

Notes from School Board Meeting

Dickinson Public Schools
Regular Meeting

June 8, 2015; 5:00 p.m.
Central Office Board Room

The Dickinson Public School Board held a regular meeting on June 8, 2015, at the Central Administration Office. Board members present were: President Kris Fehr, Vice-president Jason Hanson, Mrs. Sarah Ricks, Mrs. Tanya Rude, and Ms. Leslie Ross (via conference call). Administrators present were: Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, Dr. Marcus Lewton, Dr. Becky Pitkin, Ms. Sherry Libis, Mrs. Melanie Kathrein, Mr. Jay Hepperle, Mrs. Dorothy Martinson, and Mrs. Susan Cook. Others present were: Mrs. Beth Grandell, Mr. Burton Lewton, Mrs. Margaret Olheiser, Ms. Teresa Blackwood, Mrs. Twila Petersen, and Ms. Abby Kessler from the Dickinson Press.

Call to Order - Board President Fehr called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Public Participation – There were no requests for public participation.

Additional Agenda Items/Removal of Items from Consent Agenda – There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

Consent Agenda – Mrs. Ricks moved to approve the agenda including the consent agenda consisting of the minutes from the May 11 regular board meeting, May 29 special board meeting, the bills for June 2015; the financial reports for June 2015; the pledged assets report for June 2015; the personnel reports; the student/staff recognitions; a tuition waiver request for four children of Heidi M. Krank and one child of Melissa Schwindt; and the RACTC report, as presented. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Assuming a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Sullivan reported on the following topics.

Principal and Teacher Evaluation Instrument – Last week administrators had two days of professional development training on the Danielson model. The Danielson model was selected as the evaluation instrument that will be used for evaluating the teachers and administrators in the district. There will be training for the faculty this fall on the Danielson model. Mrs. Rude inquired how the training was perceived. Superintendent Sullivan responded the Danielson model will be a learning curve; it is an intensive process. He added providing enough time to complete the work will be a challenge. It will take years to fully implement with the process beginning next year. Dr. Sullivan explained that the district had been using an evaluation process before; this will be a new model for evaluating. Having an evaluation model for teachers and administrators will satisfy a requirement from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

DHS Student and Teacher Recognitions – Dr. Sullivan called attention to the document posted on the website under Supporting Documents recognizing the achievements of the students, staff, and teachers at Dickinson High School throughout the 2014-2015 school year. DHS Principal Dockter collected the information and created the document.

DEA v. DPS – Superintendent Sullivan noted the district has not received the final order from Judge Greenwood regarding the recent hearing.

Business Topics

Adult Learning Center (ALC) Update – Mrs. Beth Grandell, Coordinator for the Adult Learning Center, has available under Supporting Documents a report. She addressed the board providing updated information and summarizing her report. There were four goals the ALC had for 2014-2015. All goals were met. The first goal was Career and College Guidance Program. This program not only focuses on career and guidance but also helps students through their next step in life, whether it be college or into the work force. The center has been partnering more with Job Service. Due to increased requests for assistance with learning English, Mrs. Grandell reported that the existing computer lab is also a language lab. A lot of the adults learning the English language are parents of students in the school district. This helps to close the communication gap. Another goal at the center was to monitor GED students more closely. Since there is no required attendance for GED students, the staff has been more conscientious to try to contact students that had not been checking in. The data reflects the increased monitoring has been successful. Mrs. Grandell noted the final goal was for visible growth in ELL student levels. She explained the test that is given is very difficult because of the broad range on the test. The ALC additionally is reaching out to the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center families, displaced homemakers, and other areas. The number of graduates is down at the ALC, however they are better in comparison to Bismarck and Williston. President Fehr asked if there is a waiting list for students at the ALC. Mrs. Grandell responded there is not a waiting list; the center has not experienced more than they can serve. She added that they have seen an increase of GED students at the ALC, possibly as a result of the economic slowdown and employers being more selective in hiring. President Fehr thanked Mrs. Grandell for the information provided. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

