

The Grinnell-Newburg Board of Education met in Regular Session on October 14, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. at the Grinnell-Newburg Community High School in the Media Center, 1333 Sunset Street, Grinnell, Iowa 50112.

Members Present: Barbara Brown, Meg Jones Bair, Jeff Knobloch, Jonathan Nance, Helen Redmond, Dustin Smith, and Jeff Smith.

Members Absent: None

Also in attendance at the table: Superintendent Todd Abrahamson and Board Treasurer/Secretary Lisa Johnson.

Administrators Present: Director of Instruction and Curriculum Kym Stein and Activities Director Chris Coffman.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

President Brown called the regular meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Board Secretary Johnson called the roll. Seven members were in attendance. Board member Knobloch read the district's Mission and Vision Statement.

2. Fiduciary

Johnson discussed the recent increase in the District's bond rating, stating the healthy cash balance and prepayment of debt were the key drivers for the increase. She explained that this is very good news if the District is wanting to continue with facility improvement projects, because a higher rating typically correlates to lower interest rates.

Johnson presented the FY2015 Unaudited results. She stated the District's General Fund had a deficit of \$728,007, which was \$84,480 more than budgeted. The increase from the budget was due to higher than expected maintenance costs. This deficit includes approximately \$300K from last year due to posting a batch in July 2014 to the wrong fiscal year. This error was corrected in the FY2014 audit. FY2016 Line Item budget and projections will be presented at the October 28th board meeting. Cash balances remain high, over the 20% solvency ratio, so the District is not able to levy cash reserves.

Johnson stated the Activity, Management, Debt and Trust Funds are relatively flat for the year. The PPEL fund, however, ran a budgeted deficit. The district has developed a multi-year plan for PPEL and SAVE funds to cover larger maintenance, transportation and technology costs. The SAVE fund ran a surplus, but these funds are being retained for future facility improvement projects.

The Nutrition fund ran a deficit again in FY2015. The \$54,365 deficit reduced the balance to \$19,737. Some major changes need to be addressed in the Nutrition fund in order to maintain a positive fund balance. Food Service Director Carrie Nachazel is looking at available options, which may include reducing some buildings to serve-only kitchens, or possibly increasing meal prices. A consolidated elementary would drastically reduce the costs for the Nutrition fund.

Johnson stated the auditors will be in the district next week, on October 21 and 22. She asked that board members interested in attending the exit conference contact her. The conference is typically sometime in the afternoon.

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion by Jones Bair to amend the agenda to include approval of Level I and Level II Investigators in New Business, seconded by Nance. Motion to approve the consent agenda by Nance, seconded by J. Smith.

A. Approve/Amend Agenda

B. Minutes: 9/23/15 Minutes 10/7/15 Minutes

C. Financials

D. Claims and Accounts

E. Personnel:

1. Offerings: Joe Quick: 7th grade assistant coach boys basketball

2. Open Enrollment Out: Adrian Thompson: 9th grade to East Marshall; Logan McDonald: 3rd grade to East Marshall; Kyle McDonald: 5th grade to East Marshall

3. Open Enrollment In: Journey Riddle: kindergarten from Montezuma

Motion carried 7-0.

4. Communication from the Public

None

5. Communications and Reports

A. Board

Board member Jeff Smith commented the work session last week went well with the new board members.

B. Director of Instruction

Curriculum Director Kym Stein presented on the Attendance Center Rankings. She discussed the testing requirements, process, and procedures. She explained the state has reformatted their procedures for monitoring proficiency; previously there were site visits every 5 years, but the state will now be doing annual assessments of each district's proficiency rates. Assessments measure the percent of students tested who are proficient, as well as the percent of students not "making it," along with how we are progress monitoring and doing interventions for them. Essentially, these assessments done by the state are measuring how we are applying the core, and pushing our students to the next level. Brown asked for a good definition on Differentiated Accountability (and how this is different than what was done before). Stein summarized, explaining "Differentiated Accountability uses indicators that the state is looking at to determine whether our schools are in alignment [with the core]... Before it was a checklist of things we would do every five years. Now the state is coming in every year to make sure that our assessments are matching our curriculum and instruction, that we are teaching the right things at the right grade level, looking at the data to match our instruction to the needs of each student." Each district will receive an achievement score. Based on that score various evidences of compliance may be required.

