

GREATER JOHNSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Discussion/Business Meeting
November 3, 2004
Jansen Avenue Elementary

I. Called to order by Board President at 6:04 PM.

ATTENDEES:

Joanne Freeman	Richard McGuire	William Pollak
Kathleen Leo	Brian Miller	Christopher Swatt
Russell Martin	John David Praught	

ABSENT:

Peter Cinelli

OTHERS:

John S. Whelan Katherine Sullivan

II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

➤Cindy Lakata commented that she felt the proposed auditorium add-on in the Capital Project is an excellent place to put the taxpayers money as there has been no significant upgrade or expansion in at least thirty-one years and at present it is not possible to seat the entire student body at once. She would like for it to be strongly considered as the arts are an important program which enrich the District and for which we have received many accolades.

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

➤Mr. Whelan introduced City of Johnstown Police Chief Gregory Horning, who made a presentation regarding School Resource Officers. Chief Horning stated he was approached by Ona Whaley about placing a School Resource Officer at JHS and he supports this program. His goals for a School Resource Officer from his Department would include increasing safety; reducing crime, drug use, underage drinking and truancy; serving as a role model, offering security advice; and acting as a liaison between the School District and the Police Department. He submitted a proposal for the District and his Department to enter a four year commitment contingent on receipt of a federal COPS grant. Grant funds would be used to cover the base salary of the SRO for the first three years, with the City being responsible to pick up the cost of benefits, training, equipment and supervision, while the School would be responsible for the Officer's salary in the fourth year. He suggests the District set aside \$10,000 or \$12,000 each year during the initial three year period to pay the Officer's salary in the fourth year. He would want a Memorandum of Understanding between the Police Department and the School District stating that if either party failed to fulfill the terms and conditions of the grant, the party responsible for violating the agreement would be financially responsible. Under his proposal, if the District wanted to continue the program after the fourth year, the cost of the Officer's salary and benefits would be split equally between the City and the School District. He indicated his existing Officers would be given the opportunity to express an interest in the position and he and Lt. Gifford would then decide which of them to present to School Administrator's for consideration. He stated that the Resource Officer would be dedicated to the School District and would not perform other Police Department duties and a new officer would be hired to fill any resulting opening in his Department. It was mentioned that the Officer would not wear a uniform, but would dress in business attire and carry a concealed weapon, and that while an actual office isn't necessary, some sort of space would be needed at both JHS and Knox. Any problems with the Officer would need to be brought to his attention by School Administrators as disciplinary measures would have to be handled through the Police Department's collective bargaining unit. It was indicated that the grant opens in February and the District will need to make a decision before then in order to get paperwork started. City Councilwoman Cindy

Lakata was present and indicated if the School wants to participate, the City needs notice very soon in order to incorporate it in its budget for next year. She said if the proposal isn't submitted until after the budget is in place, she for one would not be inclined to approve the additional funding needed. Mr. Whelan reported that he had received a fax from Mayor Schultz today stating the City is not in a financial position to support the program. Chief Horning indicated he had not seen that fax, but he thinks the City will participate if there is support from the public, and if the City won't participate, the District has the option of approaching the County Sheriff's Department or the New York State Police.

IV. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF PARTICULAR PERSONNEL AND NEGOTIATIONS

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Praught to go to executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment history of particular personnel, and negotiations, at 6:32 PM.

VOTE: 8 Yes 0 No

V. MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Praught to return to public session at 8:12 PM.

VOTE: 8 Yes 0 No

(III.) SUPERINTENDENT'S/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS (resumed)

- Music Teacher Andrew LaCoppola asked for permission to establish a Knox Music Club, the purpose of which would be to engage in fundraising to pay for student awards and possibly a fieldtrip. He indicated he and Music Teacher Cynthia Fiorenza would act as volunteer advisors and their goal would be to raise enough funds to significantly defray or entirely cover the cost for students to attend a Broadway play as a reward for good behavior and achieving academic goals. Mr. Pollak commended it as a terrific idea. Mr. Swatt expressed thanks for the volunteer effort. Mr. McGuire stated a motion to approve the request would be placed on the Board's November 17th Business Agenda for consideration.
- Mr. Whelan stated that he, E.J. Maye and Dave Bonacci had recently inspected the Baronet Building and the architect is currently conducting an assessment and putting costs together with regard to using the same as a bus building and storage warehouse as part of the Capital Project. It was noted that the building consists of approximately 63,000 square feet, which would permit indoor storage of the buses, and possibly room for the Marching Band to practice indoors.
- Ms. Sullivan noted that the Restructuring Survey had been mailed out to taxpayers today and responses are due by November 22nd. She mentioned the mailing was delayed for a week due to a typo made by the printer, who had absorbed the cost of reprinting. She stressed that the survey was being mailed to taxpayers, not parents as stated in a recent newspaper article, and that copies of the survey are available at all elementary schools for any parents who are not taxpayers but wish to participate.
- Ms. Sullivan reported she had been contacted by BOCES Assistant Superintendent Dom Baggetta, who wanted to know whether the District would be interested in being included in a collaborative Learning Technology Grant, which targets middle level students with identified disabilities. The total award to be shared by participating parties would not exceed \$50,000.
- Ms. Sullivan reported that Mr. Baggetta also asked her if the District would be interested in joining in an application for the 2005-2009 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant, which would provide for development activities and supportive services for "at risk students", to be hosted after school at Knox. She noted the District had previously applied and was found ineligible because we are not a school in need of improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act, but that possibly guidelines had been revised which would allow us to participate now.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORTS

