

GREATER JOHNSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Discussion/Business Meeting
March 2, 2005
Knox Junior High Library

I. Called to order by Board President at 6:00 PM.

ATTENDEES:

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| Peter Cinelli | Russell Martin | William Pollak |
| Joanne Freeman | Richard McGuire | Christopher Swatt (arrived 6:08 PM) |
| Kathleen Leo | John David Praught | |

ABSENT:

Brian Miller

OTHERS:

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| John S. Whelan | Katherine Sullivan | Peter Hopke |
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II. SUPERINTENDENT'S/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

- Mr. Whelan presented information to the Board from the architects regarding the District's responsibility to complete a State Environmental Quality Review Act with regard to the possible purchase and use of the Karg property for a storage facility and bus maintenance garage. The proposed cost for the SEQRA would be \$4,800.00 and the process would take approximately eighteen months. Monies from the District Wide I & II capital projects could be used to cover the cost. A discussion ensued as to whether it is worthwhile to continue to pursue this site or whether we should consider another location. It was suggested that, in order to move on with the Capital Project, the Superintendent look at other alternatives and present a recommendation at the next meeting. Mr. McGuire asked if this was agreeable to the Board members and no opposition was noted.
- Mrs. Sullivan discussed concerns regarding the June regents schedule, including scoring problems for teachers and concern that everyone gets the correct diploma considering that 67 of 142 students will be taking regents exams. She advised that the Commissioner has proposed that students who fail a regents exam twice, by three points or less, but have a 95% attendance rate and receive extra help, may appeal. It was noted that this dovetails with our academic eligibility policy.
- Mrs. Sullivan announced we should be receiving \$149,400 next year for the Knox after school program for students at risk. The program will be administered by BOCES, who want use of the gym for enrichment activities, which may be difficult considering the full schedule of sports programs.
- Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Swatt advised that the Network Operations Center is almost operational. Fiber is being run and a super hub room site is being completed, which will monitor the whole District and put us ahead technology wise. Funding for the project came from \$185,000 in federal funds awarded to the District, together with additional monies approved by the Board. The Buildings & Grounds Department was complimented for doing a wonderful job constructing the hub room at Warren Street.

III. PRESIDENT'S REPORTS

Mr. McGuire requested that notice of Standing Committee meeting dates be posted on the District web site in order to alleviate public concerns that the requirements of the Open Meetings Law are not being met. It was noted that while we can request they be posted in the newspaper, without purchasing display space, publication can not be guaranteed.

IV. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Academic - Mr. Martin advised that the Academic Committee had met earlier in the evening and the proposal to create a Student of the Month honor at JHS has been changed to a Student of the Quarter, with selection criteria left up to the principal and teachers. Pictures of the Student of the Quarter will be prominently displayed. A draft proposal to revise the Academic Eligibility Policy was presented to Board members and it was requested they review the same and be prepared to consider it at the next Board meeting on March 16th. It was requested that a copy be posted on the website so the public may review it and comment prior to its adoption. A meeting will be scheduled later this year to discuss next year's graduation, as we will re-encounter the same regents exam schedule which created an issue this year. The committee will be looking for parents to participate at that meeting. The next Academic Committee meeting will take place at 5:00PM on April 7th at JHS.
- Capital Projects - Mr. Swatt advised that Mr. Whelan had covered the Capital Projects committee report. No new meeting date has been scheduled.
- Restructuring – Mr. Swatt advised that the tentative date chosen for the next meeting did not appear to be good for the members of the public who want to attend. A new date will be set after March 9th.
- Finance – Mr. Hopke reported there had not been a meeting of the finance committee. No new meeting date has been scheduled.
- Buildings & Grounds – Mr. Pollak advised that a two hour meeting had been held yesterday. It was noted that the Knox Museum roof is thirty-five years old and needs replacement. This cannot be done in-house and will have to be contracted out. Estimates will be obtained and the cost can be paid for from the Knox Memorial Fund; taxpayer money will not be used. The fence on First Ave, Fourth Ave and Glebe Street needs painting and the committee would like to see this get underway this spring. Possibilities for energy savings in the District were discussed, such as making sure lights are turned off and doors are closed. Cooperation of staff and students is needed to minimize energy use. More recycling is encouraged, as the recycling tipping fee is \$25, versus the garbage tipping fee of \$46. It was noted that reduction of littering and beautification of the grounds through flower beds and tree planting might be good projects for students looking to add community service to their resumes. The baseball field at JHS needs modification, the fence needs attention and dug-outs need to be built. There are concerns with the traffic patterns and flow at the high school and some adjustment is needed. This will be discussed with Mr. Beatty. The Buildings and Grounds crew is operating at full staff for the first time in eighteen months and things are running smoothly. SED requires that an architect be brought in every five years to conduct a building condition survey and this needs to be taken care of during the upcoming year, at a cost estimate of \$45,000.00, based on \$0.12 per square foot. No new meeting date has been scheduled.

