

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Hawthorn Community Consolidated School District Number 73, Lake County, Illinois, held in the Conference Room at 841 West End Court at 7:30PM on the 28th day of April 2008.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Tim Shanahan, President, at 7:30PM. Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Debbie Limer called the roll, with the following members of the Board of Education answering present: Jeff Bard, Lisa Jay, Michelle Comitor, John Sonnenberg, Tim Shanahan.

Public Comment period:

Parichehr Yomtoob thanked everyone for their support during her illness. She and Dr. Yomtoob are pleased to have recognized 201 students with the David Yomtoob Most Improved Award over the years. They have all received \$50 US Savings Bonds. This year 32 students will be recognized on April 29th. She gave the Board a \$10K check to fund the awards.

Student and Staff Accomplishments, Recognitions:

Karen Cencula announced the teachers from Townline who will be receiving tenure. They are Carl Fritz, Raquel Kim, Marissa Vazquez, and Katie Wheeler. Tom Springborn recognized the teachers from Aspen who will be receiving tenure. They are Anthony Carlsen, Carl Fritz, and Lisa Roberts. Richard Viviano announced the teachers from Elementary North who will be receiving tenure. They are Angelena Colon and Sachiko Kim. Jill Martin recognized the teacher from Elementary South who is to receive tenure. She is Anne Moebius. Joy Mullaney announced the teachers from Middle School South who will be receiving tenure. They are Sara Hilger and Daniel Yablonsky. Anna Groh recognized the teachers from Middle School North who will be receiving tenure. They are Erin Brickman, Cathy Dimer, Rachel Serlin, Sheryl Swanson, and Brandon Todd. All of the teachers came forward to received a certificate and shake hands with the members of the Board of Education.

Donna Gaidamak arrived at 7:40PM.

Consent Agenda:

John Sonnenberg moved to approve the Personnel Report of the Consent agenda. Donna Gaidamak seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 6 ayes: 0 nays. Motion carried

The principal from each school introduced the newly hired teachers for the 2008-2009 school year. Jill Martin presented Sarah Lawless as a new teacher at Elementary South. She introduced Robert Collins as the new Vice Principal for Elementary South and Aspen. Tom Springborn introduced Stephanie Bechler, Erin Dingman, and Karen Oliver as new teachers at Aspen. Karen Cencula introduced Vanessa Hopp as a new teacher at Townline. All newly hired staff members came forward to sign their contracts and shake hands with the members of the Board of Education.

Tim Shanahan suggested a break, so that the teachers and guests present could leave the meeting.

The meeting recessed at 7:50PM.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00PM.

Public Comment period (cont):

Steve Limer of 11 Montebello told the Board that a parents group presented to the Board in December to the issue of consistency throughout the District. In January Dr. Zook responded. The reply was from Dr. Zook, not from the Board of Education. The group, The Concerned Parents of District 73, has not had most of their questioned answered. We asked direct questions and have not gotten direct answers in return. The issues are important. In December the parents involved asked to be able to meet as a group with the Board of Education so that we can help to be part of the solution. It has been 140 days, and we have received no real specific responses. He wanted to know how we can help. Mr. Limer commented that he read the on-line answers to the Town Hall Meeting questions. Some are good answers; others are very vague. The articulation with the High School has never been directly addressed. He asked the Board of Education to readdress these concerns to have the parents and the community help with the issues.

Amy Lebovitz of 339 Haddon Circle stated that she is afraid that getting rid of Outdoor Ed will be a disservice to the 6th grade students. There are ways to work around the issues. For some kids this is their first time away from home. It is a way for the students to socialize with some of their classmates whom they have never met before. There are other facilities available such as Camp Duncan or Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute. She commented at she is willing to take this project on. She would work through the issues.

Shari McAdams of 1136 Tracy Lane told the Board that she is concerned that opportunities are limited to some students. The field trips are for some and not all. She stated for that reason alone she hopes that Outdoor Ed can be saved for all students.

Lisa Lightman of 1112 Tracy Lane stated that there were no field trips for her son's team while in middle school. Some kids do not get chances for experiences that field trips and Outdoor Ed bring. We are educating the whole child. We can find a way to make it work. This is a life experience. The administration needs to address the challenges because they are also opportunities.

Staff Presentations:

Dr. Zook stated that things change. We are looking at and evaluating all of our programs. She listed the programs that have been evaluated and changed because of the evaluation process. Joy Mullaney and Anna Groh, Middle School principals, presented on the history, highlights, challenges, concerns, and recommendations of the Outdoor Education program. The main issues were facility safety concerns, liability to the school, disruption to the regular school program, staffing concerns, and a high student absentee rate after returning from Outdoor Ed. Ms. Groh commented that we feel that with a committee of teachers we can recommend an alternative educational experience. Donna Gaidamak pointed out that not all students get to go on field trips. She wanted to know if there would be an assurance that all 6th graders would get to go on any alternative program that is initiated. Ms. Groh stated that they would. Donna Gaidamak asked for a timetable on the committee of teachers who will be working on an alternative program. Ms. Groh reported that we will be working on this over the summer and will report back as soon as we have a plan in place. Lisa Jay wanted to know the main reason for the change if there are other facilities available. Dr. Zook indicated that time is limited. There are too many days that we are not maximizing education. John Sonnenberg stated that there is a difference between a virtual classroom and real life. We do need to think outside of the classroom walls.

