

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
August 23, 2007
7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Teneka Frost, President
William Barnette, Vice President
Wayne Morris, Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Judy Doesschate
Barbara Gaffuri
Jackie Jenkins-Cox

Dr. Eva. Joseph
Jeffrey Honeywell
Dr. Joseph Dragone
Kathleen Wetmore
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

ABSENT: None

Call to Order:

Ms. Frost called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Frost requested a moment of silence in memory of Shahied Oliver, a student in the District who passed away earlier this week. Ms. Frost welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph extended condolences to the family of Shahied Oliver, noting that the security of all of our students is a top a priority in the City School District of Albany. Dr. Joseph noted the district has been working this summer on a continuing basis to review procedures and implement new policies to ensure a safe orderly learning environment. Dr. Joseph noted there are changes that students and families will see when school begins as a result of the work this summer. As examples, the proposed code of conduct changes that the board will be considering for approval this evening will further clarify expectations for our students and responsibilities, and also the responsibilities of the district to enforce the policy. Dr. Joseph noted the district continues to work closely with local law enforcement officials to better understand tensions that might exist within the communities so the district can address conflicts before they escalate. Student IDs will be provided for students at Albany High School beginning this fall. The district is reviewing very carefully special student placements to be sure that the district is making the best provision, particularly for some of the students who have specialized or additional needs for supports and resources. Student orientation sessions have been ongoing. Expectations are being reviewed.

Dr. Joseph noted this is the last official board meeting here in Albany for Ms. Kathy Wetmore. Dr. Joseph advised the district is grateful that Ms. Wetmore has been here up to this point, presenting the finishing touches to the 2007-2008 budget, presenting information for consideration of approval of the tax warrant. Dr. Joseph joined board members in wishing Ms. Wetmore good luck.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Melissa Mackey addressed the board regarding district discipline policies and the achievement gap.
2. Bill Davis addressed the board regarding the fee schedule for the use of schools for after school programs.
3. Vincent Amodeo addressed the board regarding the Code of Conduct policy.
4. Celinda Taylor addressed the board regarding her son, Mister Taylor's education.
5. Torkin Fullard, advocate for Mister Taylor addressed the board relative to Mister Taylor's education.
6. Susan Pedro addressed the board regarding the fee schedule for the use of schools for after school programs.
7. Mary Beth Fowler addressed the board regarding the fee schedule for the use of schools for after school programs.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Ms. Frost presented the Routine Consent Items, including Resignations, Termination, Leaves of Absence, Transfers, Appointments (Administrative Appointments (Interim Principal, Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Business Affairs), Probationary Teachers, Regular Substitute Teachers, Part-time Teachers, Miscellaneous, ALC, Civil Service) Budget Status Report – 6/30/07, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Contract (Sawchuk Brown). Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve routine consent items. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion.

Dr. Joseph noted in terms of the Sawchuk Brown Contract, the board would be approving the contract subject to the final proposal being in a format that is acceptable to the superintendent and board counsel, Mr. Honeywell, who has requested that the payment schedule be defined more clearly. Dr. Joseph noted the amount of the contract and services remain the same.

Following discussion Mr. Barnette made a motion to table the contract until counsel and the superintendent are comfortable with the content prior to being presented to the board for action. Ms. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted 5 ayes and 2 opposed. Dr. Barth and Ms. Doesschate were opposed.

Motion passed.

Ms. Frost called the vote on approval of routine consent items.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the 2007-2008 Tax Warrant

Dr. Joseph advised Ms. Wetmore has continued to refine the figures since the district first adopted a contingency budget on June 4, 2007 to be sure they reflect the most current information related to revenues, projections, expenditures and the information regarding the assessment base. Dr. Joseph advised Ms. Wetmore has been working very closely with the City Assessors Office to get the best estimates about the impact of the reassessment on the tax levy. Dr. Joseph noted through the very diligent efforts of Ms. Wetmore, the district is able to commit to the tax rate presented to the community with the contingency budget on June 4th. Dr. Joseph

noted prior to approval of the tax warrant, the board would be asked to approve a budget amendment in the general fund.

Ms. Wetmore gave a very comprehensive presentation on the tax levy calculation, including the re appropriated amount in the fund balance and the increases in the projected fund balance based on additional revenues (back state aid paid in June for 92/93 – 98/99) and reduced expenses (utilities, health insurance, salaries & other benefits and miscellaneous). Final figures indicate the proposed tax rate for \$1,000 assessed is \$15.39 for 2007-08 for Homestead. The rate for \$1,000 assessed value is \$25.05 for 2007-08 for Non-Homestead. Ms. Wetmore advised the tax levy increase is now 2.66%, which was an increase in the budget of 11.12%. Ms. Wetmore advised the basic STAR exemption has been increased from \$30,000 to \$40,180 and the Enhanced STAR exemption has been increased from \$56,800 to \$76,100. Ms. Wetmore noted in addition tax rebate applications would be available on line on September 10, 2007. Ms. Wetmore advised the district would be putting information on the website regarding this application, which will allow homeowners to access additional rebates, based on the STAR exemption.

Ms Wetmore advised prior to adopting the tax warrant, the board is required to approve an amendment to the budget to increase the appropriated fund balance by \$2,675,000 and decrease the revenue from real property taxes the same amount. Following that approval, the tax warrant would require approval by the board.

Following discussion, Ms. Frost called for a motion to amend the budget. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the following to amend the general fund budget. Ms. Jackie Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the resolution.
Motion passed.

Ms. Frost then called for a motion to approve the tax warrant. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the resolution. Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the resolution.
Motion passed.

Code of Conduct Policy

Dr. Joseph advised the final revisions to the Code of Conduct policy reflect responses to questions previously presented by board members. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers reviewed the final revisions. Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the Code of Conduct Policy. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion.

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers advised the plain language booklet would be mailed to each household in the district by mid-September. The district is providing the full booklet to administrators who then can convert that into their handbook and other kinds of newsletters and other information that is sent home. Principals reviewed the changes during orientation pending final approval of the document.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

Comprehensive Education Plans

Ms. Frost presented the CEPs for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy and Hackett Middle School discussed at the August 7, 2007 board meeting for approval. Dr. Dragone noted there were minor changes made to the plans related to dates, etc. Dr. Dragone advised implementation is the next step in this process. Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the motion. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Use of Facility Fee Schedule

Ms. Frost presented the Use of Facility Fee schedule for discussion and possibly approval. Dr. Joseph advised as a result of the contingency budget, the district is now required to charge outside organizations for building use for non-school sponsored events. Dr. Joseph advised the standard fee used for budget planning is \$60/hour. Dr. Joseph advised the schedule also includes a menu of charges should the use not fall under the realm of specific use of certain facilities with all the amenities in place. Dr. Joseph this schedule has been reviewed very carefully with every concession the district is legally able to make within the contingency budget requirements that the district could hopefully advantage community partners with a reduced fee of approximately \$20/hour.

Ms. Wetmore advised the reduced fee charge was set after considering that \$60/hour is being charged to organizations when the building is not open, which required that a custodian come in on an overtime basis. If the building is already open there is a recognition that the district is not paying overtime for a custodian to cover the building

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the item. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion.

Following discussion that included the issue of billing outside organizations that have used facilities as of July 1, 2007. Ms. Wetmore noted these organizations have been advised that they would be charge for facility use. Ms. Frost advised additional information is available from Arnelle Ullrich at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Information will also be available on the district website.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Adjournment

Ms. Jenkins-Cox made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board