

VASSAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

Date: September 9, 2013

Time: 6:30 P.M.

Place: High School Media Center

A. CALL TO ORDER:

1. The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Mike Kennard at 6:35 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Kennard , Roger Bacon, Kirk Van Wormer, Russ Hubbard, Ben Guile,
Jeff Fackler, Jill Baase

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Palmer, Al Hoard, Bill Haines, Phil Marcy, Paul Wojno, Chuck Fabbro

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: ADDITION OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

1. MOTION by Jeff Fackler, support by Roger Bacon to approve agenda with deletion of S #1, S #2 and the addition of J #1 and J #2.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

E. BOARD RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCES:

F. SPOTLIGHT OF MONTH:

G. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND CORRECTIONS:

1. MOTION by Roger Bacon, support by Russ Hubbard to approve the minutes from the August 12, 2013 Regular Meeting as presented.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

H. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS AND/OR COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. General Ledger Summary Comparison Reports-General Fund and Food Service: No comments.
2. Internal Fund Balance Sheet- No comments.
3. RECOMMENDATION by Kirk Van Wormer, support by Russ Hubbard to approve the payroll in the amount of \$307,987.06.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

RECOMMENDATION by Kirk Van Wormer, support by Ben Guile to approve the General Fund expenses in the amount of \$770,571.42.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

4. Committee Reports – NA

I. FINANCIAL ISSUES:

1. Mr. Dave Quimby of Weinlander-Fitzhugh, CPA presented a power point highlighting the 2012-2013 audit report. The General Fund ended with a balance of \$659,716 which was down \$455,096 from the prior year. The fund balance is 5% of expenses which is acceptable; however, it is recommended that it not be reduced to lower than 3% of expenses. His power point included a breakdown of the number of fte (student count for which the district receives its state funding). Note: The breakdown showed how in the past 5 years the fte count has decreased from 1729.34 in 2008-2009 to 1342.50 for the 2012-2013 school year. That is a decrease of 386.84 fte which means an estimated decrease in revenue of just under \$2.7 million (based on foundation allowance per pupil or what the state pays for each student of \$6,966). Also as with all school district 83% of all expenses are wages and benefits. After the presentation Mr. Palmer discussed the current enrollment which is down 70 students. If this continues through count day, it will reduce our state income and the district will be looking at ending the school year with an estimated 2.5% fund balance. Administration will continue to monitor and look at these numbers.

2. The district needs a plan to stop the bleed of students leaving the district. Expenses can be reduced by doing things with contracts. Administration will continue to look for more savings and a way to grow enrollment. Mr. Bacon inquired as to the status of the \$50,000 of available At Risk funds discussed at an earlier regular meeting. Mr. Palmer responded that those funds were used to make the Young 5's program an all day program. This doubles the amount of fte the district receives. Mr. Fackler made inquiry to the use of left over grant funds. Mr. Palmer responded that administration is working with the Title auditor on how we can utilize these funds to her parameters. Mr. Fackler, Mr. Palmer and Mr. Hoard discussed the biggest issues facing the district which are the High School and Central Elementary School roofs, the High School water main and the boilers in all the buildings. In October Mr. Palmer is planning on have the Facility Committee meet to discuss these issues.

MOTION by Jeff Fackler, support by Roger Bacon to accept the audit report as presented.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

3. While completing a FOIA credit card information request, Mrs. Peplinski discovered that the district does not have the purchasing card image receipt feature. The cost of the feature is \$50 per month for a total of \$600 per year. Instead of purchasing the feature, Mrs. Peplinski will revise the employee reimbursement policy and will accept only detailed receipts from which to reimburse expenses or pay credit card bills. If a detailed receipt is not provided, the employee will not be reimbursed. Also if a detailed receipt is not provided for a credit card, the employee will have to reimburse the district for the expense incurred.

MOTION by Russ Hubbard, support by Ben Guile not to purchase the purchasing card image receipt feature.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

4. Mr. Palmer explained that the 3 items listed are expenses that were historically a part of the budget as public relations tools. Considering current budget constraints are now being put before the board to see if they should be continued as part of the current year budget.
 - A. Senior Citizen Brunch: Mr. Wojno discussed the origins of the event which the district has been doing for over 25 years. The cost is less than \$2,000 and last year we had 285 participants. It is something that the seniors in the community look forward to each year. It is the best investment the district can make. Mrs. Atkins: Does Chartwells help with it? Mr. Wojno: they pick up the poinsettias. Audience Member: Wouldn't the funds be better spent on supplies for the teachers? The seniors do not show support and they are negative. Mr. Wojno: Typically they show lots of support and are the biggest reason our bond issues pass. Audience Member: What is the difference between the brunch and a Grandparent Lunch, where the grandparents eat lunch with the kids? Mr. Wojno: This is something we've done since 1984. The seniors are provided a hot breakfast, entertainment and art work provided by the students, plus, they are able to walk the halls and see what is going on in the classrooms. Mrs. Moore: It is a positive event. The younger students sing. Instead of gift bags why don't we have the children in art make gifts? Mr. Wojno: We can do that. Audience Member: It sounds expensive. Has anyone looked at a senior program? Audience Member: These seniors are a tax base member and support the school. It is a positive event.

