

The Grinnell-Newburg board of Education met in Special Session on January 23, 2013, at the City Council Chambers, 927 4th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Grinnell, Iowa 50112

Members Present: Jeff Smith, Doug Cameron, Barbara Brown, Jeff Knobloch, Leo Lease, and Claire Moisan. Board member Wilhelm arrived at 6:35 pm. Also in attendance at the table: Superintendent Todd Abrahamson, Business Manager J.T. Anderson, and Board Secretary Susan Kriegel

Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Sarah Seney, Sara Hegg-Dunne, Kevin Seney

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

President Smith called the special board meeting to order at 6:06 pm. Board Secretary Susan Kriegel called the roll. Six members were in attendance.

2. Approve of Consent Agenda

Motion by Brown, second by Knobloch. Motion carried.

3. Communications from the Public

The board listened to comments and questions from the audience. Comments included do not change the present school system. Questions included what is the best way to contact the district? The response was talk to a board member or to the superintendent. The best way for a discussion is direct contact. Concerned citizens have a list of questions for the board. Superintendent Abrahamson stated there will be additional public forums to discuss the building project. Bob Mann will be the moderator for the forums. The board and the superintendent would appreciate having the questions sent to them prior to the forums. If the process of eminent domain is approved this decision does not mean the acquisition of the land. The link for the DLR report/building project will be moved to the main page of the website. There is a concern regarding empty school buildings, a potential loss of jobs, and the value of homes purchased close by existing school buildings. The board was reminded to continue reviewing the 1:1 project. They are to ask questions on how this new project is proceeding.

4. New Business

A. Notice of intent to approve acquisition of real estate by eminent domain

The board listened to questions from the audience regarding taxes, capital gain tax, water run off from the site, concern about the production of products close by this property, the industrial zone sites surrounding this property, and concern about asbestos in the buildings located on the site. Superintendent Abrahamson indicated the seller is asking 1.3 million for the property, the property has been appraised at \$425,000. Eminent domain is not a purchase agreement. There is a process that needs to be followed. The district can back out at any time during this process. If the district completes the process the district would end up with a clear title of the RC property .

Wilhelm arrived at 6:35 pm.

The district likes the campus look, there is a concern about the potential crossing of Highway 6. The board was reminded about the possibility of the former Windstream property located on 11th avenue. An elementary building on that site would have to be a multi-level structure. There would have to be extensive work on the utilities on 11th avenue. There was concern the community has felt excluded in discussions regarding the future of the district and the DLR poll didn't acquire the main consensus in the community.

Motion by Lease, seconded by Cameron of notice of intent to approve acquisition of real estate by eminent domain. The board took a roll call vote. Smith, Cameron, Lease, Moisan, Brown and Knobloch voted yes, Wilhelm voted no. Motion passed 6-1.

B. Board development

A. Presentations: PLTW and Transitional Kindergarten

The first presentation was by Chris Molitor and Jill Harris. They explained the new PLTW format to the board. Their presentation discussed the challenges, their classes, their certification, and how they are modeled this project for the middle and high school students. The board viewed a power point presentation by Molitor and Harris. They discussed the need to convince more students to enroll in PLTW, start the discussion early in the elementary school by encouraging those with strong math and science skills, and would like to see more female students in PLTW. There are ongoing costs with PLTW, would like to expand the program offerings, and would like to secure financial commitments. Currently, PLTW is an elective. Scheduling can make it hard for some students to take the PLTW class. Molitor and Harris continue to face ongoing tech issues, no printers to print out work, and there are space issues. They continue to work on the curriculum to make PLTW exciting for the students. There was a suggestion to see how

other schools with the STEM program are resolving their tech issues. PLTW offers a tough curriculum to students but is a very rewarding experience.

The second presentation was by the current transitional kindergarten teacher, Brenda Price. She observed the transitional classrooms in the Decorah and Newton district to assist in the development of the transitional kindergarten curriculum for the class. Price has received good parent support and works with the preschool teachers. The class is structured at a slower pace and very repetition based. Throughout the year the students work on foundation skills. The top priority is to have a para-educator in the classroom. They continue to review on what students would benefit from this class. Price believes lower numbers in the class allows more assistance to the students.

B. Needs Assessment Results/Instructional Triangle

There was discussion on consistent scheduling for the buildings and semesters, quarters, and tri-semester. Currently, there is an active district schedule with events, conferences, and open houses. Chris Coffman, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will continue to have these discussions with the certified staff over the next year and a half. A semester format does require more staff.

Superintendent Abrahamson has discussed strategies with the administration team and what is important for the district. They have been formatting groups for further discussion. Recently, the administrators had a daylong meeting with Troyce Fisher. The cabinet meetings are being re-structured. The board needs to review the goals and programs of the district.

There was a reminder to the board about their responsibility for the January 28 community meal at Davis.

6. Adjournment

Motion by Cameron, seconded by Brown to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Motion carried 7-0.

Board calendar:

Regular board meeting	6:00 p.m., February 13, 2013
Education Meeting	6:00 p.m., February 27, 2013