

CARLYNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting February 3, 2011 Carlynton Jr.-Sr. High School Cafeteria – 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The Carlynton School District Board of Education conducted its Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting on Thursday, February 3, 2011 in the cafeteria of the junior-senior high school. Those in attendance included President Thomas Brown, Vice President Patricia Schirripa and School Directors Thomas DiPietro, Sandra Hughan, Ronald McCartney, Nyra Schell, Betsy Tassaró, Raymond Walkowiak and Sharon Wilson. Also present was Superintendent Michael Panza, Solicitor Ira Weiss, Business Manager Kirby Christy and Principals Laura Burns, Jacie Maslyk, Robert Susini and Christopher Very. The audience was comprised of 93 individuals and three members of the press.

CALL TO ORDER - *The meeting was called to order by President Brown at 7:32 pm. Crafton Elementary student Emily Quinn was invited to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.*

ROLL CALL – *The roll was called by Recording Secretary Michale Herrmann. All members of the board were present.*

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD – *None; President Brown said he planned to conduct the beginning of the meeting a little differently, adding that comments would be accepted after the business portion of the meeting and following two separate presentations, one to be made by Dr. Panza, and the other by Director Walkowiak.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Wilson, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2011 Regular Voting Meeting as presented. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0-1, with Director Tassaró abstaining due to absence.**

REPORTS:

- **Executive Session** – *President Brown noted that employment, legal and labor issues were discussed in executive session, all within the guidelines of Section 11 of Board Policy .006.*
 - **Principals' Reports** – *The principals distributed newsletters and called attention to several highlights within the newsletters. The principals also relayed information about upcoming events in their buildings.*
 - **Business Manager Report** – *Mr. Christy reported the money has been sent out for the tax assessment appeal on Carnegie Towers*
- **Superintendent's Report** – *Dr. Panza enumerated the dates of upcoming meetings and events and recognized two board members who missed the school board recognition at the former meeting. He noted that teachers will be trained in the Olweus Bullying Prevention program; the program will be operated in the district through grant monies.*

Minutes – January 20, 2011

Deena Mitchell, the food service director for Aramark, provided a synopsis of the new nutritional guidelines, which will affect meal prices, but add more fruits and grains. She referenced new equipment purchases for the cafeteria as well, and Dr. Panza reported that a recent cafeteria audit found the cafeteria in full compliance.

Director Schirripa presented two books for the elementary libraries, as well as two stuffed animals that correlated with the books. One book and toy was provided through an AIU program and Mrs. Schirripa purchased the other so both libraries could have one.

I. Miscellaneous

Director Tassaro moved, seconded by Director Wilson, to approve the list of conference and field trip requests as presented and approved by administration:

- C...A.Harrity...AIU3...PASA Refresher...2/8
 - C...N.Kovanis...Carnegie Science Center...Math Collaborative...2/10
 - C...L.Burns/L.Myford...AIU3/D&B-Homestead...Alternative Ed Updates...2/17
 - C...M.Berlingeri/L.Burns/AMBunch/R.Foltz/M.Mishkin...PaTTAN...Least Restrictive Environment Training...2/23, 2/24, 4/27
 - C...M.Herrmann...Pgh. Conv. Ctr...PenSPRA Symposium...3/15-16
 - C...J.Ficorilli...South Fayette HS...Phys.Ed. Lesson/Instructional Updates...3/25
 - FT...MBVeri/M.Smoller...Pgh. Public Theater...Shakespeare...2/9
 - FT...MBVeri...North Allegheny HS...Battery Car Race...2/17
- (Miscellaneous Item #0211-01)

And the Letter of Understanding between the District and the Borough of Carnegie regarding an Educational and Governmental Channel to contribute to an informed citizenry by cablecasting non-commercial community announcements and/or programs. (Miscellaneous Item #0211-02)

By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.

Dr. Panza informed the board that the district is in the process of obtaining similar agreements with the other two boroughs within the district. He noted that the communities have the franchise and the district would sign an agreement to operate the programming.

II. Finance

President Brown announced that the two items below would be discussed following the presentations.

Select Option _____ as the preference for the elementary school;

Select _____ as construction manager for the preferred elementary school project.

