

CARLYNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting May 5, 2011 Carlynton Jr.-Sr. High School Library – 7:30 pm

MINUTES

The Carlynton School District Board of Education conducted its Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting on May 5, 2011 in the library 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 Janet Burkardt, Business Manager Kirby Christy and Principals Laura Burns, Jacie Maslyk, Robert Susini and Christopher Very. The audience was comprised of 17 individuals and two members of the press.

CALL TO ORDER - *The meeting was called to order by President Brown at 7:30 pm. Carnegie Elementary sixth grade students Hannah Diulus and Nathaniel Wilcox, DARE essay contest winners, led the pledge.*

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*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Director McCartney moved to remove the minutes of the March 17, 2011 Regular Voting Meeting from the table.

Director Wilson questioned a line in the minutes that recorded a statement by Kirby Christy and asked that it be stricken. Director Schirripa disagreed and explained that the sentence was in fact what Mr. Christy had stated. Director Walkowiak concurred. After some discussion, Director Wilson agreed.

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Schell, to approve the tabled minutes of the March 17, 2011 Regular Voting Meeting as presented with revisions. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2011 Committee/Voting Meeting as presented.

Director Schell noted a correction to page 7201 regarding the results of a roll call vote, stating the minutes should reflect: "By a roll call vote, the motion carried 7-2, with Directors Brown and Schirripa voting no."

As amended, and by a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.

REPORTS:

- **Executive Session** – *President Brown stated that employment, legal and labor issues were discussed in executive session, all within the guidelines of board policy.*
 - **Principals' Reports** – *The principals distributed newsletters with highlights of activities and events occurring in their buildings. The high school principals discussed the options for elective courses and asked for permission to offer Economics Scholars*

Revised Minutes of the
March 17, 2011 Meeting

Minutes of the April 14, 2011
Meeting

course despite enrollment lower than policy guidelines.

- Business Manager Report – Mr. Christy reported he has learned the gaming tax break for taxpayers will be \$164.17 under the Homestead/Farmstead Act. The figure the district will receive is \$557,916.79.
- Superintendent's Report – Dr. Panza reviewed the calendar of events; he noted that discussion regarding the Electronic Device policy took place at the Elementary Education Committee meeting and will also be discussed at the secondary level. He said the elementary staff believes the policy should stand as is. Dr. Panza also provided an update on the balcony steps at Crafton Elementary, adding that John Recchio, maintenance foreman, believes he can do the work and complete it by the end of May. In regards to a question at the former meeting about the savings generated by the new capacitor, he reported that the initial savings is \$458.58. Director Walkowiak asked him to maintain a tally and report again at the end of the year.
- ✓ Secretary's Correspondence – The minutes of the Parkway West Career and Technology Center Joint Operating Committee Meeting of March 1, 2011 were entered into record. (SC Item #0511-01)

BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD:

I. Miscellaneous

Director DiPietro moved, seconded by Director McCartney, to approve the list of conference and field trip requests as submitted and approved by administration:

- C...J.Sweeney...Holiday Inn, Monroeville...Homeless Issues...5/4
 - C...L.Myford/E.Cummings/S.Kosko/N.Kovanis/L.Rowley/N.Tobin L.Zimmerman...Radisson, GT...Title 1 Prof. Dev...5/10
 - C...M. Sywy...Bethel Park/ProSoft...Training...5/10
 - C...L.Rowley...AIU...Federal Programs Updates...5/25
 - FT...M.Smoller...August Wilson Ctr...AA Quiz Bowl...5/28
 - FT...Crafton 6th Gr...Carnegie... Library Civil War Room...5/9
 - FT...P.Stone...Carnegie Science Ctr...Science Concepts...5/10
 - FT...R.Pedersen...Carnegie/Crafton Students to HS for Band Concert Rehearsal...5/11
 - FT...Crafton 5th Gr...Meadowcroft Village...Indian Artifacts...5/12
 - FT...R.Pedersen... Carnegie/Crafton Students to HS for Band Concert Rehearsal...5/13
 - FT...Crafton 4th Gr...Duquesne Incline/Just Ducky Tours...5/17
 - FT...Carnegie 5th Gr...Challenge By Choice...Team Building...5/18
 - FT...F.Zebrasky...S.Fayette HS...LS Prom...5/19
 - FT...MBVeri...Jr. High GATE Students to Crafton to Present...5/20
 - FT...MBVeri...Jr. High GATE Students to Carnegie to Present...5/23
 - FT...M.Clark...National Aviary...Integrate Language Arts...6/7
- (Miscellaneous Item #0511-01)

