

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

**Board of Education
Minutes
Regular Meeting
May 14, 2018**

Welcome: This regular meeting of the Cassopolis Board of Education was held on Monday, May 14, 2018 in the Board meeting room at Squires Education Center, and called to order at 6:30 p.m., as President Ward welcomed those attending.

Roll Call: Members present: George Calvert, Sue Horstmann (arrived at 6:31 p.m.), Amanda Smego, Jesse Binns, Lisa Cutting, Deb Deubner, Scott Ward

Also present: Dr. Angela Piazza, Renee Manno, Brooke Brawley, Geri Vlasticak, Karen Blaha, Glen Barr, Dave VanLue, Jeff Wernette, Jason Messner, Cindy Martynowicz, students, parents, members of the community, and the press.

George Calvert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Ward welcomed all to tonight's meeting of the School Board of Education. He stated that the purpose of this public meeting is to conduct the business of the School Corporation and is not to be considered a public community meeting. There will be time for public participation as indicated by the agenda.

Mission: To ensure that all students achieve the educational and life skills necessary to be successful in today's ever-changing society.

Vision: All students will demonstrate the academic, technological, and cultural competencies necessary to compete in a global society.

We will keep these statements at the forefront of all business decisions.

Approval of the Agenda: **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Jesse Binns 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** Amanda Smego, **supported by** Lisa Cutting to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2018 special meeting, as written. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Smego, yes; Deubner, yes; Cutting, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Superintendent's Report:

New Tech Presentation: Ms. Manno introduced three of the four teachers who participated in the New Tech Secondary Residency last month. Attending to review their experience with the Board were: Julie Herwick, Carey May and Jessica Pompey. Rachele Ward attended the residency but was unable to attend tonight's Board meeting due to a prior commitment.

Curriculum Development: Mrs. Blaha introduced Carey May and Kylee Ride who reviewed two projects for New Tech that they began to outline. They spoke of how they came up with the project ideas and formulated the steps involved and were looking forward to the program's implementation.

Literacy Program: Mrs. Blaha distributed information to Board members including curriculum map samples. She reviewed this information. Mrs. Blaha said that curriculum guides for K-8 will be ready and given to teachers before they leave for the summer.

Board Committee Reports:

Athletic: Mrs. Deubner said that she has been to several athletic events recently and is very proud of our kids.

Building & Grounds/Transportation: No report.

Curriculum: No report.

Personnel/Finance: Mrs. Horstmann said that the Personnel Committee met last week and discussed job descriptions. The Superintendent will be updating all job description.

New Business – Discussion Items:

Lewis Cass ISD 2018-19 Budget Presentation: Brent Holcomb, Lewis Cass ISD Superintendent distributed copies of the ISD's strategic plan to Board members. Mr. Holcomb then reviewed their proposed 2018-19 budgets.

Proposal for new position – Reading Specialist/RTI Building Coach K-12: Dr. Piazza thanked all for coming to tonight's meeting. Dr. Piazza then read her statement from the April 30th meeting:

"When I took the position of Superintendent, I was charged to assess and analyze the district's current status of operations, from business & fiscal operations to the academic, curricula and instructional practices currently being implemented. Together with the administrative team, the District's data trends were analyzed and an in-depth root cause analysis was conducted. Based on their assessment of the analysis and working extensively with the entire leadership team, I have learned their areas of strength as well as their passions. It is with these areas of strength in mind that I would like to propose a restructuring of the Administrative team.

The proposed restructuring is to provide the best supports for our students, to meet the needs of our District and move the District forward to be the District that this community and our students deserve. In order to restructure our team, tonight's meeting is a formality of the first phase."

Proposal for new position – Coordinator of Special Programs: Dr. Piazza said that in this position she would combine some administrative positions already in place. The person in this position would oversee Special Education and Adult/Alternative Education.

Proposal for new position – K-12 Literacy Coordinator: Dr. Piazza asked Mrs. Blaha to review the specifics for this position. Mrs. Blaha did so and said that this would be a district-level position.

Dr. Piazza said that the remaining job descriptions are updates of current job descriptions, which included:

Proposal of updated job descriptions: Elementary Principal and Secondary Principal: These two job descriptions are updates to the original job description.

Proposal of updated job descriptions: Elementary Assistant Principal and Secondary Assistant Principal: These two job descriptions are updates to the originals; however, the Secondary Assistant Principal position has some changes from the original.