Director Tassaro moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to approve the November 2010 Cafeteria Report as submitted by Aramark Educational Services. (Finance Item #0211-01) **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 9-0.**

Conference and Field Trip Requests

Letter of Understanding with Carnegie Borough – EG Channel

Discussion: Options for Elementary Schools
Discussion: Construction Manager

November 2010 Cafeteria Report

III. Personnel

Director Wilson moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to approve the addition and deletion to the 2010-2011 Supplemental Athletic List as presented and reviewed by administration:

- Scott Wolf – Boys' Assistant Varsity Baseball Coach
- John Vaughan – Varsity Head Football Coach: *Declare Open and post*
(Personnel Item #0211-01)

By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 9-0.

Director Wilson moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to approve Jaylynn Sapsara as a long term substitute at Carnegie Elementary School for the second semester of the 2010-2011 school year;

And the Leaves of Absence for Employees #SCA11-05 and #SCA11-06 as submitted. (Personnel Item #0211-02) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

IV. Student Services

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to approve the addition of the following bus drivers as submitted by STA and the Transportation Department:

- James Bennett
 - Walter Gardner
- (Student Services Item #0211-01)

By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.

V. Policies

Recommend the following motion:

The first reading of the updates to Policy No. 431, Job Related Expenses, as recommended by the administration; (Policy Item #0211-01) **PLACE ON AGENDA**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: *Before moving forward with the board meeting, President Brown asked all board members to state their names and share a brief biography about their term on the board and connection to the district.*

NEW BUSINESS: *Dr. Wilson shared information about a class offering at the AIU on February 24, sponsored by PSBA. The class is to discuss the ways to effectively communicate with the community. She felt it was a timely subject and hoped someone could attend.*

OPEN FORUM: *President Brown offered guidelines for audience conduct and then offered the floor to Dr. Panza so he could begin the Power Point presentation.*

Dr. Panza began the presentation by providing a history of the district schools. He proceeded by offering dates to illustrate when the district began the process of the feasibility study with a Request for Proposal to find a company to complete the study. After reviewing the RFPs, he explained the board's decision to hold off, then months later, making the decision to hire L.R. Kimball to complete the study. He discussed the feasibility study and reviewed the ten options offered by Kimball. He continued the presentation by offering data of classroom sizes/enrollment, floor

Addition/Deletion to the 2010-2011 Supplemental Athletic List

LTS at Carnegie – Jaylynn Sapsara

Leaves of Absence

Additional STA Bus Drivers

Updates to Policy No. 431 – First Reading

plans of the elementary schools to indicate classroom usage, the hiring of Kimball as the Architect of Record, the hiring of a bond council and an underwriter, the PlanCon process as defined and required by the Department of Education, and the decision to hire Thomas and Williamson to complete a cost modeling study. He concluded the nearly hour-long presentation by opening the floor for discussion, but before that occurred, Director Walkowiak distributed a spreadsheet to all board members and began to breakdown costs to illustrate which options from the feasibility study would be best for the district and its taxpayers. Director Walkowiak said he wanted to provide a financial snapshot of the district as it stands now and into the future, and apologized that he was not able to put the information into a PowerPoint for all to see. Mr. Walkowiak said he based his numbers on many facets and began with a \$10 million dollar figure from the fund balance, rather than the existing \$12 million. By reviewing the options presented by Kimball, his statistics demonstrated that some options would allow for no tax increases through the year 2015, while another would place the district in the red. Director Walkowiak said he integrated unknown factors into his data by combining increases in health care costs, the pension issue and probable unfunded mandates. President Brown asked him if he had used the PSERs (pension plan) rates and other published rates for his projections. Director Walkowiak said yes.

Director Wilson said she was using the presentations to further reflect on the many questions she has had and has heard from the public. She said she is still struggling with which option is the best. Going on, Director Wilson said she voted for the Architect of Record because she was told it was the means to discuss a change within the options. She said she voted for the Thomas and Williamson study to see a costed-out number for the options so the board could pick and choose what options they wanted. She commented that Director Walkowiak's presentation raised further concern about how the district and taxpayers would pay for a new building project. Calling attention to a booklet by PSBA, she read that it is less costly to renovate and read a list of benefits to renovating, adding that she values the benefits of small neighborhood schools. Director Wilson said all she has heard is the bottom line, referring to costs, but little about educational value. She said she is seeking an option for renovation at a lower cost, which we have yet to see.

Director Wilson went on to say that people make the greatest changes in education; not a building. She then asked how Pathfinder could make so many renovations to its buildings under Act 77 without it costing anything. Dr. Panza and John Hummel from Kimball explained that there are "hidden" costs under Act 77—the companies completing the work are compensated through the energy savings that is generated by completing certain jobs. Mr. Kimball added that these jobs are not reimbursable and can only be those which will generate energy savings, such as window replacements.