V. 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."

- Mark Ralbovsky stated that an article appeared in last night's newspaper indicating the Fonda-Fultonville School District is looking to move to the Colonial Council. He feels that with the Foothills Council losing two teams (Fonda and Broadalbin Perth), there is the potential for trouble and we could be left dangling in the wind. He encourages the District to be proactive and to take care of itself by quickly looking into putting us on that docket. Mr. Whelan advised that the situation is being monitored.

- Dick Baker asked if the SEQRA cost would be less if we were looking at a site other than Karg's, such as on the high school campus. The possibility of problems with residents in the area of the high school not wanting a bus maintenance facility near their homes was mentioned. Mr. Baker thinks that comments indicating the Snyder Ave property will go back on the tax rolls if we purchase other property for a bus facility are in error, as the Snyder Ave property is already on the tax rolls because we lease it, not own it. It was agreed this is correct.
- Dr. Richard Solby stated that he had viewed the last Board meeting on television and was shocked and dismayed by statements made by the audience (not the Board), regarding a child in the District with a peanut allergy. He noted that he is seeing more children with potentially life threatening peanut allergies and the public needs to be educated to prepare for potential disaster. Dr. Solby advised that there are varying degrees of severity, with class 6 being the most severe. He indicated his own child is a class 5 and should he touch peanut items, he would most likely break out in hives, but the bigger concern is that if he consumes peanut items, he could go into anaphylactic shock and die. With regard to comments made about airborne peanut allergies, Dr. Solby said he does not know what that is and his son would not have a reaction from smelling peanut butter. He advised that when there is a potentially life-threatening allergy, the District is responsible for the child in its care, and the focus needs to be on safety. He suggests that parents who are making an issue over not being able to bring in cupcakes or muffins as snacks be compassionate and that, before they say things they may regret, they step back and put the shoe on the other foot. He commented that his son is better educated than three-quarters of parents as to what he can and can't eat, and when he isn't sure he asks, but this isn't safe when people aren't aware or can't be bothered to read labels. He is working with the school doctor to modify the present peanut policy, which currently consists of individual plans, and he will be speaking to staff at the Superintendent's Conference.
- Meg Brown sees a bigger problem with the traffic pattern at Glebe than at JHS. She indicated she has children attending JHS, Knox and Glebe and is familiar with each school. People are not following directions about not using the circle and it is a disaster waiting to happen. She has spoken to some of the offending parents and they appear to care less. Mrs. Brown asked who she should speak to now that Peter is gone and there is no one to stand out there every day. There was a general discussion about whether the police can or should be called to assist with this. Mrs. Sullivan advised that the Assistant Principal from JHS will be there until further notice and although he is presently dealing with issues inside the building, she will talk to him about this tomorrow morning.
- Lisa McCoy feels it was unfair to parents, staff and children that there was no communication regarding Mr. Burnham leaving or what was being done now that he had left. Mrs. Sullivan indicated that yesterday was a snow day and Mr. Harris had spoken with the students today. Mrs. McCoy believes it should have been addressed sooner, with a memo home on Monday. This was not possible as the final determination was not made until after the Superintendent had an opportunity to contact all of the Board members on Monday.
- Mr. Pollak noted that the museum collection continues to increase and asked if anyone has any memorabilia at home, they send it his way. This week he received an 1882 graduation announcement and a football shirt from the 1990's.

VI. BUSINESS ITEMS

- Warrants
- Vendor Additions
- Treasurer's Reports

VII. EDUCATION ITEMS

VIII. BOARD OF EDUCATION ITEMS

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

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| March 9, 2005 | Budget Workshop | 6:00 PM Johnstown High School |
| March 16, 2005 | Business Meeting | 6:00 PM Public Session Johnstown High School |
| April 7*, 2005 (*in place of the scheduled April 6 th meeting) | Discussion/Business Meeting | 6:00 PM Public Session Johnstown High School |

X. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATIONS

Motion by Mr. Swatt seconded by Mr. Pollak to go to executive session for the purpose of discussing JTA negotiations, at 7:17 PM.

VOTE: 8 YES 0 NO

XI. MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Mr. Swatt seconded by Mr. Pollak to return to public session at 7:45 PM.

VOTE: 8 Yes 0 No

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Swatt seconded by Mr. Pollak to adjourn at 7:45 PM.

VOTE: 8 Yes 0 No

Respectfully submitted,

Larraina Carpenter
District Clerk