MOTION by Jeff Fackler, support by Kirk Van Wormer to continue the Senior Citizen Brunch with the students to make gifts instead of providing gift bags.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

- B. 2013-2014 newspaper advertisement package: Each year the district receives a list of ads to be put in the paper on behalf of the school district. Each ad costs \$20 and there are 10 ads in the package. Mr. Fackler asked about the circulation of the Pioneer Times. Was it sufficient bang for the bucks? Megan Decker, reporter for the Pioneer Times, said circulation was about 1300. Mrs. Peplinski asked about requests for ads during the school year. The board said to handle as

business as usual. Mr. Palmer to review the ad request and determine whether or not it is a practical expense for the district.

MOTION by Ben Guile, support by Roger Bacon to continue with the standard advertising package.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

- C. Funeral and Graduation flowers: Mr. Palmer informed that board that in the past funeral flowers were given to families of deceased employees and to employees who have lost an immediate family member. The graduation flowers are the ones on the stage at commencement. Mr. Bacon offered that for funerals that he would rather a collection be taken up in place of using General Funds to purchase flowers.

MOTION by Roger Bacon, support by Ben Guile to keep the graduation flower expense and to take up a collection for funeral flowers when necessary.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

J. CURRICULUM ISSUES:

1. Mr. Palmer informed the board that the seat time waiver request be approved for Pioneer Work & Learn. Note: (information taken from the MPAAA Pupil Accounting Manual) The seat time waiver allows Pioneer Work & Learn to offer pupils access to online learning options and seeking to offer the opportunity to continue working on a high school diploma or grade progression without physically attending the school facility. The seat time waiver is a Michigan Department of Education approved alternative or innovative education program that removes the days, hours, and physical attendance requirements, and lifts the cap on the number of online courses a pupil can enroll in during the count period.

MOTION by Kirk Van Wormer, support by Russ Hubbard to approve the Seat Time Waiver for Pioneer Work & Learn.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

2. Mr. Palmer told the board that the district has been offered 12 extra GSRP slots (Great Start Readiness Program also known as Preschool). They are for a half day program which would require 1 teacher and 1 parapro. This would be in addition to the 72 slots the district currently has which is being used for 36 all day preschool students. Mrs. Smith added that the 12 seats could be a blended classroom which could consist of funded 4 year olds and tuition paying 3 year olds. The tuition paying 3 year olds would fill any open 4 year old funded slots. When asked if any General Funds would be needed, Mr. Palmer replied that he could not say yes or no. Currently, the program is sufficiently funded, but if during the year the State decides to change the funding, then General Funds may have to be used. Mrs. Baase stated that 3 year olds would do better with a half day program and asked if we would get this same number of slots the next year. Mrs. Smith said she would ask for as many as she could get as she does every year. Mrs. Auernhamer told that she was the first preschool teacher in the district (25 years ago) and that it is a grant program. It typically doesn't need use of General funds, Title or even At Risk funds. Audience member: What are the guidelines? Mrs. Smith replied that there are several factors to determining a whether a student qualifies. Income and other risk factors are taken into consideration. Most who turn in applications qualify. Audience Member: How soon until you start filling with 3 year olds? Mr. Palmer replied we are uncertain at the moment but at least within the next 2 weeks. Mr. Bacon asked if the information regarding the program could be reported to them quarterly. Mrs. Peplinski responded that the information will be part of the monthly budget report under function code 118. The program has a history of spending less than appropriated as well as consistent funding from the State.

MOTION by Roger Bacon, support by Ben Guile to accept the additional 12 GSRP slots.
MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

K. BY-LAWS AND POLICY ISSUES:

L. PERSONNEL ISSUES:

1. Mr. Palmer explained that the board needs to make a motion to reduce contract and responsibilities of Mrs. Dewey as principal of Townsend North Elementary School and add time for her to act as the program director of Title I and Title II programs in the district.

MOTION by Russ Hubbard, support by Jeff Fackler to accept the language change to Mrs. Dewey's contract as stated above.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

M. STUDENT ISSUES:

N. OPERATIONAL ISSUES:

1. Mr. Palmer informed the board that the electronic parent notification system is a go and he and Mrs. Peplinski will be trained on Friday, September 13, 2013.

O. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: 63 attendees.

