

Board of Education Committee of the
Whole Meeting
Thursday, March 22, 2018 6:00 PM Central

Administration Building- Board Room
320 N 5th St
Beatrice, NE 68310

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication and/or posting in accordance with the Board approved method for giving notice of meetings. Notice of this meeting was given in advance to all members of the Board of Education. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the publicized notice and a current copy of the agenda was maintained as stated in the publicized notice. All proceedings of the Board of Education, except as may be hereinafter noted, were taken while the convened meeting was open to attendance of the public.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Present: Janet Byars, Doris Martin, Nancy Sedlacek, Jon Zimmerman, **Absent:** Lisa Pieper, Steve Winter. Present: 4, Absent: 2.

Mrs. Martin, Vice-President of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Administration Building Board Room. At the beginning of the meeting, Mrs. Martin announced and informed the public that a current copy of the Open Meetings Act was posted on the west wall of the meeting room.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Board of Education of District #15 approve the agenda as presented passed with a motion by Jon Zimmerman and a second by Janet Byars.

Janet Byars: Yea, Doris Martin: Yea, Nancy Sedlacek: Yea, Jon Zimmerman: Yea
Yea: 4, Nay: 0

3. Monsanto Grant

Present: Lisa Pieper. Present: 5, Absent: 1.

Mrs. Nielsen and Carol Oltman shared basic information on the Monsanto grant that was received by Dr. Christen. They noted that funds have been used to create a makerspace in the library which includes cabinets full of options for students. Some of the items purchased with funds from the grant include robotics, drones, a virtual reality lab, green screen for animation, a hydro plant for the Pro Start students to grow their own herbs, as well as 3-D pens and manipulatives. Oltman added that most of the computers are open learning centers for students to utilize throughout the day. She added that the maker space is open and available all day, but students must be passing their classes to have access to it. Oltman informed the Board that watching the kids fail and then work through the critical thinking process to determine how and why it failed before trying again (and sometimes again) is an enjoyable part of this new area to the library as the learning that occurs throughout the process is very rewarding to the individual student.

Lisa Pieper entered the meeting at 6:03 PM.

Dr. Christen shared a handout with Board members that shared images of student opportunities that were provided due to grant funding. Some of the images highlighted the trout eggs experiment, virtual reality lab, three dimensional printing, makerspace activities (coding, programming, engineering and construction), and video editing. Dr. Christen added that they are looking into the possibility of an incubator to study the life cycle of egg laying birds and Vex robotics. He also informed the Board that the Monsanto corporate office asked if the high school would be willing to be featured on their website to which they graciously agreed. Dr. Christen is planning to apply for the grant again next school year.

4. Psychological Services

Mrs. Cordry-Hookstra provided a brief recap of the level 3 program for the 18-19 school year and the staff that will be needed for that program. Next, she provided the Board with a handout outlining the approximate costs for the psychological services that the district is currently providing. She informed the Board that if the district contracted 1 full-time employee then it would replace the current costs of all the separate areas that we provide service for now and then it would allow the school psychologists to provide more assistance in the classrooms which they would love to do. Mr. Nauroth asked Board members to share their thoughts on the proposed suggestion. Martin asked how we will know that no additional staff time or days will be needed. Mrs. Cordry-Hookdstra noted that there is no guarantee of that, but that any extra contracted days would then be approved through her directly if they were absolutely needed. Byars stated that it makes sense not to piece together the program. The Board was in census with Byars.

5. Updated Job Descriptions

Mr. Brazell shared a list of all of the new and updated job descriptions for classified staff. The list included 37 positions. He noted that all of the descriptions have been formatted and are available for review on Sparq. The food service and bus driver positions will be forthcoming soon. He added that the policy that references the job descriptions is being updated and will need to go through the normal policy readings process.

6. Education Foundation Office

Mr. Brazell shared that the Foundation was created in 1986 and has approximately \$1.8 million in assets with the majority of that going towards scholarships. He added that the foundation hired a grant writer (Janet Byars) who successfully acquired some large grants and one of those was used to hire a full-time staff member (Executive Director- Doris Martin). Mr. Brazell informed the Board that the Executive Director is temporarily housed in the student programs office in a shared space, but that space will no longer be available next year so she will have to be relocated. It was suggested to use the locker room space on the east side of this building to renovate for an office for the Foundation. Mr. Brazell noted that the estimated cost is \$15,000 for the renovations. He recommended that the school renovate the space since the building is owned by the district and then bill the Foundation for rent. Martin added that the Foundation is running an after school program so there is a lot of equipment/supplies to store and their own space for private scholarship discussion is greatly needed. Foundation Board members added that they are in the process of making the operation known and growing it. Pieper added that while the Foundation is a separate entity, it clearly benefits the district students and staff through scholarships and teacher grants. Mr. Nauroth asked if the Foundation would be willing to make a long-term commitment to utilizing the space. Andy Carothers responded that it has not been discussed specifically, but he doesn't see a problem with that. Mr. Carothers added that the Foundation is very motivated and looking to do some ambitious fundraising. Martin echoed Pieper with the relationship between the district and the Foundation. Byars asked for clarification that the funds for this project would come from the building fund to which Mr. Brazell responded that is correct; therefore, it is separate from the general fund which is used for teacher salaries and building supplies.