Roughrider Career and Technology Center (RACTC) Update – At the April RACTC Governing Board meeting, Director Larry Sebastian submitted his resignation. Mrs. Ricks is the board representative on this committee. She reported to the board there was an RACTC governing board meeting last week, however there was lack of a quorum. Mrs. Ricks explained the process for hiring the new director. A committee has been formed that will include RACTC Board Members, a former RACTC director and/or someone from Dickinson Public Schools. DPS Board members expressed that Dickinson Public Schools be represented on the interview team due to the large number of DPS students involved with RACTC. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

Prairie Rose Elementary Expansion Update - Assistant Superintendent Reep addressed the board reporting that everything was progressing well on the new wing at Prairie Rose Elementary. Mr. Reep said everything appeared to be on schedule for the owner transfer target date of July 27. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

Middle School Update – Superintendent Sullivan reported there has been some dramatic personnel changes with Mortenson construction which will not compromise the construction project. Mortenson Construction assured them that they have the same goal as the district, the very best project on budget with an ownership transfer target date of July 2017. Additional soil borings were done to identify the extent of the coal in the property. The architect will provide options to resolve the matter of the coal on the property. Bid package #1 for the mass excavation will come out on June 19. It is anticipated the soil will be removed beginning as early as August 3. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

Budget Development and Input Committee Report – The minutes are posted on the website for the May 21 Budget Committee meeting. All three topics discussed at the meeting have been placed as agenda items for this meeting. This agenda item had no discussion.

Teacher on Special Assignment – Dr. Sullivan noted this topic had been discussed at two previous Budget Committee meetings. Posted on the website are possible job responsibilities for this position. The document was created by Dr. Lewton. The primary focus is to provide some additional assistance for Hagen principal, Dr. Marcus Lewton, as he prepares for the opening of the new middle school. It will also provide some daily assistance as he tries to get into the classroom more frequently. Ms. Ross is a board representative on the Budget Committee. She believed it would be money well spent to have a teacher on special assignment to assist Dr. Lewton and noted when Prairie Rose was built, Principal Libis had additional days added to her contract. Mrs. Rude moved to authorize the administration to add one new position for a Teacher on Special Assignment at Hagen Junior High for the 2015-2016 school year. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. Discussion: Mrs. Rude inquired regarding the transition back into a teaching position. The motion was limiting it to just the upcoming school year. Dr. Sullivan said there would be an interview process similar to any certified position and said she brought up a good point. He suggested eliminating the date. Mrs. Rude moved to amend her motion. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken on the motion: yeas-Hanson, Rude, Ross, Ricks, Fehr; nays-none. The amendment passed unanimously. President Fehr called for a roll call vote on the motion as amended: yeas-Ross, Ricks, Rude, Hanson, Fehr; nays-none. The amended motion carried unanimously.

Amend Budget – Assistant Superintendent Reep addressed the board members and noted when the budget was set for 2014-2015, the teacher negotiations were not concluded until December. At that time, an additional \$600,000 was added to the budget. Mr. Reep requested to amend the budget from \$38 million to \$40 million anticipating that the district probably would not spend all of it. He gave some examples where there have been some savings: fuel prices have been lower than budgeted saving approximately \$50,000, Delco Communications expenses this year are \$17,000 less than anticipated, there was no cost for property insurance this year which will save the district \$35,000, and out-of-state tuition came in less than anticipated with a savings of \$80,000. Mr. Reep asked the board to approve the amended budget and provide some flexibility within the spending budget. He said the district is in good financial position. There are some big expenses in the month of June with transferring money into food services and the four payrolls left within the fiscal year. Mr. Hanson moved to amend the general fund expenditures budget from \$38,589,310 to \$40,000,000. Mrs. Ricks seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Rude, Ricks, Hanson, Ross, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution Providing for Sale of \$25,000,000 General Obligation Building Fund Bonds –Ms. Ross moved to approve the resolution providing for the sale of \$25,000,000 general obligation building fund bonds, series 2015. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Hanson, Rude, Ross, Ricks, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing the Participation in the School District Bonds Credit Enhancement Program –Mr. Hanson moved to approve the resolution providing for participation in the School Bond Credit Enhancement Program, as presented. Mrs. Rude seconded the motion. Discussion: Mrs. Ricks inquired how this will benefit the district, would the district get better rates? Mr. Reep responded it doesn't guarantee lower rates. If the district is rated AA or AAA it will bring it down a few basis points. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Ross, Ricks, Hanson, Rude, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously.

