

MASON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting
October 12, 2015
Harvey Education Center
400 South Cedar Street
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Mason Board of Education was held at the James C. Harvey Education Center on Monday, October 12, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Becky Brimley, Vice President.

Present: Becky Brimley, Laura Fenger, Julie Rogers, Laura Cheney, Kurt Creamer, and Tom Curtis

Absent: Ralph Beebe

Also Present: Ron Drzewicki, Superintendent; Cheryl S. Wald, Chief Financial Officer; Matt Stuard, Curriculum Director; Rick Brooks, Director of Human Resources; Alan Panter, Abraham & Gaffney, P.C.; Mason staff and community members

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Julie Rogers made and Tom Curtis supported a motion to approve the agenda as printed. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC REQUESTS/COMMENTS

Anne Hudgins of 3460 W. Plains Rd., Mason, MI addressed the board. Mrs. Hudgins referenced three documents. The documents were distributed to board and audience members by middle school teacher, Jennifer Sauser. Mrs. Hudgins read board policy #3200, Payment of Obligations. She indicated the board of education voted on June 29, 2015 to close the 2014-15 budget and open the new budget. Mrs. Hudgins believes that prior to this date, the board had received incomplete budgetary reports in the form of check registers. Mrs. Hudgins questioned how the board was able to vote with confidence and make decisions with incomplete information. Mrs. Hudgins referenced a timeline of FOIA and PERA requests and asked that the public and Board of Education be informed of revenues and expenditures on a monthly basis.

Cindy Hyaduck of 1120 East Ash Street, Mason, MI stated she attended the Property and Finance Committee meeting in September. She recalled three board members requesting financial reports indicating what was budgeted, spent and what still remains. She referred to policy #3200 indicating the board is not following its own policy. She asked why reports are not provided to the board of education and the public.

Eric Cargill of 775 East Maple Street, Mason, MI stated that on June 8th, President Ralph Beebe reminded the public that board policies have been in place a long time.

SPECIAL REPORTS/COMMENTS

Steering Committee Progress Report

A Steering Committee progress report was presented by Steering Committee Chair, Mrs. Chris Waltz. Mrs. Waltz introduced the six committee members in attendance. The committee has met sixteen times and logged over 300 volunteer hours to the cause. Since the last board meeting, a community survey was completed by 735 participants. The results were positive with 90% in favor of the need for facilities additions and renovations to meet expanding enrollment and 91% believed it is important to update current facilities. Sixty-eight percent stated they would vote yes on a bond proposal and Sinking Fund renewal.

Projected enrollment, school financing, the state of current facilities, examples of mills to be levied and clarifying information was presented at both Community Forums held on September 28 and October 6, 2015. The Steering Committee heard and responded to questions from community members at both forums. The Community Forums were a great opportunity to educate those in attendance.

The Steering Committee met following the forums and agreed on three areas of district need. They are facilities upgrades, safety and security and technology. The committee agreed that elementary schools require upgrades, they will consider building a 4/5 Intermediate building to obtain space for elementary students and agreed to the need for improvements at the middle school and high school. The committee is hopeful that 10-15 years from now the district will be thankful for decisions made today.

The Steering Committee agrees that additional land is needed to expand and improve elementary sites and secure land for a new building. The intent is to build a 4/5 Intermediate building, gain space for arts and athletics and allow for future growth.

The next committee steps include creating a communication plan, addressing questions from forums and ensuring needs of the district are understood. The committee will work to finalize a presentation to be considered at the Board of Education meeting scheduled on December 14, 2015.

The board discussed ways to communicate the daily operations of the James C. Harvey Education Center which serves over 600 children each day. The Steering Committee has communicated the reasons for repurposing Cedar Elementary. The current site is not large enough for a new building with only 8.5 acres. Architects recommend 12 acres for a new build due to updated codes.

At the end of each forum, documents were available to adequately address attendants' questions. The committee will continue to gather community feedback. A communication subcommittee was formed to decide how to disseminate information.

The Steering Committee discussed 12 different options to address the district's needs. The committee researched, read articles and discussed financing. Information was discussed until the committee reached consensus on building a new 4/5 intermediate building.

Each K-3 elementary building would house approximately 400 students and the 4/5 Intermediate building would contain approximately 500 students. Superintendent Drzewicki stated that the committee decided that a 4/5 Intermediate building was in the best interest of the district. He stated the age of current buildings was a big concern and we want to do what is right for the district long term.

Tom Curtis thanked the Steering Committee and subcommittees for their time and commitment.

Mrs. Waltz added that a goal of the committee is to reduce elementary class size. A 4/5 Intermediate building would reduce class size without adding several additional teachers. She stated the class space we have now is not optimal for today's education.

The committee will continue to communicate the work. In the next four weeks, Mr. Drzewicki will present information at building staff meetings and address staff questions.

Alan Panter, Abraham and Gaffney, P.C.

Mr. Alan Panter presented the draft audit presentation binder dated October 12, 2015. A finalized opinion from the Office of Attorney General is expected back by November 1, 2015. He indicated the audit went well and his team appreciated the district efforts. Mr. Panter thanked Mrs. Cheryl S. Wald for her support during the process.