Michelle Comitor stated that she loves the Outdoor Education program. She likes the overnight experience. There is no way to replicate what is done outside inside. We should be looking for alternative programs. Tim Shanahan commented that George Williams College was a great experience. He sees the realities of the program. We need to build on the good aspects. He suggested having the program outside of the school year. Lisa Jay suggested having Outdoor Ed from a Friday night to Saturday. Ms. Groh told the Board that there are safety and liability issues. The nurses needed a large amount of time to prep all that was needed for the trip. She feels that we can replicate the experience. Jeff Bard reported that we cannot replicate an overnight program without an overnight stay. A parent is willing to help overcome the issues. He commented that he would like to see the program continue.

Dr. Zook told the Board that there is a liability issue with students' misbehavior and parental reactions. The liability should not fall back on the school. Things are different than they were 30 years ago. There are challenges with "all-inclusive" education. John Sonnenberg commented that not all children get the opportunity to experience a natural setting. This opportunity should be available to all students. We should be able to move beyond the legalities. Dr. Yomtoob stated that we have seen the positives and negatives with Outdoor Ed. We need take the liability seriously. Times have changed. Dr. Zook told the Board that the committee will be researching alternative programs and report back at the end of the summer.

Consent Agenda (cont):

Lisa Jay moved to approve the consent agenda. Michelle Comitor seconded the motion. Donna Gaidamak asked about the reserve study. She stated that she understands that we cannot have bids on this, but it sounds like a lot of money. She wanted to know if the cost is reasonable. Alan Hahn explained that he has talked to other people about this kind of a study, and they are expensive. Dr. Joe stated it is set up as a "not to exceed." This is very comprehensive. Alan Hahn reported that the District has over \$80M in infrastructure. We will get a report with analysis of the facilities when they are done with the study. Architects and engineers will be looking at all of our plans and records as well as spending time in each building. They will report back to us on any safety issues we may have. The reserve study will give us a maintenance plan for the next 10 years.

- 04/08.85 Expenditure Report, April 2008
 - 04/08.86 Financial Statement, February 2008
 - 04/08.87 Financial Statement, March 2008
 - 04/08.88 Intergovernmental Agreement with NIU
 - 04/08.89 Reserve Study
 - 04/08.90 2008/09 Board meeting schedule
 - 04/08.91 Teacher resolution
 - 04/08.92 Amended calendar for 2007/08
- Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jay, Comitor, Bard, Sonnenberg, Gaidamak, Shanahan
Nays: None
Absent: Hoffman
Motion carried – 6– 0

Action Items:

Donna Gaidamak moved to approve the 1% county sales tax resolution, as presented. Michelle Comitor seconded the motion. Jeff Bard commented that it is the State Legislators' responsibility to fund the schools, and they are not looking at the issues. He indicated that Vernon Hills usually is either first or second in Lake County in annual sales revenues. He questioned if Vernon Hills' sales should essentially be funding all of the county's schools. We already have a high tax rate. Jeff Bard stated that there is a possibility that Lake County retailers will lose sales to retailers across the border. It is not fair to families who are struggling. Donna Gaidamak commented that she thinks we should put it on the ballot and let the voters decide. Jeff Bard reported that it will be county wide, not just Vernon Hills. Vernon Hills voters will not actually decide because we are a small overall percentage of the Lake County population.

Michelle Comitor stated that we cannot rely on Springfield. We need to take this on ourselves. John Sonnenberg indicated that he has a hard time supporting this resolution and a regressive tax. It is out of our control once it is on the ballot. Tim Shanahan stated that we can vote on the motion to give the resolution the opportunity, but the County can still do it without us. Lisa Jay asked if we need this tax increase to stay financially healthy. Tim Shanahan stated that by us saying no, we limit those who need it. Alan Hahn explained that this needs to be approved by enough districts to count for over 50% of the student population in the County. Seven districts have approved the resolution so far. Dr. Yomtoob reminded the Board that SEDOL is asking for help, and we need money to maintain our buildings.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gaidamak, Comitor
Nays: Bard, Sonnenberg, Shanahan
Abstain: Jay
Absent: Hoffman
Motion denied – 2 - 3

Michelle Comitor moved to authorize the Board's representative to the Governing Board of the Special Education District of Lake County to vote "yes" on the Capitol Improvement Bond issue to build additional facilities to serve students with disabilities for the 36 SEDOL member districts. Donna Gaidamak seconded the motion. Michelle Comitor commented that she needs to know what she should do when voting in May. Lisa Jay asked if this will benefit us financially. John Sonnenberg stated that if it does not pass, we may have to move our students to private placements. Jeff Bard commented that it is very clear that SEDOL has the need for more space.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jay, Comitor, Bard, Sonnenberg, Gaidamak, Shanahan
Nays: None
Absent: Hoffman
Motion carried – 6– 0

President's Report: None

Superintendent's Report: None

Discussion Items: None

Committee Reports:

John Sonnenberg commented that there was a Finance meeting today. There will be another one before the Policy Committee meeting on May 27th. We talked about hiring an auditor, the reserve study, and Board of Education goals.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements: None

Informational Items:

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Tim Shanahan requested a motion to adjourn.

Donna Gaidamak moved to adjourn the meeting. Michelle Comitor seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 6 ayes: 0 nays. Motion carried

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 9:40PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Limer

Timothy Shanahan, President

Anne Hoffman, Secretary