

**GREATER JOHNSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Board of Education**  
**Discussion Meeting**  
**October 6, 2004**  
**Pleasant Avenue Elementary Library**

I. Called to order by Board President at 5:32 PM.

ATTENDEES:

Joanne Freeman	William Pollak	Russell Martin (arrived 5:35 PM)
Richard McGuire	Christopher Swatt	Peter Cinelli (arrived 5:40 PM)
Brian Miller	John David Praught (arrived 5:32 PM)	

ABSENT:

Kathleen Leo

OTHERS:

John S. Whelan	Katherine Sullivan	Diana Horton
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II. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF A PARTICULAR PERSON**

*Motion by Mr. Pollak seconded by Mr. Swatt to go to executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment history of a particular person at 5:32 PM.*

  5   Yes        0   No

III. **MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

*Motion by Mr. Pollak seconded by Mr. Swatt to return to public session at 6:30 PM.*

  8   Yes        0   No

IV. **SUPERINTENDENT'S/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS**

- Ms. Sullivan stated that the NYS embargo on fourth & eighth grade math scores was lifted today and she was able to report that 72% of the students at Knox Junior High reached levels three and four, which is an approximate gain of 20% over last year's score. Congratulations to Mr. Carr and staff. With regard to fourth grade, city wide 85.3% of the students achieved levels three and four, which was similar to last year. Congratulations to all of the elementary Principals and staff!
- Ms. Sullivan congratulated Pleasant Avenue as the NYS PTA PARP winner of a \$200 credit.
- Ms. Sullivan reported that each year at the Frehofer's Jazz Festival held at SPAC, Time Warner employees volunteer their time to sell jazz festival t-shirts and part of the proceeds are then presented to an area school that participates in SPAC's Class Action School Program. GJSD has been chose of this year's recipient and will be receiving \$1,500. Ms. Zullo is arranging for a presentation to be held at Jansen Ave. and will provide further details at a later date.
- James E. Amell of Marvin and Company, P.C. reviewed the audit conducted of GJSD's financial performance for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2004, together with the audit conducted of GJSD's Extraclassroom Activity Funds for the same period. He indicated that aside from a few small measures to be considered with regard to the Extraclassroom Activity Funds, there were no significant findings, that the District had done very well overall, and he wished to commend those responsible.

V. **PRESIDENT'S REPORTS**

- Mr. McGuire recounted that Director of Facilities Tom Clark had recently left GJSD for a position with Saratoga Schools and that District Treasurer Diana Horton will be leaving shortly for a position with Northville. He indicated that these jobs used to be the duties of the Business Administrator, but the District has not had anyone in that position since Todd Wood left. He stated that until these issues can be resolved, the responsibilities of these positions will need to be divided between the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent and they will have to shoulder the extra work in addition to their normal duties. He suggested it will only be fair to compensate them in some way and asked Board members to think about this and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.
- Mr. McGuire asked that the Board members consider whether it is necessary to meet more than one time per month, whether meetings should be held on Monday nights rather than Wednesday's, and whether the number of Board members should be reduced from nine to seven.
- Mr. McGuire asked the Board to consider whether it needs to respond to Jack Scott's diatribe regarding the recent law enforcement emergency near Pleasant Avenue and the precautionary lockdown implemented in some District buildings.
- Mr. McGuire reminded the public that Board members cannot make things happen individually and that prior to calling a Board member with a concern, there is a chain of command to follow. Problems should be addressed first with a teacher and, if a suitable resolution is not reached, move on next to the building principal, then the Superintendent and administrators and lastly the Board.

VI. **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

VII. **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR FOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*"In accordance with its practice, the Board of Education of the Greater Johnstown School District does not permit oral comments from the public relating to specific personnel decisions regarding individuals employed by the District during the portion of its business meeting where the Board permits the public comment on agenda and non-agenda items. The Board will accept written comments from the public on this subject matter and all other agenda and non-agenda items."*

- Anna Whaley introduced herself as the Jansen Avenue PTA President and asked the Board for their position regarding procuring a School Resource Officer, based on the presentation made at a recent Central Council meeting, which she noted was attended by Mr. McGuire, Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Freeman. She stated that her brother is the School Resource Officer at South Glens Falls and that there is also one at FMCC, where she is employed, so she can obtain further information regarding the program if wanted. She indicated the grant opens in February and the filing deadline is May and that she has experience writing grants if assistance is needed. She mentioned that the NYS Troopers have first choice if the position is created, but if they sign off, a city police department officer can take over. She believes Chief Horning supports the program.
- Mr. Pollak questioned what the cost would be after the initial three year COPS grant expires and the District is required to pay Resource Officer's salary and benefits (estimated at \$70,000). He indicated it shouldn't be assumed that a uniform brings respect or guarantees skills and asked what credentials these people have and how they are evaluated. He suggested money might be better spent to hire other staff, such as guidance counselors or teachers.
- Ms. Freeman indicated she attended the presentation as a parent. She said she supports being proactive and thinks the program is needed, but believes the Johnstown Police Department had approached the District regarding this previously and been handed their head.
- Edgar Whaley stated he believes an officer in the building who knows the law will save the District money. He asked if safety issues, drugs and bullying are not addressed, how long will it be before something like Columbia happens here. He indicated there have been many advancements in the program and that these are veteran officers, not the same animal as before.