7. Budget Projection

Mr. Brazell shared a handout on state aid information with Board members. The handout included information (formula needs, resources and state aid) from the 16-17 and 17-18 school years and projections for the upcoming 18-19 school year. The current projections show a decline of over \$500,000 in state aid from the 16-17 school year to next year. Mr. Brazell noted that the decline is primarily due to the decline in enrollment and the continual increase in property values. He added that there is not much that can be done to help increase state aid besides trying to increase enrollment.

8. Elementary Structure

Mrs. Replogle provided a summary of the five parent meetings that were made available on the topic of elementary structure. She noted that the total attendance was approximately 40-50 parents, as well as Board members, administrators, and candidates running for the Board of Education. A short survey (open from a Friday to Tuesday evening) was also sent to parents to collect additional feedback; 285 families responded to the survey with over 163 comments. Results from the survey showed that approximately 15 people responded that they would be willing to move their student(s) to a different building; however, only about 3 of them were in the grades that administration will be looking to move students. Mr. Janssen added that parents and patrons were given plenty of opportunities to have a voice on this topic. Zimmerman thanked the elementary administrators for all their work on this topic. Mr. Nauroth thanked all those that attended the meetings and completed the survey. He noted that this is a very important issue and that he has gone over it and the comments/thoughts from patrons and parents. Next, Mr. Nauroth briefly addressed some of the questions and comments that were raised during this process. Mr. Nauroth encouraged the Board to consider two basic options and he noted that cost has to be something that the district considers to help balance the budget. His recommended options are to 1) continue with the K-5 configuration at all elementary buildings which would reduce a section of third grade at Lincoln next year and move the current 7 sections of first grade to 6 sections of second grade- both of which would require moving students or 2) address the class size equity issue and move to leveled buildings in which Paddock Lane would stay K-5, Lincoln would become a K-2 building and Stoddard a 3-5 building. Mr. Nauroth stated that in April he will have a definite recommendation to present to the Board, but as of now he is leaning towards grade level buildings.

9. Public Comments - This is the proper time for public questions and comments on any topic. Please make sure a request form is given to the Board Vice-President before the meeting begins.

First, Neal Trantham addressed the Board. He made the following 3 points while addressing the Board:

- Aren't there more than just 4 options for this topic? He noted that some solutions have been offered under the parameters of the superintendent's office, but that there are probably more options (encouraged thinking outside of the box).
- The best solutions come from a diverse group of stakeholders so he encouraged using parents that have a background in lots of different areas/industries to help form a committee to evaluate this topic and come up with additional ideas.
- Rushed decisions almost always result in regret- just a little more than a month after these options were first shared with the community the Board is looking to make a major decision that will affect something (neighborhood schools) that has been working well. Trantham encouraged the Board to take some extra time to make sure that all the options have been solicited and refined and to consider the unintended consequences of a rushed decision. He recommended conveying a committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to continue to work on this and offer a recommendation to Mr. Alexander sometime during the 18-19 school year.

Next, Brent Essink addressed the Board of Education. He stated that the idea of elementary grade levels for this district is pretty good; however, he entertained the idea that the Board hold off on the decision for the following reasons:

- Cost- he noted that the addition of a staff member would require some additional funding and may require a change to board policy; however, there could also be some costs (busing, bus hub modifications, moving logistics, etc.) for going to grade level buildings that should be researched and considered as well.
- Aging facilities- the move to grade level buildings does not address the major issue of the aging facilities of all the elementary buildings. He suggested waiting until the master facility discussions/meetings are complete and recommendations made based on those findings.
- Incoming new superintendent (Jason Alexander)- he stated that he would think that he would like to be included in this decision and holding off for a year would give him a chance to get in district and better evaluate the situation.

10. Adjournment

Board of Education of District #15 adjourn passed with a motion by Jon Zimmerman and a second by Nancy Sedlacek.

Janet Byars: Yea, Doris Martin: Yea, Lisa Pieper: Yea, Nancy Sedlacek: Yea, Jon Zimmerman: Yea
Yea: 5, Nay: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Danielle Fairbanks

Board Secretary/Superintendent

Date