

Minute of the Swan Valley School District #92 Special Board Meeting
Public Input
March 3, 2014

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at 6:03 and led the board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Board Members in attendance were Chairman Tara Hicks, Vice-Chairman Joseph Lundquist, Trustee Bill Steffes. Others in attendance: Superintendent Dan Keck, Board Clerk Fran Howell

Patrons in attendance: Tom Walsh, Ann Walsh, Ron Frazell, June Winterfeld, Delbert Winterfeld, Mark Lundquist, Kate Johnson, Jared Johnson, Audi Sutheimer, Rayni Kopp, Teresa Ashment, Andrea Ashment, Jeff Ashment, Chenoa Allen, Mike Allen, Daryl Metzger, Jenny Lundquist, Jake Jacobson, Lee Coveny, Michael Jacobson, Ciera Metzger, Angie Metzger, Sharon Hunter, Cody Hunter, Joyce Hincks, Amy Ausland, Madisyn Ausland, Joy Ghetia, Margie Snider, Blake Jacobson, Amy Sailer, Kelly Jacobson, EllaRae Hasselstrom, Dusty Jacobson, Melanie Jacobson, Jessica Poole, Laura Baarda, Amy Page, Tristyn Page, Joanne Hincks, Joet Zohner, Ben Lundquist, Chelsea Lundquist, Jamie Pruett, Katie Williams, Brandy Urrutia, Steve Griffel, Anna Griffel, Troy Vias, Shawn Hamlin, Cecily Martinez, Pauline Scholes, Lanae Jacobson, Jayda Jorgensen, Deputy Brad Goode.

3. Chairman Hicks introduced the guidelines for the meeting and stated that there is no present crisis, and the board wants to hear input on possible things to do to tighten up the budget, and to be educated. She stated the board wants more public input in the future. She asked that input be phrased as input, and there was to be no questions. She also limited comments to 3 minutes per topic.

4. Topic: *High School Bus*. Mr. Keck shared a slide, which explained ways to save dollars with the current high school bus situation.

a. Ron Peterson: He is concerned about the attributes of both schools, and would like the board to look at curriculum, special high schools, and would also like to see the ability of parents to choose an educational approach for their children preserved.

b. Audi Sutheimer: She doesn't want to see the Idaho Falls option end. She feels that making a possible two trips to Ririe a day doesn't save money. She feels that a kid losing the option to go to a special high school is unfair. She stated that academics at both schools are arguable, and Idaho Falls has more courses. She finally stated that if we left our partnership with Idaho Falls that we might lose the ability to go back there.

c. Mike Allen: He expressed some confusion on contracting with high schools. He wondered how parents have input with the high schools once students leave here. (*Note: Mr. Allen was hard to hear as he did not speak clearly into the microphone*)

d. Sharon Hunter: She expressed how her older son does well at Idaho Falls but her younger son would not do well at Idaho Falls. She wondered what curriculum is best for her children. She will "pitch a fit" if her older son has to leave Idaho Falls HS.

- e. Joy Ghetia: She pointed out that tuition is less expensive at Idaho Falls than Ririe. She felt that those savings would offset the cost for the additional mileage, and she also wondered what the bus driver was going to do all day, that making two trips would make no sense. Her son, she stated, would not have survived going to Ririe, because he loved the diversity at Idaho Falls, and loved the AP classes there. She stated that Ririe is not for all kids.
 - f. Tom Walsh: He has been assessing academics at Idaho Falls and feels there is better AP classes and college credits available there. He also stated that tuition costs at college can be saved by going to Idaho Falls and that students can be one semester ahead by taking classes. He feels that since we want to get our kids ready for college that Idaho Falls is better. He stated that parents need freedom of choice instead of dictation.
 - g. Cecily Martinez: deferred comments
 - h. Pauline Scholes: deferred comments
 - i. Ann Walsh: She expressed concern with what goes on with the children here. She wondered what the savings would be as part of the budget. She also said that children need choice.
 - j. Andy Lundquist: He didn't see the cost savings as significant. He wants to see success with kids going to Idaho Falls because he didn't observe that personally when he was in high school. He said that decisions fall to the parents, and shame on parents if their children aren't successful.
 - k. Margie Snider: She feels that it's great at both schools and that her kids have gone to both Ririe and Idaho Falls. She said they wanted out of Ririe.
5. Topic: *Budget*. Mr. Keck gave an introduction and reiterated that we are not in a budget crisis, the board just wants to consider things. He showed a list of 17 possible cost cutting items, and said he would type additional suggestions on the list as we proceeded.
- a. Ron Peterson: He felt that there are two items highly overspent, which are salary and technical related. He indicated that when he was on the board that the salary schedule was 1% above the state's salary schedule to attract quality teachers. He supports doing that within reason. He also feels that the student-teacher ratio is too low, and that we lose 1-2 aides. He suggested contact positions instead of salaried positions. He suggested reducing the local bus routes to one. He wondered if we need full size buses to bus kids. He stated that the district car was originally for driver's education, and since we have discontinued that service that we sell the car and save the cost of gas and insurance.
 - b. Audi Sutheimer: She is concerned about the district benefits package, and feels that it is not viable due to costs for 100% premium coverage any longer. She suggested that we shop the health exchange for coverage. She said we are discriminately offering a health care package to the superintendent's family, and feels it is illegal. If the district continues on with this "illegal practice" she'll pursue determining her belief of what she feels is illegal.
 - c. Chenoa Allen: She pointed out errors in the budget submitted to the state, and said that the SDE has backed up some of her findings. She requested that the state form budget be published on the school website. She asked some rhetorical questions. How can the public have confidence in your budget? Why should the public vote to increase property taxes? She wondered about

the budget for the next year, and is wondering about the big picture. She has reviewed the accounting sheets and has noted increases and decreases over the year. For two years administrative costs have increased and revenues decreased. She opposes cut in salaries and benefits for teachers. She noted the transfers out to technology, food service, and Title 1. She wonders how to make cuts.