VII. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Swatt stated Mr. Whelan and Ms. Sullivan had already touched on both the Capital Project and Restructuring committees' items
- Mr. Pollak reported that the Buildings & Grounds committee would be meeting tomorrow at 4:00 PM.
- Mr. Miller indicated the Finance committee was not yet in a position to meet due to the vacancies in the Business Office. Mr. Whelan stated that to date he had received about eight applications for the Business Administrator position (and five for the Athletic Director position), and was in the process of conducting reference checks. A discussion was held regarding the possibility of re-advertising if there is not a bigger response before the final application date closes.
- Mr. Martin reported there was a meeting of the Academic committee on October 27th, which was attended by himself, Joanne Freeman, Mike Beatty, Kathy Sullivan and Jack Whelan. The Academic Eligibility and Extra Curricular Code were discussed and the following changes regarding Academic Eligibility are recommended:
 - Progress report – 5 weeks
 - 2 “Unsatisfactory”- require weekly progress, based on effort
 - Weekly progress report – 1 or more Unsatisfactory – student ineligible for that week
 - Process continues (carry weekly progress report) for remainder of 5 week period
 - 10 week report card – student continues to fail 2 or more of the same subjects - he/she ineligible for 5 weeks
 - Process continues

It seemed to be the general consensus of the Board members present that these changes would be an excellent way to proceed and Mr. Martin was thanked for presenting the same.

VIII. BUSINESS ITEMS

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

IX. EDUCATION ITEMS

A. PERSONNEL

1. Creations/Appointments/Adjustments

a. Temporary Appointment of Volunteer coaches for Odyssey of the Mind Program

Motion by Mr. Miller seconded by Ms. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the temporary appointment of the following as volunteer coaches for the Odyssey of the Mind Program through June 24, 2005:

<i>Tamie Martin</i>	<i>Sara Randolph</i>
<i>Christine VanValkenburgh</i>	<i>Erik Betz</i>
<i>Melissa Livingstone</i>	<i>Mary Jo Smith</i>

Vote: 8 Yes 0 No

X. 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."

- Mr. McGuire noted there had been several scathing letters to the editor recently regarding Johnstown's sports programs and football in particular.
- Mr. Martin pointed out that the girls sports teams are doing exceptionally well.
- Mr. Whelan added that the Marching Band is doing very well also.
- Mr. Pollak, Mr. Praught and Mr. McGuire praised the addition of the Odyssey of the Mind program and expressed gratitude for the volunteers who are making it possible.
- Kathy Zajicek said she did not want her comments to be construed as criticism, but that the agenda said the meeting was to be a public session and there were people, and especially students, who wanted to be heard, but could not wait through the executive session and left in disappointment.
- Mr. Pollak, Mr. Swatt and Mr. Praught indicated the Board had changed the way executive session was held due to accusations that they weren't complying with the law, and that they are frustrated too because they do want to hear from the public.
- Mr. Whelan indicated that, in the future, if an executive session is needed, we will try to hold it after privilege of the floor.
- Mr. Martin noted there are sometimes people the Board needs to meet with in executive session who can't wait until the end of the meeting.
- Edgar Whaley noted that there had been students present who wanted to be part of the process and he felt the academic leaders let them down. He said the Board needs to pay attention to the people as they are who vote for Board members. He indicated he believes there are waiting lists of schools trying to get COPS grants for Resource Officers and the District should not let this opportunity pass them by. Mr. Whaley said Mr. McGuire had asked him what a Resource Officers qualifications are and he suggests the Board do research at the websites listed in the handout provided. He believes there are very few instances where it does not work out.
- Mr. Martin indicated that he will look at the websites about SRO's, but that he has concerns as it appears that Chief Horning will call the shots and if the person doesn't work out, they might not be interchangeable.
- Mr. Pollak stated the costs need to be looked at and that it is not always necessary to build staff, sometimes all that is needed is to re-evaluate procedures.

XI. BOARD OF EDUCATION ITEMS

- Mr. Praught asked that the motion previously made to appoint a supervisor to assist the alpine ski team be reconsidered on the next agenda. [*Refer to 09/01/04 minutes for prior motion*]

XII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

November 17, 2004	Business Meeting	6:00 PM Public Session Johnstown High School
December 8, 2004	Business Meeting	6:00 PM Public Session Johnstown High School

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to adjourn at 8:52 PM.

VOTE: 8 YES 0 NO

Respectfully submitted,

Larraina Carpenter, District Clerk