Proposal of updated job description – Teacher/Athletic Director: Dr. Piazza said that the current person serving as A.D. also is Dean of Students. She is recommending this be changed to a former configuration which is Teacher/A.D. that would allow more flexibility in the schedule.

Proposal of updated job description – Music Teacher: Dr. Piazza said that this is also an updated job description and would bring Music back to students K-12.

Dr. Piazza said that she would bring a job description for Media Specialist to the Board at another time, as that also needs to be updated.

Old Business – Action Items:

Lewis Cass 2018-19 Budget: **Moved by** Lisa Cutting, **supported by** George Calvert that it is hereby resolved the Lewis Cass ISD 2018-19 budget is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Deubner, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on proposal for new position – Reading Specialist / RTI Building Coach K-12: **Moved by** Jesse Binns, **supported by** Deb Deubner that the position of Coordinator of Special Programs is approved, as presented, beginning with the 2018-19 school year. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Cutting, yes; Binns, yes; Deubner, yes; Horstmann, yes; Smego, yes; Calvert, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on proposal for new position – Coordinator of Special Programs: **Moved by** Amanda Smego, **supported by** George Calvert that it is hereby resolved the position of Coordinator of Special Programs is approved, as presented, beginning with the 2018-19 school year. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Cutting, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Deubner, yes; Smego, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on proposal for new position – K-12 Literacy Coordinator: **Moved by** Deb Deubner, **supported by** Jesse Binns that the position of K-12 Literacy Coordinator is approved, as presented, beginning with the 2018-19 school year. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Deubner, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on updated job description – Elementary Principal: **Moved by** Sue Horstmann, **supported by** Lisa Cutting that the updated job description for Elementary Principal is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Cutting, yes; Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on updated job description – Secondary Principal: **Moved by** Jesse Binns, **supported by** Deb Deubner that the updated job description for Secondary Principal is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Smego, yes; Binns, yes; Cutting, yes; Deubner, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on updated job description – Elementary Assistant Principal: **Moved by** Amanda Smego, **supported by** George Calvert that the updated job description for Elementary Assistant Principal is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Horstmann, yes; Cutting, yes; Smego, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on updated job description – Secondary Assistant Principal: **Moved by** Deb Deubner, **supported by** Jesse Binns that the updated job description for Secondary Assistant Principal is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on updated job description – Teacher/Athletic Director: **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Deb Deubner the updated job description for Teacher/Athletic Director is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Smego, yes; Deubner, yes; Cutting, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Act on updated job description – Music Teacher: **Moved by** Jesse Binns, **supported by** Lisa Cutting the updated job description for Music Teacher is approved, as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Deubner, yes; Smego, yes; Ward, yes.

Public Comment:

Mr. Ward read the following into the record regarding public participation at Board meetings:

- “1. Attendees may only speak during ‘Public Comment’ as stated on the agenda.
2. Participants must, when approaching the podium, state their name and address and group affiliation, if appropriate.
3. There is a five (5) minute time limit by a participant. This will be monitored.
4. Comments are to be addressed to the Board, not to staff or others.
5. Statements are to be directed to the presiding officer; Board members may not be addressed or questioned individually.
6. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.
7. Public comment shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes, however this may be extended at the discretion of the presiding officer.
8. NOTE: Board members cannot reply to questions during the Board meeting.”

John Winfrey, 1000 Oak Brook Drive, Ann Arbor, MI, with Merit Networking Mr. Winfrey said that he was speaking because the Cass County Medical Care Facility has been trying to work with the administration to get fiber at their facility. The proposal has been submitted to the District and is ready for signature. Mr. Winfrey asked the Board please sign the agreement so they can move forward.

Lora Martin, 320 S. Fulton Street, Cassopolis, said she has a concern about the proposed restructuring. Mrs. Martin said that parents are very upset and feel there is secrecy going on about these changes. They have been unable to get answers and she is hearing concerns from a lot of kids.

Carol Montavon Bealor, 61164 Cass Road, Cassopolis, said that she is the parent of an 8th grader at Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School. Mrs. Bealor said that she is appreciative of the Board’s public service, however is concerned with how this part of the meeting started, with the Board President reading the rules to them. Mrs. Bealor said the message received was that they are not wanted here. She is very upset also that the students have been so upset about the “antics” going on. Mrs. Bealor feels the students should have gotten some reassurance from the Superintendent or Board.