A community member asked about including a measure on non-college bound students. Superintendent Abrahamson stated they are looking at ways to measure this. Stein stated this is a new process and they do not have ways to measure all of the variables they are wanting to track.

The proficiency and growth percentages for Reading and Math compared to surrounding districts, the Little Hawkeye Conference, and the state were presented.

Board member Redmond asked about the difference between proficiency (41st percentile) and college/career readiness (75th percentile). Stein explained that currently the state is identifying these as two different standards. Redmond asked when this data will be available for each student. Stein responded saying we already have and are using the data. Board member Jones Bair asked about the two standards. Stein stated the standards are State mandated.

Board member Jones Bair asked about how long this pilot program is going prior to being rolled out to the entire State of Iowa. Abrahamson stated mostly likely this will be rolled out next year to all districts. Abrahamson also voiced concern

about how pieces like community involvement will be measured. This will be continuing to change as this is rolled out and the Department of Education releases information and makes adjustments.

C. Superintendent

Abrahamson stated the local media is liking the Communications Post. He is continuing to work with local media sources. He and Stein have been doing walk throughs in the classrooms and thinking about the new rankings impact.

Abrahamson discussed the discovery of a leak of an underground tank related to the back-up heating and cooling system at the Middle School. He explained the leak has been mitigated and DNR is testing the contents to determine what is required. As more information is available Abrahamson will be providing a recommendation to the board for what solution is best for the District.

Activities Director Coffman presented a phased project proposal for a new tennis facility on the south end of the property, football upgrades (press box, bleachers, turf), baseball & softball field upgrades (field drainage and bleachers), as well as new baseball & softball restrooms, auditorium projector system, Kriegel Gym bleachers, maintenance shed, auditorium sound board, and better parking.

Jones Bair asked why some of these things are currently out of code. Coffman explained these were in code when constructed, but since no changes have been made for years these items are not required to meet current code. Once improvements of any kind are made all items need to be brought into code.

Abrahamson stated they are also working on estimates for the next phase of the roof, window replacements, exterior paneling, and District Office renovations. Brown asked if there are needs that better address educational needs. Abrahamson stated the needs of the High School were priority due to the hope for a larger plan for the Elementary and Middle School. He stressed the outside of the structure needs to be improved so as not to compromise interior improvements that have already been made.

Knobloch stated he believes the priorities are tennis, softball and the restrooms. Abrahamson stated the press box is a safety concern that needs addressed. Knobloch noted that the district might consider not using the press box for a year, as opposed to renovating it right now. Coffman stated the tennis courts are his priority, but many of these other things need to part of a plan. Smith asked for a

priority list with costs for the following meeting.

6. Old Business

A. Third & Final Reading - Policy 303.2 Administrative Qualifications, Recruitment, Appointment

Motion by J. Smith, seconded by Knobloch to approve the third and final reading of Policy 303.2.

Motion carried 7-0.

B. Appoint board members to Advisory Committees

Facilities Advisory Committee - volunteers are: Nance, D. Smith, and Jones Bair. J. Smith suggested meeting monthly with report outs to the whole board. Brown suggested all groups create agendas and minutes.

Finance Advisory Committee - volunteers are: Redmond, Knobloch, D. Smith. Knobloch stated this was usually only used for negotiations, but due to the district's financial situation it should probably meet more regularly.

Policy Advisory Committee - volunteers are: Brown, J. Smith, Knobloch. Brown stated they would like to continue monthly.

School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) - volunteers are: Redmond, Jones Bair. This group has also been meeting monthly.

Calendar Committee - Abrahamson stated this gears up in January and is concentrated in the spring. Redmond volunteered.

IASB Delegate - Brown is currently doing this for the upcoming assembly.

Safety Crisis - Abrahamson stated this is looked at annually to be sure it is up to date. D. Smith volunteered.

Superintendent's Advisory Committee - Abrahamson stated this is for meetings with community groups. Knobloch noted he wished these individuals would come to a board meeting and speak. Brown stated if he would like a board member at a meeting with a community group to ask for volunteers.

Brown stated she is currently the Board Representative to GNEE and would like to continue.

Motion by Knobloch, seconded by Nance to approve the recommended members to the committees.

Motion carried 7-0.

7. New Business

A. Certified Annual Report (CAR)

Johnson stated this is approving the financials discussed previously.

