

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #16 SCHOOL BOARD

Mechanic Falls – Minot - Poland

The 8th Regular Meeting of the RSU #16 School Board

for 2009 – 2010 was held

Monday, February 1, 2010 at 6:30 P.M.

in the Poland Regional High School Auditorium

“You get the best efforts from others not by LIGHTING a fire beneath them, but by BUILDING a fire within.”

-Bob Nelson-

MINUTES

Present: Carl Beckett, Sue Callahan, Norm Davis, Yvon Gilbert, Dave Griffiths, Steve Holbrook, Mary Ella Jones, Jeanne Manley, Yvette Murray, Scott Sawyer, Martha Stone, Jack Wiseman

Absent: Annette Annance, Melissa Hodgkin, Chris Woodford

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Dave Griffiths, Chair

Dave Griffiths called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Dave reviewed the public meeting from 1/27/10 with municipal officials and community members. It was a packed meeting and it was gratifying to see everyone there.

ACTION ITEMS (A):

2.0 EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION:

3.0 ACT ON MINUTES:

Approve 7th Regular Meeting Minutes – 1-11-10

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve the minutes of the 1-11-10 meeting

Seconded: by Norm Davis

Vote: Unanimous

4.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

Approve Financial Statement of January 2010

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve the Financial Statement of January 2010

Seconded: by Jack Wiseman

Vote: Unanimous

- Rick reported that last week we paid off our \$1M loan at a cost of about \$14,000. Cash flow looks good. Norm asked if fees were coming in on time from all three towns. Rick explained that they come in by the 28th of every month.

Scott asked about a copy of the audit and Rick said they would be providing that.

Carl asked if all the deeds are in. Rick responded that there is still a slight hold up on that. The School Board will vote to accept the deeds once they are all set for transfer.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS:

Approve PRHS Field Trip – Gran Turismo

- Ray Lafreniere talked about the annual college visit trip. March 22nd, 23rd, & 24th - 40 students, four adults via a tour bus. Part of the cost is paid by a grant and the students subsidize the rest. Cost per student is \$85 for two nights, hotel, transportation, breakfast and visits to 6 or 7 schools. Martha said the trips are very beneficial for the kids. Ray said it is an economically feasible way to visit lots of schools for kids and families.

Motion: by Steve Holbrook
Seconded: by Martha Stone
Vote: Unanimous

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

7.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION – REPORTS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT:

A-team Reports

Sue Callahan thanked Minot for the successful Battle of the Books. The entire school participated.

Dave asked Margaret Pitts about becoming a Certified trainer for Ruby Paine.

Scott asked Cari about issues with laptop computers and use of the cameras. Cari explained that nationally there is lots of discussion about “sexting”. It used to be on cell phones and involves sexually explicit photos of themselves that they may send to a boyfriend or girlfriend. Kids have also done this with laptops and digital cameras. We had the Assistant District Attorney from Androscoggin County come speak to the kids about what the laws are and what a serious issue this is. Scott asked if the cameras on the laptops could be disabled and Cari explained that we are evaluating this. Sue Callahan added that we don’t take laptops away just like we don’t take textbooks away. It is a tool for learning. Mary Ella said it is also a parenting issue with what they are doing outside of school time. The vast majority of students are using the laptops properly. The kids also use the camera to study together online and connect with exchange students. Parents have to be very involved in their kids computer use at home. Jill Cramp added that her student was online at school talking on Skype. Jeanne Manley said we have entered a different age and we get ahead of ourselves in trying to bring the technology to children. It is difficult for teachers to micro-manage the issues. We need to establish policies for this. Sue said this is a problem in other districts, as well as ours. We need to take the opportunity to educate students, parents and teachers. Carol Lundberg spoke as a parent whose student has a wireless school laptop and can pick up the neighbor’s wireless at home. The School Board would like to review these policies. Rick added that we are in the process of looking at these policies.

Gary Chapin – We are educating children and he urges anyone to go visit kindergarten, it is amazing to watch. He deals with three questions: What do we want kids to know, how will we teach it to them and how will we know when they got it? The first one, What do we want kids to know? We follow state and federal standards and have subject area committees for the four main content areas. They meet once every five weeks and decide what’s important to teach and what pace we will teach it at. They provide guides for new teachers. Second question, How are we going to teach it? We rely on the excellence of our faculty and developing new strategies for reaching kids we haven’t been able to. We need to reach every kid. Professional Development is still important. Some grants pay for release time for teachers. Amy Tucker is doing classes dealing with MLTI computers. Cari led a book group that had 23 faculty members who volunteered to get together to read and discuss, *Fair is not always Equal*. 3rd question, How do we know if they got it? We are always asking, are they getting it now? We have structures in place across the district to measure how we are doing, NECAPS, NWEA, Amesweb, teacher-based assessments and Subject Area Committee’s (SACs) have designed end-of- year tests and mid-terms to measure how kids are doing with the pacing. Parent, Tammy English, asked if we would be presenting this information on how we are doing as schools and as a district. Parent, Marc Ferguson, asked if there was any way the parents could influence curriculum? Gary explained that he is happy to talk to any parent. Jeanne Manley asked if we are using any national norm-based assessment? Gary said we are using SATs for juniors, 4th and 8th graders participate in the Nations Report Card and NWEA is a nationally normed assessment. Sue Callahan said our children are being overly assessed. We need to balance assessment with teaching.