Loretta Bowers, 20164 Bulhand Street, Cassopolis, read the following statement:

“Dear Dr. Piazza and Board of Education Members,
I’m speaking on behalf as a concerned citizen of this community and also as a building secretary of Sam Adams Elementary School since February 1992.

Since our District is exploring the option of restructuring, I would love to see Mrs. Voss and Mrs. Stermer remain as our current principal and assistant principal. I am in favor of improving our District's image and improving our test scores but please give Mrs. Voss and Mrs. Stermer the opportunity to be part of this plan.

Mrs. Voss and Mrs. Stermer have put their heart and soul into the needs of this community by building relationships and rapport with our students, parents and staff.

With all of my heart, I believe without Mrs. Voss and Mrs. Stermer's leadership at Sam Adams Elementary School, the restructuring plan will have negative consequences in the student enrollment at our building. Thank you."

Shelly Johnson, 16133 Indian Valley Street, Schoolcraft, said she is all for Project Based Learning, her art class at the high school already does so. Mrs. Johnson said that Mr. VanLue is one of the biggest cheerleaders of PBL, he cares about every student and the kids depend on him. He makes kids and parents proud to be here. Mrs. Johnson said she can work for anyone but can work with Mr. VanLue, he knows how to work with kids. PBL is a great thing, teachers have bought into it, but she feels that they will be losing their foundation if Mr. VanLue goes. Mrs. Johnson said that Mr. VanLue is the 4th building principal in the 12 years she has been with the district. The kids need consistency.

Marty McGinn, 727 Sassafras Lane, Niles, said that he is a junior high math teacher and the Cross-Country coach. Mr. McGinn said that the school and community are built on positive relationships. He left the District a few years ago and took a pay cut to return to the District last year. Mr. McGinn said he came back because of the positive relationships. He said that no one is better at building positive relationships than Mr. VanLue. Mr. McGinn asked the Board not lose sight of what makes us great, and that is our positive relationships.

Jerry Hamilton, 21275 Sail Bay Drive, Cassopolis asked why this plan seemed to be developed in secret. He is not opposed to this approach but wondered why we didn't talk to a school with an existing New Tech program to ask their success rate. Mr. Hamilton said he was unable to find data on New Tech schools around the country. He feels this restructuring plan should have been announced publicly before it got to this point. He has a granddaughter in 8th grade, and he has been to several of Mr. VanLue's meetings to honor the A/B Honor Roll students. Mr. Hamilton feels that Mr. VanLue's optimism is great and feels he is a resource that this school should not be losing.

Lesley Steensma, 22323 Forest Avenue, Cassopolis asked the Board to please consider the community and the kids, as well as both of our principals. New Tech is a new program, why can't we just give the principals a chance to make it better. Mrs. Steensma said she thinks we need to give Mr. VanLue and Mrs. Voss a chance.

Kelly Martin-Sanchez, 320 S. Fulton Street, Cassopolis said she is a junior at the high school and doesn't think it fair that their feelings aren't being taken into consideration. Kelly said that she loves both of the principals and doesn't understand or appreciate these changes. She said that it seems the Board doesn't care and would like some reassurance; she is scared and doesn't understand why the students weren't asked their opinions first. She said that the principals truly care about the students and she does not want them removed.

Terryn Williams, 975 Woods Edge Drive, Niles, said she is a junior at the high school. She lives in Niles but chose to come to Cassopolis. She loves everything about New Tech but doesn't agree with the principals being gone. Terryn said she could go to Niles but chose to stay because of the people in her school. The students are scared and don't know what is going to happen. She said it is overwhelming and she feels both principals deserve a chance to be a part of New Tech.

Miscellaneous Administrative Items: Mr. Ward read the following items into the record:

May 16 National Honor Society Induction @ RBHS, 6:30 p.m.
May 23 Senior Awards Night @ RBHS, 6:00-8:30 p.m.
May 28 Memorial Day / No School for Students or Staff
May 29 Special Board Meeting @ Squires Education Center, 6:30 p.m.
May 31 Spring Band Concert @ RBHS, Grades 5-12, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
June 3 Graduation, 2 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Education it was **moved by** George Calvert and **supported by** Jesse Binns to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Susan Horstmann, Secretary