Director Brown noted that the overall renovation costs based on the Thomas and Williamson report were more expensive, although the breakdown did allow for paring down of spaces which would therefore reduce costs.

Director Schell said the Thomas and Williamson report allowed the board to take a closer look at their study. By tweaking it, she said, the board could decide what is truly needed and is most affordable without burdening the taxpayers. She said there has to be a better option between doing nothing and \$30 million.

Comments and questions were then taken from the audience.

Ron Yochum introduced himself as a representative of Pittsburgh History and Landmarks and a member of the Brentwood School District school board. He also mentioned that he worked as a maintenance person at Brentwood. He called attention to publications that showed that renovating is less expensive. He offered that Standard and Poors has linked older schools to better education for students, adding that he can appreciate the board's challenges because he saw similar issues at Brentwood. Going on, he said the Brentwood school board took a similar study completed by Thomas and Williamson and selected the needs for the school. Mr. Yochum said the inside of the school was completely gutted and reconstructed, all within code guidelines and standards. He closed by saying that renovations can go a long way.

Crafton resident Kevin Smallman thanked the board for the open dialogue and presentations. He said he has a grave concern with the building project, adding that the research he has read states that smaller schools are more educationally sound.

Steve Tassaro, of Rosslyn Farms, spoke on behalf of another individual. He asked the board not to distort the difference between renovation and additions because they are two distinct options. Renovation makes changes to the existing and additions add additional costs, Mr. Tassaro said. He commented that it is not fair to the public if the board is unclear about this.

John Thomas of Thomas and Williamson stated that earlier references to Brentwood School District, as well as elementary schools within the Mt. Lebanon School District, were renovated without any additions. Mr. Tassaro suggested a plan be laid out based upon the amount of money the district has to spend and go forward with that. In closing, he said the board is not ready to vote.

April Weitzel of Crafton asked why the options for building a new school added so many additional rooms. John Hummel explained that the floor plan designs give a false impression of space when considering the accommodations for necessary rooms. He said that when conducting the feasibility study, his firm considered the projected enrollment provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and then looked at the present structure of the buildings to see if additional support classrooms could be integrated within the structure. John Thomas added that ADA codes and the need for support rooms did not allow enough space within the existing shells of Crafton and/or Carnegie Elementary. This, he indicated, is the difference between Crafton Elementary and the Brentwood school. Going on, he explained that in two separate buildings, functional rooms such as the principal's office, auditorium, etc., are configured into one (of each) in a new building, equaling less space. Mrs. Weitzel said her husband worked on the Brentwood school project and he informed her that everything inside the building was removed to the studs, with sky above, and then reconstructed all within the time frame of the school's summer break.

Monica Dugan of Crafton asked if the board has given consideration to the implications of the new governor's plans to allow vouchers and give greater power to charter schools. She noted that costs for this could be great, adding that a number of parents would place their children in a charter school, at district expense, if a new school was built.

Crafton resident Megan Schriver said she was unsure of how the process to consolidate schools and build a new one started, especially since the two schools perform as well as they do now. She said she researched and learned that many

districts cross-district students and it can be a benefit, if done correctly. In closing, she said that by building one school, the district is then, in fact, crossing districting 350-plus students.

Jim Schriver, of Crafton, thanked Dr. Panza and Director Walkowiak for their informative presentations. He made reference to PlanCon and asked if the district is required to seek reimbursement. John Hummel said yes and no. He explained that a project's scope and scale determines whether PlanCon is necessary under Act 34. Dr. Panza said that changes are mandated to meet codes. Mr. Schriver asked if reimbursement would not be required, for instance, if a renovation project used only \$8, \$10 or \$12 million. John Thomas said it may not be required, but paperwork would still need to be submitted to the state for Act 34. John Hummel interjected that renovation needs at Crafton were estimated at \$12 million; at Carnegie the estimate was \$11 million – and this did not include additional space or classrooms. Director Schell offered that renovations to the existing building could work because it would not be heinously illegal to move special services to other available classrooms within the buildings as is currently done.

John Thomas commented that the bricks and mortar upgrades need to meet required codes. John Hummel agreed, adding that not only is it important for the students, but for parents, teachers and visitors who come into the schools. Director McCartney concluded that renovations with only hard costs would be over \$20 million. By adding in the soft costs, he continued, it is more realistic to consider a new building with optimal opportunities for education.