- Tim Greenwood, 341 Margery Court, Vassar, MI: He addressed the amount of negativity he has heard about the school district. The Superintendent should be spoken to with respect and consideration. The student count is down and that is a lot of money. What the district needs is to figure out a plan to draw students into the district and keep them. We need to offer something that other districts do not. It may be necessary to spend the money the first year, to achieve future income. We need positive comments in the newspaper and during meetings. Leave the negativity alone and put children first. We do not want a 1 county school as they have in the south. Be a leader.
- Carson (Dan) Atkins, 133 N Cass Ave., Vassar, MI: He reviewed the information he received from his FOIA requests. He questioned the excessive spending. Mrs. Peplinski responded, as has been stated before at earlier meetings, that last school year was the last school year for General Funds to be used to purchase gifts for retirees. The other expenses were paid using grant funds and fundraising money. The fundraised money as well as the program are done and is a dead horse issue. Mr. Palmer asked Mr. Atkins about the date of the purchases and Mr. Atkins only responded about the June retiree gift purchases. Mr. Palmer followed by stating that he no longer has a school-issued credit card.
- Tracy Brightman, 7017 S Vassar Rd., Vassar, MI: No comment.
- Shirley Seney, 370 Margery Court, Vassar, MI: No comment.
- Randy Tausch, 4903 Hess Rd., Vassar, MI: An article was written about him in the newspaper questioning his lawn mowing on Memorial Day this year. Every Memorial and Labor Day he has mowed the football field for the past 15 years. His spraying unfortunately cannot be done when students are at school. He is the only person in the district trained to do it. To do all that is needed to be done in the summer with no overtime cannot be one. There is not enough time in the day. You got to keep the grounds running.
- Audience Member who did not sign Public Participation sheet, Leslie Fall, Vassar, MI: The latchkey program closed. What are the numbers? She has never seen the figures that explain why the latchkey program was closed. Mr. Palmer explained that the Preschool/Daycare/Latchkey program expenses were lumped together. Mrs. Greenwood explained that it was the 3year old preschool program that cost the district. Mrs. Fall asked then why was everything cut? Mr.

Fackler responded because the way it was presented to the board was everything combined. Mr. & Mrs. Greenwood spoke regarding the cost of the preschool versus the amount of income the program generated which was \$4000 of the \$27,000 the program generated. Mr. Fackler offered that latchkey be broken out and the information reviewed at the next meeting. Much discussion quickly went back and forth between the board and the audience. The parents present whose children were in the program highly support it. The board requested more information, specifically about the latchkey program. A special meeting will be held Thursday, September 12 at 6:00pm in the HS Auditorium to discuss the latchkey program.

MOTION by Roger Bacon, support by Russ Hubbard to call a Special Board meeting for Thursday, September 12, 2013 at 6:00pm in the HS Auditorium to discuss the latchkey program.

MOTION CARRIED (unanimous)

P. SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS:

1. Enrollment is the hot issue at the moment. We are really watching it. It is a scary factor out there. We expected it would be up. One family of 10 all but 1 of the students moved to the Caro district. The big scare is Section 25 with the money following each student not just students at Pioneer Work & Learn but our K-12 students as well. Mid-year we may need to look at layoffs or more combined classes. With enrollment down this also means the district will be receiving less state aid. Mrs. Baase asked about the number of School of Choice students. Mr. Palmer stated that the number is currently up but overall enrollment is down. The ISD will provide a report that shows for each district the number of School of Choice students.

Q. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

- o Mr. Fabbro: Enrollment is down 10 students. At the end of the summer marking period they had 3 students graduate and 10 earn their GED.
- o Mr. Wojno: The year is off to a good start. They have realigned job titles and he is really pleased with his secretarial staff. September 20th is Homecoming with a parade and bonfire on the 19th.
- o Mr. Haines: Last meeting he presented the bullying survey data. Any questions? He will be covering for Mrs. Dewey until she returns from her accident.
- o Mr. Marcy: We are up and running and the staff is excited.
- o Mr. Hoard: Everything is running smoothly right now.

R. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

- o Mr. Hubbard: The public is asking if the Halloween Parade can be moved to the street like it was. Mr. Palmer, Mr. Marcy and others: It is a matter of safety. The 1st and 2nd graders are harder to supervise as well be seen by vehicles when they are on the street. Also by having on the track there is a reduced risk of children be snatched due to parental custodial issues. Also, it provides a barrier so students can not hear the inappropriate comments of some adults.
- o Mr. Fackler: He has received several emails regarding the school district report card. Vassar is shown as yellow. There are 2 levels above as well as 2 levels below the yellow level. Do not take it too seriously yet as it is a new system.
- o Mr. Bacon: The candy for the homecoming parade last year cost \$400. Would the other board members be interested in donating money for the candy? The board members will be donating money for the candy. The money will be turned into Mrs. Peplinski.
- o Mr. Marcy: As with the latchkey program, we need accountability. When information is provided it should be in a power point or hard copy documentation. Mrs. Greenwood stated she gave the board members copies of documentation she created.
- o Mrs. Baase: In our defense, we are trying to conserve money and save programs. If you charge us with anything, charge us with being too conservative.

S. CLOSED SESSION:

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T. DATES TO REMEMBER:

September 19 – Homecoming parade and bonfire

September 20 – Homecoming game against Bay City All Saints

October 2 – Pupil Count Day

U. NEXT REGULAR OR SPECIAL MEETING:

September 12 – Special Meeting in the High School Auditorium @ 6:00pm

October 14 – Regular Meeting in the High School Auditorium @ 6:30pm

V. ADJOURNMENT:

1. MOTION by Kirk Van Wormer, support by Ben Guile to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm.

MOTION CARRIED

DATED: _____ SIGNED: _____

(Secretary)