Open Enrollment Application – Cara Praus applied for open enrollment for her three children to be admitted to Dickinson Public Schools from South Heart Public School District. These children have been attending DPS and recently moved outside the Dickinson Public School District. The administrative recommendation was to approve the applications. Action was requested. Mr. Hanson moved to approve the open enrollment request for three children of Cara Praus as specified in the open enrollment requests and to be admitted to the Dickinson Public Schools under the open enrollment policy. Mrs. Ricks seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Ricks, Ross, Hanson, Rude, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously.

Teacher Negotiations Update – President Fehr noted that she, Ms. Ross and Mr. Hanson have previously been the school board representatives on the Teacher Negotiations Team. Mr. Woehl, Mr. Fahy, Mr. Tuchscherer, Mr. Gray, and Mrs. Schubert are the Dickinson Education Association representatives on the Teacher Negotiations Team. The Teacher Negotiations Team had its first meeting on Friday, June 5. Vice-president Hanson said the discussion at that meeting was the ground rules and said it was a good meeting. Mrs. Fehr noted that board representatives had not been formally appointed. Mrs. Rude moved to designate for 2015 negotiations Mrs. Kris Fehr and Mr. Jason Hanson as primary school board representatives and Mrs. Sarah Ricks as the secondary school board representatives on the Teacher Negotiations Team. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. Discussion: President Fehr noted the next negotiations meeting is set for Monday, June 15 at 4:00. The team will possibly be looking at problem statements. A roll call vote was taken on the motion: yeas-Rude, Ricks, Ross, Hanson, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously.

President Fehr requested a one minute recess. At 5:49 the meeting recessed. At 5:50 p.m. the meeting was called back to order by President Fehr.

Negotiations Strategy as it Relates to Potential Contract for Property Purchase (Executive Session Anticipated) – President Fehr noted the next item on the agenda was Negotiations Strategy as it Relates to Potential Contract for Property Purchase–Executive Session Anticipated. She said this item may be discussed in an executive session. The legal authority for closing this portion of the meeting is North Dakota Century Code section(s) N.D.C.C. § 44-04-19.1 (9). The topic or purpose of this executive session was discussion of negotiations strategy as it relates to a potential contract for the purchase of property. As per North Dakota Century Code N.D.C.C. §44-04-19.1 (9), Mrs. Ricks moved to close the meeting and go into executive session for the purpose of Negotiations Strategy as it Relates to Potential Contract for Property Purchase. Mrs. Rude seconded the motion. Discussion: none. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Hanson, Ricks, Rude, Ross, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously.

President Fehr stated the executive session would be recorded and all members of the governing body were reminded to limit their discussion during the executive session to the announced topic. The prohibition on taking final action during the executive session does not apply to providing guidance or instructions to the attorney or negotiator. President Fehr referenced board policy BCAD-Executive Session allows certain individuals to be in attendance at the closed meeting as directed by the Board President. The following individuals were authorized to remain in the room during the executive session: the school board members who were present either in person or via conference call, Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, and Recording Secretary Twila Petersen.

Negotiations Strategy as it Relates to Potential Contract for Property Purchase (cont.)

At 5:54 p.m., the meeting convened in executive session for the purpose of negotiations strategy as it relates to potential contract for property purchase. Board President Fehr anticipated the executive session would adjourn at approximately 6:05 p.m. Those in attendance at the executive session were Board Member Ricks, Board Member Ross via conference call, Board Member Hanson, Board Member Rude, Board Member Fehr, Superintendent Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Reep, and Recorder Petersen.

The executive session was adjourned at 6:07 p.m. The public was invited to return to the meeting room and the meeting was back in open session. President Fehr noted that the board members discussed the strategy as it related to the potential contract for property purchase.

Other - Mrs. Fehr thanked DHS Principal Dockter for compiling the information for the student recognitions and providing the student achievements in a wide variety of areas.

Adjournment - At 6:10 p.m., Mrs. Rude moved to adjourn. Mrs. Ricks seconded the motion. Assuming a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously.

Kris Fehr, Board President

Vince Reep, Business Manager

Twila Petersen, Board Secretary