

Cassopolis Public Schools
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Board of Education
Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 22, 2016

Welcome: This regular meeting of the Cassopolis Board of Education was held on Monday, February 22, 2016 in the Board meeting room at Squires Education Center and called to order at 7:00 p.m., as President Ward welcomed those attending.

Roll Call:

Members Present: George Calvert, Sue Horstmann, Amanda Smego, Jesse Binns, Lisa Cutting, Deb Deubner, Scott Ward

Members Absent: None

Also present: Tracy Hertsel, Becky Smith, Jeremy Carlisle, Dee Voss, Dave VanLue, Robyn Bright, John Bright, Cindy Martynowicz, staff member and media representative

Lisa Cutting led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda – Moved by Jesse Binns, **supported by** George Calvert to approve the agenda, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Horstmann, yes; Cutting, yes; Smego, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Approval of Minutes: **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Amanda Smego to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of February 8, 2016, as written. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Communications or correspondence – None.

Reports, Information Items from School Staff –

Ross Beatty JSHS / VanLue: Mr. VanLue gave an athletic update from Mr. Brawley. Boys basketball senior night is on Tuesday. We had three wrestlers qualify for the state tournament that will be held the first week in March. He thanked workers for the individual wrestling tournament that we hosted. The girls' basketball districts will be on February 29th at Bridgman, boys' basketball districts will be on March 7th versus Brandywine. Spring sports begins on March 14th.

Mr. VanLue congratulated FFA teams and individuals who participated in and advanced from regionals to state competition. He then reviewed the results of FFA regionals. State convention will be March 9-11th at Michigan State. Also, testing dates and times are available, and he thanked Mrs. Doll and Mrs. Brawley for working hard on this. Today, he, Mr. Brawley, Mr. Wernette and Mrs. Doll attended at truancy meeting at SMC to look at alleviating truancy issues. Mr. VanLue said he is tweaking the after school program and looking at alternative options to help the kids be successful.

Mrs. Deubner said she is proud of the kids in FFA and wrestling, noting that two kids are competing in both competitions. It is a good, solid group of kids.

Sam Adams ES / Voss: Mrs. Voss said that last Friday was the Cass County Spelling Bee at SMC. Our 4th grade team got 2nd place and Emily Carlisle received 2nd place overall for all 4th graders in individual competition. Our 5th grade got 2nd place and 5th place individual winner was Mikayla Williams. Our 6th grade got 1st place and the

overall winner in individual competition was Elizabeth Merckx. She thanked the coaches, Mrs. Carlisle, Ms. Gorham and Mrs. Stermer. It was noted that both 7th and 8th grade teams got 4th place. Mrs. Ward was a pronouncer and Mrs. Voss was a scorekeeper. Mrs. Voss said that they donated \$1,044.49 from the Pennies for Patients fundraiser and Mrs. Struble's class was the winner. Mrs. Voss said that there were 250 people at the Father-Daughter dance earlier this month.

Mrs. Voss said that she also attended the truancy meeting with the SAES team. They came up with ideas on how to help parents get kids to school. Representative Aaron Miller will be at SAES at 8:30 on the 29th to read to the 2nd graders. Also attending will be Senator Proos. McTeacher night is coming up, tentatively set for March 29th. The Title I parent night will be from 3:30-5pm on March 1st.

Food Service / Bright: Mrs. Bright said that she catered an event at SMC earlier today. There are many good things going on in Food Services. The department had fund equity to spend down and received equipment quotes for two pieces of large equipment. A new Accu Temp steamer will be installed this week. Also, a 40-inch griddle has been ordered and that will be shipped next week.

Grants & Projects / Carlisle: Mr. Carlisle said that he has been working with Mrs. Voss on a technology audit for the grant program to see where we are with equipment purchased from Title funds. They will be reaching out to the buildings as they want to make the equipment available to kids in the upcoming reading and math after school intervention program. This will be a good resource to help kids that need it the most.

Operations / Bright: Mr. Bright said that there is a lot going on with the bond projects. Mr. Bright explained an option for a new type of lock for classroom doors, where if there were ever an actual lock down the teacher would need to push just one button to secure the door. It also takes one button to unlock.

Mr. Ward said that as the remodeling at the high school will include replacing multiple interior doors, if we make this change with classroom doors at the high school, he also would like to consider having the elementary school classroom doors retro fitted.

Mr. Hertsel said that this new option is approved by the Fire Marshall. The cost for this option on new doors would be \$200-300 more per door (for 32-33 classroom doors) than for regular locks. You would be looking at an additional \$6,000-9,000 and get a huge safety upgrade. He hopes to take a serious look at this option.

Public Comment – None.

Financials – **Moved by** Lisa Cutting, **supported by** Sue Horstmann that the Board of Education approve the payment of bills for the month of January, 2016, as follows: General Fund, \$315, 621.53; Food Services Fund \$31,690.01; Debt Service Fund \$500.00; and, 2015 Bond Capital Projects Fund \$115,222.33. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Smego, yes; Deubner, yes; Cutting, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

New Business – Discussion items

Mr. Ward said that he asked the Superintendent to add three discussion items to tonight's agenda as a follow up to the February 8th meeting. Mr. Ward said he wanted to get input from the Board regarding the thought process on these issues to see if any item warranted additional discussion.

