

WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2011-4291

Minutes April 7, 2011

A special meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the Jr./Sr. High School with Mrs. Davis, Board President, presiding.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, Mrs. Davis asked if anyone would be recording the meeting. No one indicated the intent to record.

Board Members Present:

Mrs. Bamberger, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Helm, Mr. Larkin, Mr. Painter, Mr. Portner, Mrs. Sakmann and Mrs. Seltzer.

Administrative Staff Present:

Mrs. Vicente, Mrs. Mason, Mr. Fries, Mr. Griscom and Mrs. Morett, Mr. Babb, and Mr. Roberts

Attendees:

Mr. Darrin Youker, Reading Eagle, Mr. Geoff Stoudt, Kozloff Stoudt. Audience sign-in sheet included as part of these official minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following the roll call by the Board secretary, Mrs. Davis welcomed everyone. She announced the purpose of the meeting was to present a more detailed look at the 2011-12 Budget, the process the Board followed and the reasoning behind it. The audience would have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the budget following the presentation.

Mrs. Vicente explained the budget process the Board and administration went through the last several months. In January the Board was presented with a preliminary budget that reflected a \$1.9 million deficit. The Board charged the administration to determine and present recommendations that would close this gap and have the least negative impact on the academic experience of our students. Initial rounds of cuts were unsuccessful in closing the gap and it became apparent this could not be done without affecting personnel. Following many executive sessions, an overview of the budget was presented at the March 28, 2011 meeting. Answers to the questions from that meeting were included in the evening's presentation.

PRESENTATION

Mrs. Mason presented a more detailed version of the 2011-12 Budget. A copy of the presentation is included as part of these official minutes.

Throughout the presentation Board members offered points of clarification regarding assessment appeals.

Mrs. Vicente announced that Spanish instruction will continue in grades 5-6. Students eligible for Spanish I in grade 7 will still continue with the path toward AP Spanish. An afterschool program is being considered for K-4.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Geoff Stoudt explained the process by which the Board would answer questions from the public. Each audience member was limited to three minutes to comment or ask a question to make sure equal time existed for everyone who wanted to do so until the conclusion of the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Since the last Board meeting many residents formed a Facebook group to brainstorm ideas to bring additional revenue into the district in hopes of staving off staff cuts. An annual amount of at least \$685,000 would need to be raised to cover proposed staffing cuts.

In order to prevent additional cuts next year, the District is searching for a Director of Development. This position has been funded privately with a donation for that specific purpose to generate funding for programs.

Residents questioned the hiring of a Human Resources generalist to replace the Director of HR when historically up until a few years ago the District had operated without an HR department. Mrs. Vicente responded that some of the responsibilities of an HR Director include being versed in liability, insurance, FMLA, and employment laws. Delegating those responsibilities to building principals who are not trained in these areas could open the District up to possible litigation that could prove more costly than employing a generalist with the necessary HR background and training.

Residents asked why the Board applied for the Act 1 exceptions if they didn't intend to use them. Mrs. Davis explained that they applied for the exceptions as a safety net because the outcome of the governor's budget had not been determined. She stressed that in taking the exceptions, taxes would be raised beyond the 1.4% index and the Board needs to be mindful that 80% of the residents have no children in our schools.

An audience member asked if leftover money from the bond issue could be used to pay off bonds instead of completing the capital projects for which it was earmarked. The administration answered that the money was earmarked for critical repairs.

A resident pointed out that many county schools are looking to discontinue junior high sports programs and working with community based sports programs and wondered if WASD was considering that. Mrs. Davis said options are being investigated.

When asked if outsourcing of services was considered, Mrs. Davis answered it would be investigated.

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A resident asked if the teachers were approached with a retirement incentive. Although the idea was considered, Mrs. Davis answered that the experience of our veteran teachers is not only valued by the students but by their colleagues for whom they serve as mentors. Mrs. Mason also said we don't currently have enough eligible teachers to warrant the incentive.

More detailed text regarding public comments will be posted on the District web site with the Budget presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Davis adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m. as previously announced.

Corinne D. Mason
Board Secretary