Director Walkowiak asked if the high school fulfills ADA compliance. Mr. Hummel said the most recent ADA rules were set in 1990; with the renovation of the high school completed in 1996, the building was in good shape.

Jim Schriver reported that the renovations to the Brentwood school were done for \$5 million dollars and the school was completely gutted. Mr. Thomas, whose company was a part of that process, said the project was done in 1997. He noted that much of the inside of the building was of wood construction, whereas Crafton Elementary is not. Mr. Thomas agreed that only the shell of the Brentwood school stood, with complete changes inside.

Mr. Schriver said that presently there are some rooms at Crafton not being used all day long. He suggested creative scheduling could be done to help accommodate support programs.

Dr. Panza called attention to the fact that Brentwood has raised taxes and are now the third highest taxing district in the county. He also spoke with the superintendent at Brentwood and learned that class sizes are not balanced due to space limitations.

Carnegie Councilman Pat Catena came forward and named several other leaders from the community who were present, including Police Chief Harbin. Mr. Catena said Carnegie would welcome a new building or renovation in their community, adding that they will work cooperatively with the school district on any decision that needs to be made. He added that the partnerships already in place with the school and the community of Carnegie are valuable. He went on to say that everyone needs to agree on what is best for all and make a sound decision to enable the best educational value for the children of the district. The children, he stated, are the common denominator that unites the communities.

Crafton resident and PTA president Sara Koval asked why they were forbidden to place information on the elementary marquee about the meeting. Dr. Panza said he was fine with announcing the meeting's date and time, but said that advertising the availability of babysitting was an issue. She asked how that was different from advertising something like soccer sign-ups, especially when the organization was not directly related to the district.

Pamela Canine introduced herself as a fairly new resident to Crafton. She said she and her husband chose to buy a home there because of the nearness of the school and they had heard much about the success of Crafton Elementary. Mrs. Canine said her home is over 100 years old and they are renovating. With that said, she added that she would like to see Crafton Elementary renovated.

David Robb, of Rosslyn Farms, said his children have had a positive experience at Crafton Elementary. He said he and his wife, when speaking to others, often praise the attributes of a small school system and the benefits of parents and teachers knowing one another. Mr. Robb said he favors the renovation of the elementary school in a measured way; not a gross over-doing, but by looking at the greatest needs. He said he has a great concern with placing each community at the risk of having abandoned buildings and offered that if the combining the two elementary schools is due to economics, then perhaps the district should consider merging with another district. In closing, he again said he advocated renovation, but on a measured scale.

Crafton resident Carl Hunt offered thanks to the board for the open dialogue. He went on to say the district is great because of the teachers, the principals and the families in the communities. Mr. Hunt called attention to the SOS website, asking the board to read the some 600 signatures of those opposing the closing of the elementary school. He asked the board to look more deeply into renovation with modifications.

Rosslyn Farms resident Anne Lackner thanked the board for answering her questions but stated some questions remained unclear. She respectfully asked the board to not make a decision prematurely.

Crafton Councilman Dan Cindric came forward and said he appreciated the comments from Pat Catena. Mr. Cindric called attention to the Crafton leaders represented in the audience. He went on to say he had an issue with the presentation given by Dr. Panza in regards to the former schools in Crafton, noting that First Ward is now a playground, owned by the municipality, and is not on the tax rolls. He pointed out that the former school on South Linwood was also owned by the borough and not on the tax rolls, and the property near Parke Street was abandoned and in tax arrears. Continuing, he commented that if Dr. Panza provided false information about the former schools, it made him wonder if other things he has said are untrue. Mr. Cindric went on to say that if the district chooses not to renovate Crafton Elementary, property values will fall and young families will move out of the community. He said the school is a stabilizing force in the Crafton community. In closing, Mr. Cindric said Crafton Borough will not support a new construction. He said council will take all and any necessary measures to prevent consolidation and to see that Crafton Elementary remains in the community.

Crafton Elementary resident Alan Dorfield noted that Crafton was recently named the best place to raise children. He said the elementary school played a role in that honor.

