That is a strength not a weakness, you got that one wrong.

Mr. Freestone: Don't worry about your ability to public speak because you say it well and you have lived in a household of educators. And you have had conversations of this sort. Thank you for taking the time to apply.

Mr. Lindberg: Thank you all very much.

5. Cathleen R. Knights

Mrs. Knights: Good evening. I am not old enough for Cathleen yet, will you try Cathy?

Mr. Freestone: My name is Cathy Knights. I was born literally, in Warren County and have been here all of my life. I was raised in a rather large household. It's not hard for me to be last considering I was third from the bottom of eight. I was educated at Eisenhower High School. That education has

served me well. I mean no predecessor should take pride, I had good educators, I really did. I have JCC training. I do fifteen hours of training every year on my job. Learning something new, that is a requirement. I do leadership training at work, I do team building at work. I was very active with the Erie County Community Business College. We started taking interns and they would end up with me and of course I would have to give feedback to the college on what the kids need, and they ended up asking me to be an advisor to their curriculum which I did for three or four years. I raised three girls, and they were all graduates of Warren County School District. I am very blessed with thirteen grandchildren, of those thirteen I have six either in or soon will be in Warren County School District. Unfortunately my other two daughters they went further a field. My middle daughter is a doctor and my older daughter is the head of accounting. My youngest daughter lives here. My interest, I am very involved in the community, and I will be glad to share with that. I have run for elected office. I am currently an elected auditor for Mead Township. I am currently an elected chairperson for Mead Township for the Republican Committee, as well as, serving as the Vice-Chair of Warren County's Committee. I would be willing give up any or all of those positions to serve on the Board. My interest is really varied. I have a full understanding that every child is not college material. I was not college material, not because of my intellect, but because of my economic situation, and Mr. Knapp can verify that, he knew my whole family. I had educators that took what they knew to be my abilities and steered me to become very successful with a high school education. I hold a very responsible job. Granted I have taken advantage of other learning opportunities, but what I have got to see in my work world, and I don't blame this necessarily on Pennsylvania schools or New York State schools, we see people who come into the manufacturing floor that have difficulty reading, and they do not want to admit it. We set up a confidential literacy training and the company fortunately let us have a hiding hole so nobody would have to see what employee was going in, and the volunteers for literacy were all in the office. We had them for blueprint readings, we had it for reading, we had it for English, for anything they might need so they could move forward in their jobs and be a success with their high school education. Team building and continuing learning is so important. Like I said, every child cannot go to college, and it does not have to do with intellect. So we have to have them ready to go into a work force where

they can be successful and not have to feel inferior. I would like to contribute towards that in helping steer perhaps what types of things we need. And I just mentioned blueprint drawing for an assembly position. You have to be able to read them to be able to assemble the product. Everyone has to have computer skills now, everyone. One of my greatest accomplishments was, and I was scared to death when it was assigned to me, our entire maintenance department, fifteen men, had to become computer literate, to do all preventative maintenance, every work order was processed through computers. And the came to me and said, "Cathy, we want you to be the trainer." And I said, "Come on guys, you know I am not allowed to have tools." They said, "We think you will do well." My reward at the end of that, and I didn't expect a reward, I mean it was all done with the company, but those maintenance men filed into my office after everything was done, and they said, "We have a present for you Cathy. We were really afraid, when we found out that you were going to be the one to train us, but we enjoyed the experience, we know what we are doing, and you treated us as equals." That is what is important, the equality, regardless of what you do you are equal. They presented me with a pair of diamond earrings, that they had personally taken up a collection for, and I just, I loved it and my goal ever since then has been to do more so I can investigate and learn more about the people and the involvement that is needed. Of those six grandchildren, I have perhaps three that I feel are really college material. I have two, because of their likes and dislikes, I know that that is not the direction they need to be steered towards. They are just not into that, they have other interests, so I want them ready to go into the jobs they are interested in and to be able, not only to do the job well, but to go up the various levels. If you are assembling a lamp in three years, you can be lead where I work. You are not limited by your formal education, you are limited by the limitations you put on yourself. And I think somehow the board has to get that across to their children. Children are just so important.

Oh, I am married, but my husband only comes home twice a month. This is a second marriage for me, and he had never been married, and we married in our fifties. I laugh when I tell him, if I cook more than four times a month he is on next months meals. So I have a lot of free time. My mother worked for the school district, I probably should say that, she worked for the district from 1955 to 1974. She was not an educator, she was a janitor.

Dr. Martin: I like you folks, about ten years ago put my name in the hat for a position where someone left thirteen months early. After that I was elected to the position twice, I have been elected a third time. But the first time I did that I mentioned to someone I had known my entire life that I was doing this, and his retort was, "This is clear proof that the one brain cell that you had is now gone." I am thinking that if that was not proof then it was the second and third time I ran that it was proof. In all seriousness, why do you want to do this?

Mrs. Knights: Because I care about the kids, I care about this community. I do. I have been here all of my life. I want my kids, I should say I can go to the see and visit my other grandchildren and while they do well, and they are allotted advantages. I think this community needs attention, not only for the school board but for business. It's the community.