ACTION ITEMS (B):

8.0 REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Report of the Superintendent – Dennis Duquette

- ☒ Dave announced that subcommittees would be meeting during February. A proposed budget will be brought to the school board on March 1st. A middle school study committee will be meeting also. March 1st, 15th and 29th, the school board will be reviewing the budget and taking public input at school board meetings. The subcommittee meetings will not be open in February. If less than a quorum of the 15 member board is present in a subcommittee meeting, it doesn't have to be open. Everything voted on in these meetings will be brought to the public in March.
- ☒ Dennis urged the public to come forward with any questions or concerns as they move forward with this difficult budget. Today, the state notified us that the amount of aid we will be losing on July 1st will be \$820,000. With salary and benefit increases, we have to come up with \$1.4M to maintain what we currently have. Moving forward we will be trying to minimize the impact on kids.
- ☒ We need to think outside the box and turn the school system upside down and shake it. Some ideas we have are: closing central office and moving the staff into one of the schools, and the tri-town middle school study group.
- ☒ Julie Martin asked how they could physically fit all the kids in Whittier Middle School? Dennis explained that we would need to put portables outside WMS. Another parent asked if they would look at building an addition on to the middle school. Dennis said that would take about two years and would require local funds. The cost of portables is less than we expected. If we put portables in, we would work on a long-term plan to get rid of them.
- ☒ Laurie Callahan asked what happens to the space in the other schools if the middle school kids move? Dennis explained that in Minot there is no extra space and at Elm Street School, one possibility is to move the central office staff over there.
- ☒ Dennis explained that there is no money left to cut from our general supply budget. The only thing it can come from is staff and programs. He again thanked all the district staff for giving back by taking the four furlough days and saving \$175,000.
- ☒ Julie Martin asked if a middle school consolidation would eliminate teaching jobs? Dennis said yes it would, but we will lose teaching jobs next year regardless.
- ☒ Carol Lundberg asked how the decision would be made as to which teachers would go? Dennis explained that currently each school has their own teaching contract – we will need to look at those with the Education Association and see how that would happen. Carol brought up that a lot of kids wouldn't be able to play sports because there would only be one middle school team and asked how you would build community in the middle school with portables?
- ☒ George Sanborn asked how many teachers we have at retirement age. Dennis said eight at the end of this year. George asked if they had talked with the unions about concessions, salary freezes and/or reduced pay scales? Dennis said we have not, but we may in the future.
- ☒ Julie Martin asked if there was any way to get information from these committees as it transpires prior to the March 1st meeting? Dennis said that on March 1st everything would be presented. Dave said anyone could call him and he would provide an update in progress.
- ☒ Laurie Callahan asked if we are talking about furlough days for next year? Dennis and Dave explained that layoffs, furlough days and tax increases are all on the table. The final budget vote will be taken in May.
- ☒ Carl said he can't begin to get his head around what \$1.4M looks like. It would be 25 teachers. That is sad. He joined the school board to build the school system. Now it feels like we are going to tear down the school system with layoffs, tax increases and things we don't want to hear. I don't know where the money is coming from.
- ☒ Irvin Walker said he doesn't think the middle school consolidation could happen next year. \$800,000 is 20 teachers. Can we really do away with 20 teachers? There are other issues we are going to have to look at. It may take a tax increase.

- ☒ Tammy English said that at the 1/27/10 public meeting, Carol Coy offered each household might be willing to pay an extra \$20. How will this information be presented to the community at large? If we present it as we save art or music by adding this fee per household, it will be easier for the community to understand.
- ☒ Mark Ferguson asked how many teachers we have total? Dennis said we have 365 total staff with 20-30 total potential layoffs. Mark asked if this is something we should have expected when looking at unemployment nationwide due to the economy?
- ☒ Sue Callahan explained that when we cut teachers, we are affecting kids education and how they receive services. I feel for teachers losing their jobs, but that's not what it is about – we can't give kids a quality education with 25 kids in one classroom.
- ☒ Carol Coy – Dennis told us 01/27/10 that 32 teaching/staff positions have been cut in the last three years so we *have* already made cuts.
- ☒ George Sanborn asked if we are still 3rd highest in the state in cost per pupil at the high school? Dennis explained that we have dropped that cost and we will have that cost per pupil on March 1st.
- ☒ Pat Bolton asked about salary cuts. In his company, many people have been reduced to a 32-hour workweek and would rather have that than lose their jobs. Dave Griffiths explained that we have contracts.
- ☒ Mary Ella reminded people to contact their legislators. This is a state problem that has been passed on to the schools.
- ☒ Steve Holbrook talked about the 01/27/10 meeting. One of the state senators was there and incorrectly said that the state budget had not increased. It actually went from \$4B to \$7B.

2nd School Board Meeting per month - 3rd Monday:

Retirements:

Barbara Rimmer, Minot Consolidated School
 Claudette Shea, Minot Consolidated School
 Doris Herrick, Bruce M. Whittier Middle School

Handouts:

Articles: Minot wins with Book Wars
 Reaching Graduation with Credit Recovery

9.0 POLICIES:

Tabled. Scott asked to have the changes in bold so they can see them.

Policies – 2nd & Final Reading

JICH – Drug, Alcohol & Tobacco Use by Students
 JICH-R – Student Use or Possession of Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco Administrative Procedure
 JKE – Expulsion
 JKE-R1 – Expulsion of Student Procedures
 JKE-R2 – Re-admission Protocols for Students Expelled by the School Board
 JKE-E1 – Re-Admission Information for Hearing by the School Board

Policies – 1st Reading

ACAB – Harassment & Sexual Harassment of School Employees
 ACAB-R - Employee Discrimination & Harassment Complaint Procedure

10.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

11.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications to the School Board

12.0 REMINDER:

13.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to adjourn at 8:10 PM..

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis J. Duquette