The 2011-2012 Carlynton Junior-Senior High School Student Handbook as presented;

President Brown suggested the printing of the handbook be delayed until a decision is reached on the Electronic Device policy.

Conference and Field Trip Requests

2011-2012 Junior-Senior High Student Handbook

And the list of Elective Courses at the junior-senior high school level for the 2011-2012 school year, as amended to include AP Economics, and per recommendation of Dr. Susini.

*Prior to voting, Director Wilson said she was uncomfortable with not offering Organic Chemistry. Dr. Susini explained it was a contractual issue because the teacher would need to be assigned to cafeteria duty. Director Tassaro questioned the exclusion of Computer Programming I and II. Dr. Susini said this too was regarding a staffing issue, although students have been redirected and schedules are still full. **By a voice vote, all three items were approved by a 9-0 vote.***

II. Finance

The following four items were recommended for placement on the May 19, 2011 agenda:

Treasurer's Report for the month of April 2011 as presented;

The April 2011 bills in the amount of \$_____ as presented;

The 2011-2012 proposed final budget in the amount of \$_____ with a millage rate of 24.15 and to advertise the proposed final budget for a period of 30 days prior to the adoption of the annual budget. This amount represents no millage increase;

And the Software Maintenance Contract between the district and ProSoft Technologies for the 2011-2012 school year as presented.

Director Tassaro said that when reviewing the April bills, she noticed a bill from Kimball and asked if it had been paid. Mr. Christy said he would have to check and get back to her. Director Hugan stated that she did not vote for the budget last year because she did not believe the bond money should have been rolled over. She asked if this would happen this year and Mr. Christy said no.

Director Wilson moved, seconded by Director McCartney, to approve the request to acquire state income tax information from the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue for the 2009 tax year and that this information be placed on CD-Rom for processing by Jordan Tax Services, Inc.; (Finance Item #0511-01)

Borough of Carnegie Real Estate Tax Refund as presented. (Finance Item #0511-02)

The Academic Mental Health Services Agreement between the district and Wesley Spectrum Services for the 2011-2012 school year as presented; (Finance Item #0511-03)

The Letter of Agreement between the district and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic for a SAP Liaison for the 2011-2012 school year as presented; (Finance Item #0511-04)

The Contractual Agreement between the district and Pressley Ridge for the period of March 7, 2011 through June 10, 2011 for out-placed educational

List of Elective Courses for the 2011-2012 School Year

Treasurer's Report – April 2011
April 2011 Bills

2011-2012 Proposed Final Budget

Software Maintenance Agreement with ProSoft

2009 Tax Information for Jordan Tax Services, Inc.

Carnegie RE Tax Refund

Academic Mental Health Services Agreement for the 2011-2012 School Year

Letter of Agreement with Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic for a SAP Liaison

Contractual Agreement with Pressley Ridge for

services as presented. Payment is rendered only upon use of services; (Finance Item #0511-05)

And the Contract Agreement between the district and Mars Home for Youth for the 2011-2012 school year for out-placed educational services as presented. Payment is rendered only upon use of services. (Finance Item #0511-06) **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 9-0.**

III. Personnel

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPiero, to approve the Temporary Professional Employee Contract for teacher Bridget Ward under the terms and agreements of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement;

Letter of Intent to Retire of high school special education teacher Timothy Bonner, effective the last day of the 2010-2011 school year, under the terms and conditions of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement; (Personnel Item #0511-01)