Motion by Knobloch, seconded Nance to approve the Certified Annual Report.

Motion carried 7-0.

B. Special Education Report

Johnson stated the Special Education deficit was \$302,463. Costs for Special Education continue to rise as more IEPs state the need for a one to one paraeducator.

Motion by J. Smith, seconded by Jones Bair to approve the Special Education Report.

Motion carried 7-0.

C. Transportation Report

Johnson discussed the increased Transportation costs, stating the per pupil cost increased from \$578.78 to \$661.99. The cost per mile increased from \$3.79 to \$3.86.

Motion by Knobloch, seconded by J. Smith to approve the Transportation Report.

Motion carried 7-0.

D. Request to School Budget Review Committee (SBRC) for allowable growth and supplemental aid payment for the district's 2014-2015 Special Education deficit of \$302,463.05.

Motion by J. Smith, seconded by D. Smith to request to SBRC for allowable growth and supplemental aid payment for the district's 2014-2015 Special Education deficit of \$302,463.05.

Motion carried 7-0.

E. Building Goals

Stein stated the Elementary goals are similar, as an effort was made to have consistency across the district. Brown asked how the percentages or numerical goals are selected when goals are set. Stein stated the group looked at increasing previous performance, but also what is reasonable, attainable and measurable. She stated this is typically a 4-5% improvement. Redmond asked if this data can consistently be brought to the board. Stein stated the data will be taken to the board as available.

Motion by Redmond, seconded by Nance to approve the Building Goals.

Motion carried 7-0.

F. Discuss Early Retirement Plans

Johnson stated the District would like to begin this process in order to have appropriate time for hirings for both early retirement and TLC positions. Brown asked about the two year in comparison to a one year plan the district typically follows. Johnson stated this is helpful in planning. She stated the proposed plan is similar to last year's plan in relation to the payout calculation. The amount for the first year is the same as two years ago and then a reduced amount is being proposed for the second year. This reduced amount could help to reduce tax rates, especially if a bond passes and taxes are raised in relation to a bond issue. Johnson stated the Management fund currently has about a year's worth of expenses on balance at year end. Brown asked if the recommendation is expedite the approval to one reading at the next meeting. Abrahamson stated that is what he would like. Brown asked how many people qualify. Johnson stated she did not know how many were qualified. Abrahamson stated he does not believe many will take it this year since a higher amount was offered last year.

J. Smith asked how many we are looking for? Abrahamson stated he does not believe in offering early retirement every year. Brown stated it has always been offered. To not offer would be a detriment to the budget. Abrahamson stated it could mean making cuts. He would like the timing moved up so we can hire for

both TLC, refill those positions, and refill retirees. Early Retirement is the least restrictive way to reduce costs.

Jones Bair asked about how many have taken this in the past, what the cost was, and how many are eligible. Knobloch is more in favor of a one year versus a two year plan. Brown asked about the payment. Knobloch stated the number is not a concern.

G. Level I & II Investigators

Abrahamson stated the previous Level I investigator retired. The Level I suggestion is Dan Keller and Paula Simon. Don Schild is the suggestion for the Level II Investigator.

Motion by Knobloch, seconded by Nance to approve the Level I and II Investigators.

Motion carried 7-0.

Motion by Nance, seconded by J. Smith to enter into closed Session per Iowa Code 21.5(1)(a) and 21.5(1)(i): To review or discuss records which are required or authorized to be kept confidential. To evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose performance is being considered to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation, as that individual has requested a closed session.

Motion carried 7-0.

Entered into Closed Session at 8:45 p.m.

Returned from Closed Session at 9:43 p.m.

H. Approve 2015-2016 Superintendent Goals

Brown read the goals for:

Facilities: The superintendent shall develop a five-year plan for facilities improvement. Academic: Academic achievement of all students will improve and the achievement gap among student groups will close. Budget: Cut the yearly deficit in half.

Motion by Nance, seconded by J. Smith to approve the Superintendent Goals.

Motion carried 7-0.

8. Board Discussion

J. Smith noted the new assessments will be ongoing and ever changing. Brown asked for agenda items on the 28th.

9. Board Talking Points

None

10. Adjournment

Motion by Redmond, seconded by J. Smith to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 7-0.
Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Board Calendar:

Regular Board Meeting/Work Session

6:00 p.m., October 28, 2015