

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

**Board of Education  
Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
August 8, 2016**

Welcome: This regular meeting of the Cassopolis Board of Education was held on Monday, August 8, 2016 in the Board meeting room at Squires Education Center, and called to order at 7:02 p.m., as President Ward welcomed those attending.

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

Also present: Tracy Hertsel, David VanLue, Matt Brawley, Robyn Bright, John Bright

Deb Deubner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Approval of Minutes: Moved by George Calvert, supported by Lisa Cutting to approve minutes from the regular meeting of July 25, 2016, as written. Motion carried 7-0, as follows: Cutting, yes; Binns, yes; Deubner, yes; Sue Horstmann, yes; Amanda Smego, yes; Calvert, yes; Ward, yes.

Communications and correspondence – None.

Reports, Information Items from School Staff – Robyn Bright reported that 3,760 meals were served at the Cass County Fair last week. She reported many positive comments from the public.

Public Comment – Jeanne Garber, of 16565 Lakeview Drive, Vandalia, read the following: “I was driving around Donnell Lake and noticed two signs in a yard that stated ‘Currently in the Cassopolis High School there is no incentive to achieve excellence in Academics greater than a ‘D-.’ The sign had a drawing of several youth with one saying, ‘What is the problem with a D-? A D-is a passing grade.’ The second sign stated Throughout their 4 years of high school students need only a D- grade in each class to participate in sports, extracurricular activities and even earn a high school diploma. The sign had a drawing again, with a girl saying, ‘Why do better, if I don’t have to?’”

Mrs. Garber continued - "I have a couple of issues with these signs:"

1. There are plenty of incentives and help for these students to achieve in school.
2. There are awards, scholarships, recognition and just plain old "feel good about yourself incentives." The students need to want to be successful and that starts at home. I agree a D- is not a very lofty goal, but it's higher than what some parents expect and accept. It has been tried in the past to implement a 'C' average with no failing grades, but many for the top athletes were sitting on the bench and not playing because of their grades, thus losing what little interest they had in their education.
3. I don't believe there is one teacher, administrator, or a member of the support staff of Cassopolis Public Schools who would not like to see each and every student earn all "A's," but the operative word here is earn. I admire and applaud the employees of CPS for not dumbing down their requirements or lowering their standards in order for everyone to receive an "A".
4. Every one of these people are in their positions because they care about the students and want each one of them to succeed. The people behind these signs should try and start an after school tutoring program to help the students raise their grades and feel better about themselves instead of criticizing the people who are helping. Also, they could possibly go to the student's homes and offer parenting classes, because it appears the sign people have all the answers.
5. My question to the people behind this attack on the schools and everyone, who is trying to help the students of our community is 'when your children were in high school and if and when they graduated, what was the academic eligibility policy and where were you then?' Were you leading the charge to raise the requirements, or were you just sitting back and hoping your student would get by and graduate? Thank you, now I have other fires to put out. "

#### New Business – Discussion Items

**Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School Handbook** - Mr. VanLue highlighted some of the important parts of the Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School handbook. Each Board member was encouraged to review the handbook and get suggestions back to Mr. VanLue either by phone or email. Mr. VanLue would like the Board to approve the handbook at the next Board meeting.

**Running Track / Football Track** - Tony Leininger from Carmi Design gave a Bond Construction update with most of the projects being substantially complete. Punchlists will be starting on Wednesday of this week. The windows are in transit for Ross Beatty and should be in district this week. The technology and bus garage budgets have been on hold to make sure that the necessary items closet to student learning were addressed first. The Running Track was covered next and Mr. Leininger explained how the two foot difference in elevations came about after the track was removed. Upon further research, it was found that the Football Field was also off two feet from north to south. At that point, Carmi went into design phase and it took nearly 60 days to gather all of the necessary information for an informed decision. A comprehensive plan was handed out to the Board with a timeline that would work with the normal weather conditions in Southwest Michigan.

Mr. Ward spoke as a member from the Building and Grounds Committee and advised the whole Board that he would like the Board to consider a modified schedule that would allow for three home varsity football games and all the sub varsity football games in September. The committee also recommended that all varsity games would be free to the public and would allow the band to play, cheerleaders to cheer, boosters to raise money and most of all give seniors their homecoming and senior night. Mr. Leininger did caution the that the weather could increase the cost of the project by delaying the project a month and a half. The total cost of the project was estimated and \$359,000.00 without the weather conditions figured in.

Dr. Calvert, Chairman of Building and Grounds said it was important for the seniors to have their homecoming and senior night.

#### Old Business – Action Item

Running Track / Football Field: **Moved by** Lisa Cutting and **supported by** Amanda Smego to approve change orders due to unacceptable existing site elevations for the Football Field and Running Track for an amount of \$359,000.00 with the possibility of additional costs, if the schedule is delayed to accommodate the 2016 Fall Football Schedule. Motion carried, 7-0 as follows: Cutting, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Deubner, yes; Smego, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

#### Superintendent's Report - Mr. Hertsel reported as follows:

- Thanked Robyn and her staff for exceptional week at the Cass County Fair serving breakfasts and lunches.
- Thanked all the district staff that volunteered at the booth at the fair.
- The auditors are in this week looking at various business office functions.
- Thanked Mr. Bright and the community for their input about the Running Track and Football Field.
- Mrs. Martynowicz is out for a few days for healing after a medical procedure.
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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 7:55 p.m.