Letter of Intent to Retire of Carnegie Elementary teacher Reneé Carter, effective the last day of the 2010-2011 school year, under the terms and conditions of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement; (Personnel Item #0511-02)

Letter of Intent to Retire of Carnegie Elementary teacher Darlene Jicomelli, effective the last day of the 2010-2011 school year, under the terms and conditions of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement; (Personnel Item #0511-03)

Letter of Intent to Retire of high school choral teacher Mary Lear, effective the last day of the 2010-2011 school year, under the terms and conditions of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement; (Personnel Item #0511-04)

Letter of Intent to Retire of high school Consumer Science teacher Debra Smith, effective the last day of the 2010-2011 school year, under the terms and conditions of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement; (Personnel Item #0511-05)

Educational Sabbatical request for high school Spanish teacher Lynne Cramer for the 2011-2012 school year as presented; (Personnel Item #0511-06)

Full-year Leaves of Absence for Employees #CFT11-05 and #CFT11-06 as presented; (Personnel Item #0511-07) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

President Brown asked that the retirees be invited to a board meeting and be recognized.

Outplacement Services

Contract Agreement with Mars Home for Youth

TPE Contract – Bridget Ward

Letter of Intent to Retire – Timothy Bonner

Letter of Intent to Retire – Reneé Carter

Letter of Intent to Retire – Darlene Jicomelli

Letter of Intent to Retire – Mary Lear

Letter of Intent to Retire – Debra Smith

Educational Sabbatical – Lynne Cramer

Child Rearing Leaves – Employee #CFT11-05 / 06

IV. Student Services

Director Schell moved, seconded by Director Wilson, to approve the additions to the driver list for the 2010-2011 school year as provided by Student Transportation of America. (Student Services Item #0511-01) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

Additions to STA Driver List

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: *Director Schell asked for an update on the Carnegie roof over the gymnasium. Dr. Panza and Principal Chris Very said there have been no problems despite all the rain and the work on the roof will begin on Monday. Director Schell asked if additional budget meetings will be scheduled. Dr. Panza suggested that everyone email possible dates to him.*

Director DiPietro asked who will give the final okay for the Crafton balcony if it is finished prior to sixth grade graduation. Dr. Panza said the Crafton Building Inspector would make the decision. Director McCartney asked that Gleason, the insurance agency, also be asked to examine the balcony since they played a role in closing it. Director DiPietro said he would like a solicitor and an engineer to look at it before opening. Director Schell read the letter from Gleason which stated in writing the directions upon which the balcony could be reopened. Director DiPietro said he just wanted to be sure the job was completed correctly. Some discussion followed with some concerns about the suggested “warning signs” from the Gleason Agency.

NEW BUSINESS: *Director Schirripa said she had a statement to make and began reading a prepared document in regards to the upflow of the district’s fund balance. Director Schirripa said the fund balance is sizable and it has grown steadily in the last six years. She noted that despite the proposed cuts by Governor Corbett, the district still intends to grow the fund balance. She passed out several documents, derived from the annual audit by Hosack, Specht, Muetzel and Wood, to illustrate that the finances of the district are healthy. In all fairness, she said, “it is time to reduce the burden to our taxpayers.” She proposed a millage reduction of one mill, from 24.15 to 23.15, which would still leave the district with a fund balance. Going on, Director Schirripa said that even if the building project moves forward, a bond would not be obtained for several years, thus allowing the district to further grow the fund balance. After further discussion, the following motion was made:*

Director Schirripa moved, seconded by Director McCartney, to reduce the millage rate by one mill, from 24.15 to 23.15, for the 2011-2012 school year.

Director Schell said she believed the extra money should be used to enhance or fund items that would offer educational value to the student and the schools rather than “getting by.” She added that the money would allow the board to look at the “holes” in the curriculum and programming and make improvements.

Director Walkowiak said he believed the introduction of a tax decrease was a good plan. He also said he believes more budget meetings are necessary, adding that money is available to add staff or programs while still lowering the millage.