- Mr. Swatt and Mr. Pollak asked that the Resource Officer program be looked into. Mr. Cinelli said it was hard to ignore. Mr. Whelan indicated it was promoted before and the Board said no, however, Ms. Sullivan will work with Ms. Whaley to look into it again.
- Lisa McCoy said she thought a good reason to be in a small district is the ability to affect change, however, she is disappointed that after two years she does not see changes and she and her family have thought about moving. She indicated she doesn't believe GJSD takes part in enrichment opportunities that she sees in other districts, such as the Read to Succeed program partnered by the Gloversville School District and the Chamber of Commerce, or the internship program with local businesses offered by Broadalbin-Perth. She questioned why the District can't make a gym available for 50 kids at the YMCA who are on a waiting list for an after school program. She commented that Fonda-Fultonville and Canajoharie offer character education that you can see when you walk in the door, while at Johnstown she believes it is hit or miss and needs continuity. She expressed disappointment that it appears only Jansen Ave. offers a program regarding bullying between young people. She thinks there is a significant drug abuse problem and that children don't go into the bathrooms or to the athletic fields because of the illicit activities that take place. She doesn't think the Administration is doing enough to address the drug problem through available resources. She would like random drug testing looked into like at Fort Edward. She indicated that the boys athletics program appears to be disintegrating, with the cross country program discontinued and the number of kids involved in football declining to the point that the expense of the program may not be justifiable, and she wonders what will be lost next if more kids aren't encouraged to be involved in available opportunities. She thinks hot dogs are placed on the lunch menu too often and that Food Service needs to get onboard with the rest of the country to provide healthier options. She suggests that an ad hoc committee or task force look into programs that work in other districts. She thinks there are not sufficient district-wide public relations with parents.
- Mr. Whelan indicated that there is a societal problem with drugs, that this is not a concern unique just to Johnstown and that the District keeps a watchful eye.
- Ms. Sullivan indicated that the Chamber was contacted about the Read to Succeed Program and Johnstown doesn't qualify to participate. She indicated that the JHS and elementary summer schools have many enrichment components and we are currently working on bringing Odyssey of the Mind here. She indicated that character education goes on every day and the District has many programs which perhaps don't get much publicity, such as Peer Mediation, SADD, DARE, Project Alert with the Alcoholism Council and the Catholic Charities Programs. Ms. Sullivan indicated she would like Adam Samrov from the Leader Herald to come photograph the libraries, and praised the music program that is one of the top five in the nation and second to none in NYS. She indicated that with regard to public relations with parents, there are perhaps problems with children who don't bring home flyers that are given to them, but she hopes this will be alleviated by the new and very comprehensive website that will be up and running in a couple of months.
- Bob Galinsky said while a better job is being done complying with open meetings law, there are still issues. He doesn't think the Board should be setting a time limit on executive session and believes it is impossible to know the length of time needed for discussion. He expressed a concern that if the Board schedules an hour long executive session and only needs forty minutes, perhaps they spend the rest of the time discussing things that are not germane.
- Richard Baker suggests that rather than holding executive session at the beginning of the meeting, the Board should go to executive session at the end of their meetings and let the public choose whether to sit around and wait for them to come out.
- Mr. Swatt indicated that 5:30 meetings do not fit in with most people's schedules and he would prefer to start after 6:00 PM. He said with regard to the length of executive session, the Board has a list of topics to discuss and they try to be professional and not run late, but if they are done early, the public sees them come back. He questioned if we are short on coaches for winter sports as he has received calls from parents. If we are, he suggests we begin advertising immediately, together with the business administrator position.
- Mr. Whelan indicated that 6:30 is the normal time for meetings to begin, but that this evening's began at 5:30 due to a conflict. Also, his understanding is that, per Ed Smalling, we are currently short one wrestling and one basketball coach.

- Mr. Cinelli pointed out that basketball practice will start in a month.
- Mr. Praught asks that we not wait until the last minute to address this issue.
- Mr. McGuire wants phys ed staff hired who will coach and recommends that if they are not willing to coach, they not be hired.

**VIII. BUSINESS ITEMS**

- Warrants
- Vendor Additions
- Budget Transfers
- Treasurer's Reports

**IX. EDUCATION ITEMS**

**A. STUDENT ITEMS**

- Girls' Basketball Field Trip to Adirondack Center on Saturday, 11/13/04 (1:00 PM) through Sunday, 11/14/04 (1:00 PM)
- International Club Field Trip to Woodworth Lake on Friday, 3/4/05 (4:30 PM) through Sunday, 3/6/05 (10:30 AM)
- Class of 2005 Field Trip to Florida on Thursday, 4/28/05 (3:30 PM) through Sunday, 5/1/05 (9:00 PM)
- Boys Modified Wrestling Merger, Johnstown/Wheelerville

**X. BOARD OF EDUCATION ITEMS**

**XI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

October 20, 2004	Business Meeting	6:30 PM Public Session Johnstown High School
November 3, 2004	Discussion Meeting	6:30 PM Public Session Jansen Ave. Elementary School

**XII. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF A PARTICULAR PERSON**

*Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to go to executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment history of a particular person at 8:21 PM.*

8 Yes      0 No

**XIII. MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

*Motion by Mr. Cinelli seconded by Mr. Miller to return to public session at 9:00 PM.*

8 Yes      0 No

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Mr. Cinelli seconded by Mr. Miller to adjourn at 9:00 PM.*

8 Yes      0 No

Respectfully submitted,

Larraina Carpenter, District Clerk