- d. Joy Ghetia: She wished to enlighten the public. She stated that losing employment was a cost cutting measure for the school. She reviewed her 15-year employment with the school and what her successes were. She stated that the board needs to be a good and faithful servant with taxpayers' dollars.
 - e. Tom Walsh: He feels that cuts can be done without sacrificing quality. He had talked to the SDE and sees a need for a part time superintendent. He suggested elevating Marie Hammon to head teacher and have a part time superintendent to just work with the budget. He, too, noted the budget errors and suggested that IASBO and the SDE could be a resource to work with. He opposes cutting salaries or benefits for the teachers. He wondered about grant writing being gone, and gave examples of grants that private foundations offer. He suggested the district bring in a grant writer.
 - f. Cecily Martinez: deferred commenting
 - g. Pauline Scholes: She wanted to address cost savings, and wondered if the district justifies a full time superintendent. She loves the present teachers and does not want to see any changes. She feels that the supply budgets should be kept the same. She wondered if iSchool was meant to replace PowerSchool. She would like to see a reduction in staff, as the teacher-student ratio is low.
 - h. Anne Walsh: She wanted to reiterate her concerns with what happens with the school children here. She stated that students deserve the best education. She wondered why Swan Valley needs to be an iSchool without the funding for it. She opposes an increased levy and opposes paying an administrator in excess of \$100,00.00. There is an obligation to the students and what is conducted should be above board and the best education. She doesn't want a raise in taxes to pay for an administrator.
 - i. Dusty Jacobson: He thanked the board for all they are doing and knows they are trying their best. He said shame on us who are making radical moves and pointing fingers. He suggested pitching in and supporting the school, and being proud of it.
6. Topic: 2014-2015 Calendar. Mr. Keck projected the proposed 14-15 calendar that had hours listed along with the days.
- a. Ron Peterson: He feels that there are ways to improve and would like to see approximately 175-180 days. If the district is going to excel, excellence belongs in the classroom. He thinks we are short by 5 days at a minimum. He also thinks that teachers have too many workdays. He suggested shortening vacation days, and that ski days are used for in-service and workdays. He suggested moving the teacher workday scheduled on 3/20/15 to 3/27/15.
 - b. Audi Sutheimer: She stated that the proposed calendar only adds one day more than this year's calendar. She referred to a quality vs. quantity argument. She stated that her kids are home schooled because of our school

calendar. She also wanted to call out the board for having a recent snow day and stated that it was ridiculous.

- c. Mike Allen: His one comment was that he wants to break tradition.
 - d. Joy Ghetia: She wants to see more days.
 - e. Cecily Martinez: She thinks other high school kids are well ahead because they've had more time in school. She wondered why we couldn't be the best.
 - f. Pauline Scholes: deferred comments
 - g. Ann Walsh: deferred comments
 - h. Marie Hammon: She stated that she thinks the proposed work days are adequate due to the need of preparing end of quarter grades, and getting ones classroom ready for the start of school or the end of school. She stated that the community at large participated in a calendar survey, and a committee worked on the calendar taking the survey results in consideration.
 - i. Tom Walsh: He stated that we don't need to be hamstrung between Labor Day and Memorial Day. He said that since there are only 189 days in that time frame there are not many school days left to utilize unless the calendar is expanded beyond Memorial Day weekend. He stated that the state of Idaho is low in required minimum hours.
7. Topic: *Plant Facility Levy*. Mr. Keck was asked by the board to put together a slide to teach them and the public a little about the levy. Before he showed the slide he addressed the emergency school closure by explaining the protocol, and he also answered some calendar concerns and described how it was developed. At this point Chenoa interjected that she felt the survey was faulty, and thinks that hours should be shorter and the days go longer. Mr. Keck then got back to the topic and described what a Plant Facility Levy is used for. He described the length of time and the dollar amount, and gave projected increased levy rates and amounts. The majority of this year's dollars have been used to help with the heating system repairs this year. He stated that projected uses for an increased levy would be to purchase a new bus, strip, sand, and varnish the gym floor, to cover the garage floor with sealants, and to soundproof the gymnasium as well as to continuing to support the heating system repairs.
- a. Ron Peterson: He stated that he was appalled that the depreciation of the buses had not been used to save up for a new bus. He stated that the current levy of \$30,000.00 has been in place for about 30 years. He wondered if there was a need to increase the levy to help with budget issues. He doesn't think there is.
 - b. Audi Sutheimer: She doesn't think a levy will pass, and that everyone she has spoke with is negative about passing one, and that we aren't good stewards of the money. She stated that the levy wouldn't pass. She also suggested hiring a grant writer to pay for technology.
 - c. Chenoa Allen: deferred commenting
 - d. Joy Ghetia: deferred commenting
 - e. Tom Walsh: deferred commenting
 - f. Cecily Martinez: deferred commenting
 - g. Pauline Scholes: deferred commenting
 - h. Ann Walsh: deferred commenting

- i. Ron Peterson: He asked about the funds in the M&O and the General Fund and was confused if it was the same fund.
 - j. Tom Walsh: He approached the microphone without being called on and talked more about grants.
 - k. Bill Steffes: He responded that the school had a grant writer and that grant writer had failed. He indicated that some of the schools grant applicants had been successful, but it's hard to get a grant.
8. Chairman Hicks thanked the audience for their input, and the meeting adjourned at 7:47.

*Approved by Chairman Hicks
Signed copy on file in District Office*

*Approved by Clerk Howell
Signed copy on file in District Office*

3/12/14
Date