Carnegie Mayor Jack Kobistek thanked the board for their time. He then questioned the status of the Carnegie Elementary gymnasium floor. Dr. Panza said the company has begun working, with expected completion in early March. President Brown explained that schedules have had to be changed significantly because of the floor, since it is often used for athletic practices and by outside groups, as well as by the students in the school for gym classes. Mr. Kobistek shared a comment made by Lou Trombetta from the Chariters Boys and Girls Club, who said: "Please don't take the school from us." Mr. Kobistek said Mr. Trombetta was referring to the partnership the organization has with the school and how it benefits students. Mr. Kobistek said he told Mr. Trombetta that the club is a valuable entity to the community and the school. In closing, Mr. Kobistek shared a story about how the children of Carnegie Elementary recognized Dax, the Carnegie police dog, at a community event. He said this portrays the importance of the police department's involvement with the school.

Mark Popovich, of Carnegie, commented that the experts hired to complete the feasibility study concluded it would cost about \$21 million to renovate while the Thomas and Williamson projected hard costs around \$18 million. Mr. Popovich said he has concerns with the disruptions of renovating, and the fact that the buildings are at capacity. Why not, he asked, go for the additional \$6 or 7 million to build an optimal school to make for a better educational experience? John Thomas explained that his projections of \$18 million did not include soft costs, which would easily bring the costs to \$21 million or greater for renovating. John Hummel stated that his company's renovation projections of \$21 million did not include costs for support classrooms.

Director Hughan asked for an explanation of hard costs versus soft costs. Mr. Hummel said costs related to a construction project are typically divided into hard and soft costs. In general, hard costs relate to actual improvements to the real property and include construction costs such as walls, heating and ventilation and air conditioning systems. Soft costs, he said, relate to professional fees, furniture and other items that are intangible, short-lived or movable. Mr. Hummel said the allocation between the costs is of critical importance on larger projects and in new building construction.

Crafton resident Crystal Boehm asked about the unexcavated space shown in the floor plans on the PowerPoint presentation. John Thomas explained that much of the areas were either below or partially below ground level and although he and his men crawled into some of the spaces to investigate, none appeared to be promising, nor practical, for construction. John Hummel said his team looked at the spaces as well, and considered it useful for running conduits or plumbing, but nothing more.

The principals and the business manager were excused from the meeting at this point.

Director Walkowiak said he made up a list of 12 questions. He said his greatest concern is for the district to make the best use of space in the most economical fashion. He began questioning about square footage, enrollment numbers, and the number of necessary classrooms. Both John Thomas and John Hummel explained that a final building design has yet to be provided; the sketches offered in the feasibility and cost modeling study are rough designs to illustrate classroom count and necessary spaces, adding that much of it was done mathematically to account for spaces, but they were not necessarily the exact sizes. Mr. Walkowiak then decided to forward the remainder of the questions to

John Thomas, explaining he would speak with him one on one to get the answers. He said he needed to be confident that the board is making the right decision and doing the job exactly as it should be done, but most importantly, he added, he needed to be reassured before spending so much money.

Crafton resident Betsy Martin asked how many students the high school was built to hold. Dr. Panza said he did not know that answer without researching the question. He commented that the high school also now has classrooms for “special” classes. Mrs. Martin asked if the high school could contain the sixth grade. She went on to suggest that it might be less expensive to add on to the high school because of land availability, move the sixth grade to the junior-senior high school, and thereby create more space at the elementary schools. Dr. Panza said the issue of highly qualified teachers would then come into play; Mrs. Martin said it was an issue to easily overcome.

Mrs. Martin then questioned the need for a construction manager. She said she was involved with the renovation of the Carnegie Free Library and that work was being done without a construction manager. Dr. Panza and John Thomas said a construction manager was a necessary part of the process and explained that they are responsible in overseeing the project to be certain all is being done correctly and up to standards.

Dr. Panza asked a question related to Crafton Elementary and the codes for dead-end corridors. John Thomas said the state has a code which limits the number of dead-end corridors within a building. He went on to say that it would be difficult to correct those corridors because there are major issues with the areas. Mr. Thomas said this is one of the reasons a range of costs is given rather than a specific cost because in renovating, unexpected issues can arise.

Susie Kozy, of Crafton, called attention to the issue of the room availability. She said her son is hearing impaired and an AIU hearing specialist comes to Crafton Elementary twice a week to work with him. Mrs. Kozy said that upon speaking with her son’s specialist, she has learned that while they may have to move from room to room based on availability, it does not present any negative impact to her son. Saying this, she said she does not believe her son needs a room; what is most important is what he is taught within the four walls of a room.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further comments or business to discuss, Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 pm. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kirby Christy, Board Secretary

Michale Herrmann, Recording Secretary