

Cassopolis Public Schools
725 Center Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-0503

Board of Education
Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 27, 2015

Welcome: This regular meeting of the Cassopolis Board of Education was held on Monday, April 27, 2015 in the Board meeting room at Squires Educational Center and called to order at 7:02 p.m., as President Ward welcomed those attending.

Roll Call:

Members Present: George Calvert, Sue Horstmann, Deb Deubner, John Bright, Jesse Binns, Scott Ward

Members Absent: Lisa Cutting

Also present: Tracy Hertsel, Dave VanLue, Robyn Bright, Cindy Martynowicz, community members and media

George Calvert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda - **Moved by** Sue Horstmann, **supported by** John Bright to amend the agenda to add a new business-discussion item IX D, Bond Proposal, and to add an old business-action item X C Approval of Bond Proposal. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Moved by George Calvert, **supported by** John Bright to approve the agenda, as amended. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Approval of Minutes: **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** John Bright to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 13, 2015, as written. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Deubner, yes; Bright, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Communications or correspondence – None.

Reports, Information Items from School Staff –

Administration / Hertsel: Mr. Hertsel presented a plaque to Connie Fedore in appreciation of her 20 years of service with the district. Mrs. Fedore left the district earlier in the school year. He said that she worked in various departments and positions within the district and thanked her for her years of service.

Mr. Hertsel said that Cathy Murray and Sandy Rodgers retired earlier this year but were unable to attend tonight's meeting. He said that he would make sure they are duly recognized for their years of service.

Ross Beatty JSHS / VanLue: Mr. VanLue thanked everyone involved with the lock-in on the morning of the WNDU Schools Rule segments. He was not sure of the final number but said it was around 200 and that more students arrived at 5 a.m. We had close to 300 students present for the live shots. WNDU's reporter was very impressed with the turnout. He said it went smoothly and the kids were awesome. Mr. VanLue gave a special thanks to Emily Dussel, a junior who coordinated a lot of the event.

Mr. VanLue said that Brooke Brawley averaged out the 2015 ACT scores and the composite was 19, Michigan state average was 20.1 and the national average was 21, so we are right there. He said that we led higher than the state and national in writing and were close in other subjects. Mr. VanLue said it was a very positive two weeks for the district. Mr. VanLue asked Mrs. Patton to speak about the Michigan history competition.

Mrs. Patton said that this past Saturday was the Michigan history competition and we had a student that won the state competition giving a documentary. Dynisha Hackworth won first place and is going to nationals in June. Mrs. Patton said we also had 5th grade students participate in the youth division of the competition. Mrs. Leach is one of the volunteers. The team won state last year and again won first place. She is very proud of the children, and noted this is a research based program and they worked very hard on it after school.

Dynisha Hackworth said that her documentary was about slaves from Louisville, Kentucky and their story. She will compete at nationals in Washington, DC.

Food Service / Bright: Mrs. Bright said that the summer application for meals was submitted ahead of schedule. They will be serving at Sam Adams Elementary, Vandalia Community Center, Cass County Library, St. Paul's Open Arms, Brookside, Ross Beatty JSHS and the fairgrounds during fair week. Mrs. Bright said that in May they will launch a new munchable, which will be a pizza kit. If the kids like it, she will offer it on the menu next year.

Public Comment –

Dr. Fedore said that he and his wife had four children between them and all graduated from Cassopolis. All did very well in school here and went onto college. He said that a lot of this goes back to the home environment but school is very important and his children had good experiences in Cassopolis Public Schools.

Financials – March, 2015

Moved by John Bright, **supported by** Sue Horstmann that it is resolved that the Board of Education approves the payment of bills for the month of March as follows: General Fund \$250,656.63 and Food Service Fund \$39,537.69. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

New Business – Discussion Items

Lewis Cass ISD Budget Presentation – Mr. Hertsel welcomed Mr. Colby who would present their budget proposal. He said that this will be on the agenda for action at the May 11th meeting.

Bob Colby, Lewis Cass ISD Superintendent said that the ISD's across the state are obligated to annually present their annual budgets for action in a resolution. Mr. Colby said he will be presenting both their General Fund and Special Education Fund budgets. Mr. Colby said they expect their budget deficit to grow more next year but he is comfortable with the deficit. The reason they have a deficit is because they choose to do that in order to be able to support General Ed services at the local level. As the deficit in Special Education grows it becomes more concerning. He said they will change how General Ed is supported in the county. Mr. Colby said it will be less expensive and easier for locals to participate.

Mr. Colby then reviewed the Special Education budget. He said they will have a deficit but expect to end up better than projected for 2015-16. After that, they expect a higher deficit in this fund. Mr. Colby said that at least through next year the ISD will cover these expenses but in subsequent years local districts may be billed.

Mr. Colby said on that on finances in general, he feels the ISD has a very productive and effective shared business service going on with Cassopolis. It is working well for them and he thinks for Cassopolis as well.

Mr. Bright asked what Mr. Colby is hearing at the state level about the budget and upcoming election. Mr. Colby said that the Senate and House roll out their budgets intending to go to conference for resolution. He said the Governor is committed to keeping the retirement rate stable. He believes that component will survive conference committee. Mr. Colby believes Cassopolis' student funding may increase \$50-75 per student, however not all districts would be increased that amount. The May election will certainly impact the budget and he said polling numbers are not favorable. Mr. Colby said that a spokesperson from the Governor's office said there truly is no "plan b". The School Aid Fund would be impacted, if not this year, soon.

NEOLA Revised Policies, First Reading, Vol. 29, No. 2 – Mr. Hertsel said that passage of these revised policies will bring the district up to date. He would ask for approval at the next board meeting. There were no questions on the proposed revisions.