Public Information at School Board meetings – Mr. Ward said that question/answer sessions being permitted at Board meetings was asked for and his response was a concern that if we allowed open discussion we would be out of compliance with the Open Meetings Act, plus it could open the door for the chain of command to be bypassed. He asked for Board input.

Deb Deubner asked if it would be possible to have a type of public forum, with guidelines for the meeting to keep discussions under control. Mr. Ward said that in the past they have had quarterly community forums. In order to keep these informal and allow open dialogue, there can be no more than 2 Board members attend/ speak at the meeting. The Superintendent also attended these meetings, as did some members of the general public. It gave the general public an opportunity to ask questions in an informal environment. However, in the past the turnout at these meetings has been very minimal.

Mr. Hertsel said that he needs to schedule a meeting soon with parents of freshmen, sophomores and juniors to get input on suggestions for graduation dates in the next few years.

It was the consensus of Board members to schedule community forums, the first starting after spring break.

Ms. Cutting said she likes the idea as it would help others understand the process followed at Board meetings.

No "F" Policy – Mr. Ward said that the No F Policy came out of community concerns a few years ago. A concern has recently been brought to the Board to make the No F Policy stricter. He said he has heard a lot of people say that the policy as is has done a lot of good. He hasn't heard that it isn't strong enough. You would also have to make sure to have parents on board if making additional changes. Another concern is if we made the policy stricter that some students may give up if they weren't able to meet the criteria.

Mrs. Deubner said she would rather see students take tougher classes and get even a C rather than to take the easiest classes possible. Our district standard is already higher than the state mandates and she would hate to see it change. She is in favor of maintaining weekly checks.

Dr. Calvert concurred.

Ms. Cutting did not want to change the policy.

Mr. Ward asked for Mr. VanLue's comments. Mr. VanLue said he likes the policy as is, does not want to make changes. The kids want to keep their grades up so they can play sports. He feels the standard is high and he likes it that way.

Mrs. Horstmann asked if there needed to be any tweaking on timing or qualifications. If a student's behavior and grades change post season maybe that should be addressed. Mr. VanLue said Mr. Brawley is more well equipped to answer but he will speak about students out of season and how best to continue supporting them. This can be discussed at the March 14th Athletic Committee meeting.

Letter dated December 16, 2015 – Mr. Ward said that Board members have had an opportunity to review the letter and asked if there is a desire by the Board to move forward. There was a lot of content in the letter that did not pertain to the subject of the letter. He personally doesn't feel that this merits moving forward.

Mrs. Deubner said that academic intervention is being done, even expanded.

Mr. Binns said he thinks there should be some other program options available throughout the summer. He felt students having another goal over the summer would help.

Dr. Calvert said his suggestion is to take note of the comments, learn from them and move on. He does not see any further changes being needed at this time.

Mrs. Horstmann said there was content in the letter about administration and asked if we are going to leave it or pursue. Mr. Hertsel said his recommendation would be to not pursue.

Mr. Ward asked if there are any additional comments regarding the letter. There were no additional comments from Board members.

Old Business – Action Items

MASB Region 6 Representative – **Moved by** Deb Deubner, **supported by** Jesse Binns that the Board cast its one vote for MASB Region 6 Representative to Joanne Wilson. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Deubner, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Authorize Board President to speak on behalf of the full Board of Education – **Moved by** Deb Deubner, **supported by** Jesse Binns that the Board President be authorized to provide a written response on behalf of the Board of Education to Our Fathers Family Keepers Ministries.

Mrs. Deubner said this would give the Board President limited authority to discuss this issue. There was discussion about the advantage to making the motion broader or general. Mr. Hertsel said that legal counsel was involved in this discussion. Mr. Ward said that if there are ever similar situations they can be addressed at that time.

Motion carried 7-0, as follows: Cutting, yes; Binns, yes; Deubner, yes; Horstmann, yes; Smego, yes; Calvert, yes; Ward, yes.

Superintendent Report – Mr. Hertsel reported as follows:

- There was wind damage last week to the athletic complex restroom and also to the greenhouse.
- The bond projects are moving along and we will be wrapping up the bidding over the next couple of weeks.
- Due to timelines, he is recommending a special Board meeting on Wednesday, March 2nd at 7 pm. There are some bids that will be time sensitive and having this special meeting will allow us to stay within the required deadlines.
- Last week he and Mr. Bright went to Special-Lite in Decatur for a demo of a new locking device. They have a new glass that, while not bullet proof, is designed to be safety proof enough to give at least 20 minutes lead time from the start of an incident. This is being considered for the high school as an alternate bid. He expects to recommend this but it will depend on the bid tabulations.
- Thanked Robyn for ordering the new flags, not only for the Board meeting room but also for Sam Adams Elementary and Ross Beatty JSHS.
- Thanked Mr. Brawley for hosting wrestling districts and said we received many compliments about the building.
- Thanked Mr. Bright for bringing his crew in to open the lots the day of wrestling districts.
- The Robo Rangers had a test run of the robot in Coloma last weekend.
- Thanked Mr. Carlisle for his work on the web site and stated that we are always looking for new pictures for Facebook or the web site, so please send them to Mr. Carlisle.

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 8:01 pm. All in favor.

Susan Horstmann, Secretary