Mr. Panter shared the Independent Auditor's Report and the Statement of Net Position dated June 30, 2015. He indicated that the fund balance went up this year to 4.9%. He recommends a 12% fund balance and stated many districts have spent down their balance based on cuts at the State level, but the target still remains.

Mr. Panter shared a five year graph of General Fund Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance. The fund balance has decreased, but this year it increased which is a good trend. A General Fund Revenue Detail pie graph for 2015 was referenced. State sources provide 77% of the budget, while 15% comes from other sources and 8% from Federal and incoming transfers and other. The General Fund Expenditure Detail was broken down by categories. Instruction totaled 64%, Supporting and Community Services totaled 35% and other financing uses totaled 1%. Mr. Panter indicated that 64% is on the high end of what is expected to be seen.

Superintendent Drzewicki stated that the district has been on alert to trim expenditures since November. He thanked all that were involved in doing so.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Julie Rogers made and Laura Cheney supported a motion to approve the consent agenda, including approval of minutes of the September 14, regular meeting; September 14, closed session #1; September 14, closed session #2; Personnel Report No. 9 as amended; Financial Report No. 10; including payment of General Fund bills in the amount of \$1,022,083.63, Food Service Fund bills in the amount of \$49,266.31, Student Activities Fund bills in the amount of \$34,759.93, and Sinking Fund bills in the amount of \$33,650.00. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

COMMITTEE AND SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS

Finance and Property

2014-15 Audit Report

Kurt Creamer referred to minutes from the October 5, 2015 meeting. The group reviewed the audit report provided by Abraham & Gaffney, P.C. Great improvements were made from last year.

Due to time constraints, discussion regarding an electronic board book was tabled. A new format for reporting financials was discussed and check registers will be available online. A closed session occurred to discuss negotiations and property purchasing options.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 2, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

Kurt Creamer made and Julie Rogers supported a motion to approve the 2014-15 draft audit report pending Office of Attorney General's final opinion. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

Community and Staff Relations

Laura Fenger referred to minutes from the September 21, 2015 meeting. Staffing updates were shared by Rick Brooks. Custodial hours and staffing levels for all buildings were reviewed and secretaries will be cross-trained. The committee discussed district-wide volunteer opportunities.

The accountant/payroll supervisor position was reviewed. The committee reviewed a small change to candidate vacation time accrual.

The group discussed the District's Safety Plans including the Crisis Response Plan.

A bond proposal update was given.

Rick Brooks added that principals will be meeting to discuss custodial rotations between the three elementary buildings.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2015 at 4:15 p.m.

Policy and Curriculum

Laura Cheney referred to minutes from the September 28, 2015 meeting. The committee reviewed the reproductive health bi-annual report and professional development survey results. Survey results were positive.

The committee modified policy #9620 and #9840 and they were recommended for first reading. The committee requested additional information on policy #9730. The committee reviewed policy #9900 and recommended no changes.

The committee discussed ways to elicit additional review on student policies.

Policy #9300, Tobacco Products and Alcohol On/In District Premises - 2nd Reading

Laura Cheney made and Julie Rogers supported a motion to approve Policy #9300, Tobacco Products and Alcohol On/In District Premises, as presented. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

Policy #9570, Relations with Law Enforcement and Investigating Authorities

Laura Cheney made and Julie Rogers supported a motion to approve Policy #9570, Relations with Law Enforcement and Investigating Authorities, as presented. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF OTHER MATTERS BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Board members received minutes from the September 2 and October 7, 2015 Ingham School Officers Association.

Laura Cheney inquired about State law prohibiting retired teachers from substituting in Michigan schools. Superintendent Drzewicki has placed calls to State Representative, Tom Cochran, regarding the subject. Rick Brooks added that the new substitute system is advertising and adding to the substitute pool.

The transportation department is seeking additional bus drivers and full-time positions are available. Applicants should contact Mr. Kevin Doty.

Approval of Contract for Superintendent

Julie Rogers made and Tom Curtis supported a motion to approve the Contract for Superintendent, as presented. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

INTRODUCTION OF OTHER MATTERS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Drzewicki asked the board if they needed additional information from the Steering Committee prior to making a decision to move forward with a bond proposal at the December 14th board meeting. Tom Curtis suggested a board work session prior to the next board meeting.

Board members questioned what they would be voting on, how the general fund will be relieved and how to balance current buildings and new buildings during construction periods. Mr. Drzewicki indicated more details of the scope of work will become available. Drawings will be general in nature, but will provide layouts for each school. When solid financial numbers are available, the board will be able to make informed decisions.

A work session prior to the November 9, 2015 Board of Education meeting was established.

PUBLIC REQUESTS/COMMENTS

Anne Hudgins of 3460 W. Plains Rd., Mason, MI addressed the board. Mrs. Hudgins indicated that the July 2015 financial statements were provided, but previous questions have not been answered. She asked that the Board of Education be transparent.

ADJOURNMENT

Julie Rogers made and Laura Cheney supported a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

Laura Fenger
Secretary