Dr. Martin: Having heard that then, if you were appointed to the board, what would you bring in terms of strengths to move the board forward to meet some of the challenges you have mentioned?

Mrs. Knights: Because I cannot know in detail everything that is going on with the board, I do bring a very high strength in team building, I am a team player through and through. I don't make, I am not quick to judgment. I don't form an opinion and stand by it no matter what. I have learned that maybe your first impression is not really how it is. You do better to sit back and hear all of the sides and then make a decision on where you stand, but I also understand that consensus is tough. I can differ, my opinion can differ from yours, but that is no reason that we cannot work together, you just have a different opinion.

Dr. Martin: You alluded to a number of issues in terms of needs and wants in curricular areas, what do you see as the board's role in this?

Mrs. Knights: I see the board's role, and it is very important, academics are very important, I see the board's role as an overview of the administrative role. It is really administration that is in charge of implementing that curriculum, correct? And I just think it's the board's responsibility once it develops the curriculum and the programs to see that it is administered in the manner in which the Board is wanting to see it. And if not, why not? Or if so, what can we do better? Or does the teacher have a better idea.

Dr. Martin: What do you see as the board's role in the budget process?



Mrs. Knights: I feel that it is important that the board have transparency. But I believe that about anything, either publicly or privately. I believe in fiscal transparency. But I also believe that since children are number one, and if parents truly believe their child is number one, rather than to cut education or programs, you really need to address the tax issue.

Dr. Martin: Help me to understand what you mean by transparency.

Mrs. Knights: Well I think that you are dealing with public monies, correct? They are public monies, and when questions are asked or when presentations are given, you can't be "wishy-washy" you have to be transparent, you have to tell the people what you are spending their money for. If you are spending \$150,000 on books, and what books? If you are spending \$700 on five footballs that is just as important. Transparency, I think often times people feel that entities are not open and above board about what the finances are or what they are spending money for, their money. It is their money. If you want an example of that, I have made the Republican Party completely transparent. That is how firm I am about this. We give the budgets, we give the pack to every individual and any guest that happens to be there.

Mr. Freestone: You have not lived outside of the Warren County?

Mrs. Knights: Not ever.

Mr. Freestone: Any other questions? We talked about the four different committees. I do not want to put any words in your mouth, so I would like you hear you say, where do you think you could help? There is the Physical Plant & Facilities Committee, the Finance Committee, the Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Committee and the Personnel and Extra Curricular.

Mrs. Knights: I think I would fit with any and all of the those committees. Not because I have high expertise, I think it is because I have the abilities and the willingness to learn about the background for each committee and would find it even exciting and give my best. That is all anybody could ask. I think all of those committees are exciting.

Mr. Freestone: Thank you. Do you have any questions Roger?

Mr. Dunham: Yeah, I have found that being involved here, I can spend and have spent up to two hours a day, everyday, a week on this information. Do you see yourself having the time and spending the time?

Mrs. Knights: Sure I do. I have never started anything I couldn't finish.



If I am going to do it, I am going to do it well or not at all.  
Mrs. Schmidt taught me that.

Mr. Freestone: Any questions from the superintendent?

Mr. Grant: No, your opportunity, certainly if you have a question of me that is fine. Even if tonight is not a good time, certainly a phone call for conversation or questions you might have that's part of my role. We can make time to see to it that whatever you want to talk about is talked about.

Mr. Freestone: Anything else? Thank you very much.

Mrs. Knights: Thank you.

Mr. Freestone: This concludes our interviews. One final thing before we conclude, I want to thank you all for putting your hat in the ring. There are a lot of people who will fuss about the school board and the administration and the education in our county. There's a few who will write letters to the editor; once in a while, there's some who will call board members and ask that what is going on, and we all have public phone numbers and we are happy to receive calls. We encourage that, but it is the rare individuals who will do something about it. From listening to all of you, I have got to really think hard. You have given us a wonderful quandary of some very qualified candidates in my opinion. Thank you for throwing your hats into the ring. Does anyone else want to say anything?

Mr. Dunham: I would agree.

Dr. Martin: Since Arthur came in, help me out with the process, are we allowed to, clearly we do not have a quorum here tonight so we cannot do anything, but when we discuss the rankings with the other board members that were not here, our feelings on the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, does that have to be done in the "sunshine" or can it be done in executive session? What is the process?

Mr. Stewart: Yes, no, and no.

Dr. Martin: This is why you never ask a lawyer a question unless you know the answer ahead of time.

Mr. Stewart: It cannot be done in executive session, Jack. If you are going to discuss it as a quorum of the board yes it must occur in the "sunshine." However, if you are having an incidental call with Tom, and the two of you talked about the interview process this evening, because you don't sit in that conversation as a quorum of the board you may talk about it for hours in private.

Dr. Martin: But when we actually talk about it as a group to take action

on it, it has to be at a public meeting.

Mr. Stewart: That is right.

Mr. Freestone: Any other questions on process?

3. Closing Activities

A. Adjournment

Dr. Martin made a motion for adjournment seconded by Mr. Knapp that the meeting be adjourned.

Mr. Freestone announced that the Board would be meeting in executive session following the meeting to discuss personnel issues.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.