

WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2012

1. Opening Activities

1.1 Call to Order

The special meeting of the Warren County School District Board of School Directors was called to order by Mr. Stewart, President, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Warren County Career Center, 347 East Fifth Avenue, Warren, Pennsylvania.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

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

1.3 Roll Call

Roll Call

Present:

Mr. John Grant

Mr. Jack Werner

Mr. Thomas Knapp

Dr. Paul Yourchisin

Ms. Nancy McDanel

Mr. Michael Zamborik

Ms. Mary Anne Paris

Mrs. Donna Zariczny

Mr. Arthur Stewart

Others Present:

Mr. Brandon Hufnagel, Superintendent; Mrs. Amy Stewart, Director of Instructional Technology/Communications; Mrs. Amanda Hetrick, Director of Secondary Education; Dr. Norbert Kennerknecht, Director of Buildings & Grounds Services; Mrs. Diane Martin, Director of Special Education; Mr. James Grosch, Director of Business Services; Mrs. Barbara Cook, Supervisor of Business Information Management; Mr. Chris Byham, Solicitor; Mrs. Ruth Huck, Board Secretary; Mr. Josh Cotton, Times Observer; Mr. Michael Kiehl, Transportation/Purchasing Manager; Mr. Brian Collopy, Technology Coordinator; Mr. Matt Jones, Coordinator of Grants & Foundation Development; Mr. Gary Weber, Principal; Mr. James Young, Principal; Ms. Ann Ryan, Assistant Principal; and approximately 25 unidentified members of the audience.

1.4 Reading of the Mission Statement - Mr. Knapp

The mission of the Warren County School District, where today's student is our future, is to equip all students with the educational skills necessary to achieve their unique personal potential.

- 1.5 Reading of the WCSD/PSBA Standards for Effective School Governance and Code of Conduct - Mr. Grant

We as members of our local board of education, representing all residents of our school district, believe that:

Our fellow residents have entrusted us with the advocacy for and stewardship of the education of the youth of this community and the public expects that our first and greatest priority is to provide equitable educational opportunities for all youth. Accordingly, we recognize that the primary responsibility of the Board is to adopt policies by which the schools are to be administered.

- 1.6 Public Comment

Tammy Head	Bear Lake, PA	Ms. Head stated that she opposes the Sugar Grove-Russell "shuffle."
Dale McMillen	Lander, PA	Mr. McMillen opposes the Sugar Grove-Russell "shuffle."
Elizabeth Reynolds	Sugar Grove, PA	Ms. Reynolds thinks the merger of Sugar Grove and Russell is wrong and the consequences will be detrimental.
Steve Younger	Sugar Grove, PA	Mr. Younger urged the Board not to put the students on a bus any longer than is necessary and something that is right for the students.
David Bauer	Sugar Grove, PA	Mr. Bauer said there are three things the Board needs to think about when making the decision to merge Sugar Grove and Russell – time, distance, and disruption.
Heidi DeWald	North Warren, PA	Ms. DeWald is a teacher at Sugar Grove, and she asked the Board to consider implications to Title 1 funding should the schools merge. She feels there is a possibility funding could be lost.

2. New Business

- 2.1 Budget Presentation

Mr. Stewart asked that Robert's Rules of Order be waived in order for the administration to bring its presentation of the preliminary budget. The Board members agreed by common consent.

Mr. Hufnagel stated finances drive a lot of things. The 2012-2013 budget faces a \$5.1 million deficit due to declining revenues and increased costs. Some costs that cannot be controlled are salaries, benefits, insurances, and other contracts for services.

One of the challenges the District faces is that it does not know what the State budget allocations will be before the preliminary budget is due. There is the possibility that the governor's budget will cut funding again, and there will be an even larger deficit.

Mr. Hufnagel presented what a salary freeze would look like for all employee groups.

The next topic was "Long-term Solutions versus Short-Term Cost Savings." Items like supply cuts, textbook purchases, technology cuts, pay freezes, building maintenance reductions, and fund balance usage will provide savings in the short-term but will need to be introduced into future budgets.

The Sugar Grove-Russell reconfiguration was discussed. There is one major concern and that being the distance children will travel from the Bear Lake area.

LEC could also be moved into an existing building in the district. Savings would come with the utilities savings and allows the services of an administrator to be shared.

Medical benefits are being looked at for possible savings and would need to be negotiated with the unions along with wage freezes.

The question was asked, "What does the District want to provide for the students of Warren County? How much are we willing to pay for the desired education, and how will we pay for the increasing costs of education in Warren County?"

A sample model for the five-year plan was presented by Mr. Hufnagel which included staffing efficiencies, resource efficiency and increased educational opportunities, a K-12 configuration at Sheffield and Eisenhower, restructuring the Central Attendance Area, building improvements, begin planning for WAHS renovations and planned maintenance of YHS, YEMS, and WAEC.

Mr. Hufnagel requested that the Board considers approving a preliminary budget that allows for exception or referendum and form a study group to review and revise the Master Facility plan to incorporate the future (short and long-term) academic needs of the county and then approve and execute the plan.

This is a starting point for discussion.

Mrs. Zariczny asked for a summary document for the preliminary budget so that Board members know what is being supported in the budget.

It was stated that anyone from the public that has budget questions can email them to an email address set up for those questions specifically. A frequently asked questions page will be posted on the website to address questions from the public.

2.2 Other

Solicitor Byham explained the protocol for the Charter Hearing to be held on January 25, 2012.

Mr. Hufnagel stated that the administrative review and questions sent to the CSOI group would be emailed to the Board members for their information.

Mr. Stewart reminded the members that there is a special meeting at 5:30 p.m. on January 25, 2012, to consider the preliminary budget.

Mr. Stewart stated that there is a legal deadline, February 9th, for the district to submit referendum exceptions if it chooses to do so, which will require a special meeting. The meeting was set for February 8, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., at the Warren County Career Center.

Mr. Zamborik announced that he has a conflict of interest with regards to the termination of the All-Clean contract. He stated that he has a relative that is married to one of the supervisors of the company.

Mr. Stewart announced an executive session would commence at 8:23 p.m. to discuss legal advice from the solicitor on county-wide reassessment, the Act 1 referendum exceptions process, and a report on personnel issues.

3. Closing Activities

3.1 Adjournment

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Paris and seconded by Mrs. Zariczny that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth A. Huck, Board Secretary