Proposed move of 6th grade to Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School – Mr. Hertsel thanked all Board members that were able to make the community meeting last week. He felt it important for the community to be able to speak and was glad to see people turn out and voice their opinion. They heard loud and clear that the community does not want 6th grade moved to the junior senior high school and he opened this for Board discussion.

Mrs. Deubner asked about the possibility of maintaining the 6-8th grade concept by moving teachers instead of kids. Mr. Hertsel said that may be possible when staffing is reviewed. They are now looking at the capacity of the elementary. The community group seemed to like the middle school concept. It is important for curriculum and staffing but also works better for the kids.

Mr. Ward said he agrees the volume of people that showed up was refreshing. The Board is elected by them to represent them. He said the option to move 6th to the high school wasn't an option to those at the meeting, they were interested in what can be done to create a middle school environment, to have 6-8th grades together. This is something the administration would have to work through in committee and then in Board meetings. He hopes to bring this plan to fruition.

Mrs. Horstmann said she thinks the concept is critical because of the curriculum alignment and it is the administration's responsibility to make sure we are aligned with standards and to provide proper education to our kids.

Bond Proposal – Dr. Calvert, Chair of the Building & Grounds Committee meeting, said that there are a lot of repairs that need to be done in our buildings. If we are going to keep our 38 year old high school operable we need to have these repairs made. The Board is proposing that this be put to the public for a vote.

Mr. Hertsel said the total now is \$3,339,000 and the main focus of the package would be at Ross Beatty. At Sam Adams Elementary there are 21 roofs that were not addressed in the new construction. These 21 roofs have wear and tear. There is a possibility if we act now the roofs can be coated and given an extension of 14-15 years. If we do nothing they have to be replaced and that would be 2-3 times the cost of repair. Also, the auditorium has water coming in the walls due to missing mortar in the joints. He said that we need to get the outside of the building fit for any weather condition. They have added technology money into the budget for this proposal. They also want to make sure the sign at Ross Beatty is a part of the proposal.

Mr. Ward said that four to five years ago the community came together and gave the district a vote of confidence when passing the bond for Sam Adams Elementary. Now we have the new building. The deficiencies at the high school aren't due to the fact that work wasn't done, there was not money to do the work. Add budget cuts in recent years to that, as certain repairs had to be cut. Mr. Ward said that we would be doing a dis-service to the high school students if we don't improve Ross Beatty. We want to be able to say that the district as a whole is up to standard and will be around another 30, 40 or 50 years.

Mr. Hertsel said that he was just informed of the timeline on this project and that is why he requested it be an action item tonight also. If the Board is not comfortable with that we could have a special meeting but the proposal has to be to legal counsel by this Friday at Noon.

Mr. Bright said that this bond proposal would be for the August election. He said that the district had a study done and the architect came up with what was needed to fix the buildings, the deficiencies and the costs associated with these repairs. The Building & Grounds Committee has met several times as to what is and is not acceptable and narrowed the proposal down to what is in front of you tonight. The committee comes to the Board with the recommendation to go forward.

Mr. Ward said looking at the proposal item by item, most of the money proposed is for the high school. There is some money in the proposed budget for high school classroom finishes as well as money for repairs and door replacements.

Mrs. Deubner asked if this addresses security at the high school. Mr. Hertsel said that is a different project that is out to bid now. When complete the high school security would be similar to that at SAES.

Mrs. Horstmann said that the bus garage is listed as needing repairs. Mr. Hertsel said there are definite necessities in that area. Mr. Ward said it is a very small part of the budget but the savings to do these repairs will bring the bus garage up to standard and make it more efficient.

Old Business – Action Items

Act on NEOLA Revised Policies, Second Reading, Vol. 29, No. 1 – **Moved by** Sue Horstmann, **supported by** John Bright that the following revised policies are approved, as presented. 1420, 2370.01, 3220, 5830, 7540.02, 7540.03, 7540.04, 8325, 8330, 8500, 8510, 8540, 9211 and 9800. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on move of 6th grade to Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School – **Moved by** John Bright, **supported by** Sue Horstmann that it is resolved the proposal to move 6th grade to Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School is no longer being considered as an option. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Bright, yes; Deubner, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Bond Proposal – **Moved by** Sue Horstmann, **supported by** George Calvert to approve the proposal for renovations to buildings designated in the bond. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Superintendent's Report – Mr. Hertsel reported as follows:

- Thanked Board members for attending last Monday's community meeting and said it was a great way to get input on a proposed concept.
- Will bring to the Board at an upcoming meeting an option for early release one Wednesday a month excluding September next year, in order for teachers to meet with principals on school improvement.
- Asked Board members to please RSVP by May 7th about the Adult/Alternative Education graduation dinner so they can accurate count for meals.

- On his upcoming evaluation he will be using the same instrument as in the past but will send it to Board members in a Friday update and ask they complete it. The completed form needs to be returned to Mrs. Martynowicz and she will then compile the results. This process was recommended by legal counsel.
- Congratulated Mrs. Patton, the Michigan history team as well as the individual going onto nationals.
- Thanked Mrs. Brawley and her volunteers as prom was a huge success.
- Mrs. Voss is not at tonight's meeting as she is working at McTeacher night.
- Noted having received official notification that Ross Beatty JSHS is now off of the priority list, which was a 5 year process.
- We have had just a couple of glitches with M-STEP testing but Mr. Diol has helped keep us on track.

Mrs. Deubner asked if there is a way we can help our student get to national competition in Washington DC. Mr. Hertsel said that he will get information from Mrs. Patton. Also, Mrs. Leach said she is looking into this as well and will share information with the Board when obtained.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Education it was **moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Jesse Binns, to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. All in favor.

Susan Horstmann, Secretary