Director Schell cited physical plant issues; Director Schirripa offered another chart to illustrate that these issues can be made without hurting the budget. Director McCartney agreed, and read from the chart to reiterate that money would be available for projects without hurting the fund balance. Director Schell said she would be more comfortable discussing it further in budget meetings

before voting on the matter. She said she wished to err on the side of caution.

Director Walkowiak asked Mr. Christy if he saw any issues with reducing the millage. Mr. Christy noted that once the tax rate is decreased, a cap (index rate) is then in place for future tax increases. Mr. Christy went on to say the district would have about \$550K less for “down the road.” He also stated that reducing the millage rate would change the initial goal of the board to boost the fund balance for capital improvements or a future building project.

President Brown said that as a member of the board, he said he has watched the fund balance grow. He said that overall, he believes lowering the millage rate is the right thing to do.

Director DiPietro asked Mr. Christy how he would see the fund balance growing in the future. Mr. Christy repeated that the index cap would limit the amount taxes could be raised.

Director Schell said that when she first became a member of the school board, there was discussion to lower the tax rate and it was considered irresponsible; she added that she did not see how it could be any less irresponsible now. She said she did not see how lowering the millage rate could benefit students or the taxpayers in the long run. Director Schell again said it would be better to figure out what issues can be met with the monies available now.

Director McCartney said, “By my way of thinking, we have a \$1.5 million windfall because we do not have debt or owe money to a bond service.”

Director Wilson said she would certainly like to lower taxes, but the students’ education is always her primary concern. Textbooks and other things are needed, she said, and the board should look toward the future and have budget discussions before making a decision. She said a vote now seemed premature.

Discussion ensued about necessary programs and repairs to the schools.

Director Walkowiak spoke up to note that the fund balance is over 50 percent of the budget. Director Schirripa said it was in fact 58 percent over. Director Walkowiak agreed that needs could be addressed in budget meetings, adding that the board does have the opportunity to add programs and not make cuts in other areas even while lowering the millage rate. He said he felt comfortable doing so, again stressing that budget meetings are necessary.

Director Hughan said it has been her belief that the money in the fund balance is from past and current taxpayers and it is now time to allow the future generations of taxpayers to rebuild the fund balance through their taxes. She added that the district should give back to the taxpayer, especially in today’s economic struggles.

Director Tassaro asked Mr. Christy if he had seen the charts presented at the meeting. Mr. Christy said no. Director Tassaro asked if the superintendent and business manager could be directed to make a presentation at the next meeting to illustrate how a new budget would work at the lower millage rate so the board could be better informed before voting on the motion.

Director Walkowiak noted that the budget the board will approve at the end of May is the preliminary budget and the final budget will be adopted at the end of June. He offered that there is time to build the budget and meet the parameters to reflect the 23.15 tax rate. Mr. Christy mentioned that to reach the 23.15 rate, revenues would need to be lowered.

With no further discussion, the board voted on the aforementioned motion to lower the tax millage rate by one mill for the 2011-2012 school year. **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 8-1, with Director Schell voting NO.**

OPEN FORUM: *Director Wilson publicly thanked Mrs. Maggi Mishkin for coordinating a wonderful career day earlier in the week. She also called attention to the June Relay for Life and the date of the Pathfunder graduation. Director Wilson ended by commenting on the STEAM night at Crafton Elementary, stating it was a great program.*

Crafton resident Jim Schriver asked if the Crafton Elementary roof issue was in the budget. Dr. Panza said not at this time, but indicated that John Recchio and Burns and Scallo will be looking at the roof with plans to reach a decision on making repairs.

Audience member Ray Mussial thanked the board for their time and dedication. He said he has been a long-time supporter of the district and its athletics but said he has been distressed by the girls' softball program. President Brown cautioned Mr. Mussial about discussing items regarding personnel in a public forum and explained that end-of-season meetings are held to review coaches and the season in general.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further comments or business to discuss, Director Hugan moved, seconded by Director McCartney, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kirby Christy, Board Secretary

Michale Herrmann, Recording Secretary