

WHITLEY COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

107 North Walnut Street

Columbia City, IN 46725

260-244-5771

Board Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2008

The Board of School Trustees of the Whitley County Consolidated Schools met in the Board Room at the Marshall Community Center on Tuesday, April 15, 2008. Present were: Deborah Hiss, Brooks Langeloh, Jill Western, William Tucker, Nicki Baker, J. Lynn Workman, Tim Bloom, and Don Armstrong. Absent was Board member Bob Thomas. Present also were Dr. Laura Huffman, Steve Bloomfield and Tony Zickgraf of Whitley County Consolidated Schools.

OPENING OF MEETING

Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge was given by CariAnn Freed, a student at Mary Raber Elementary School. She was introduced by Mrs. Julie Turpin, Principal.

PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS – none

CONSENT ITEMS

With a motion by J. L. Workman and a second by D. Hiss the Board voted unanimously (8-0) to approve all consent items beginning with the Approval of Minutes for Board Meeting of March 18, 2008 and concluding with #2 under heading of (M) Donations. Discussion prior to the vote was a comment by a board member. The comment was that field trips at the high school should have a ratio of ten students to every one chaperone along with criminal background checks for all chaperones. It was suggested that a minimum of one cell phone should be available per group if the group is split up. Board President, Don Armstrong, noted the comment.

Approval of Minutes for Board Meeting of March 18, 2008

Approval of Vouchers/Education Expenses

Claim # 631 - # 690

03/19/2008 – 03/31/2008

Claim # 691 - # 880

04/01/2008 – 04/15/2008

Personnel:

A. Resignations:

1. Brandy Smith , CCHS Physical Education Teacher – Half Time, effective, May 29, 2008

B. Retirements:

1. None

C. New Contracts:

1. Gregg Goewert, CCHS Principal, effective July 1, 2008

D. Long-Term Substitutes:

1. Joyce Hull, CCHS Long Term Substitute – Attendance Secretary, effective March 17, 2008
2. April Conley, CCHS Long Term Substitute – Resource Assistant, effective March 24, 2008
3. Mary Neher, LTES Noon/Recess Assistant Substitute, effective March 24, 2008

E. Medical Leaves:

1. None

F. Transfers:

1. None

G. Leave of Absences:

1. None

H. Unpaid Leave of Absences:

1. Courtney Gordon, ISMS Language Arts Teacher, effective May 12 through May 13, 2008 (2 unpaid days) [Already approved April 7 & 8, 2008, these dates were cancelled]
2. Courtney Gordon, ISMS Language Arts Teacher, effective April 14, 2008 (1 unpaid day)
3. Courtney Gordon, ISMS Language Arts Teacher, effective April 24 through April 25, 2008 (2 unpaid days)
4. Barbara Cowen, MRES Pre-School Paraprofessional, effective April 7, 2008 (1 unpaid day)
5. Maryanne Willcutts, CCHS Social Studies Teacher, effective September 2 through September 5, 2008 (4 unpaid days)

I. Extra Co-Curricular Assignments:

1. Lori Heuer, Summer School Coordinator, effective April 16, 2008
2. Dennis Beckner, ISMS Stage Manager, effective March 17, 2008
3. Shannon Rehrer, CCHS Assistant Volleyball Coach, effective June 9, 2008
4. Jim Thompson, CCHS Assistant Boys Golf Coach, effective July 28, 2008
5. Lori Minnick, CCHS 9th Grade Volleyball Coach, effective March 21, 2008

J. *Extra Co-Curricular Resignations:*

1. Bruce Wood, CCHS Assistant Boys Golf Coach, effective March 21, 2008

K. *Volunteer Extra Co-Curricular Assignments:*

1. Bruce Wood, CCHS Assistant Boys Golf Coach – Volunteer, effective April 16, 2008
2. Zac Bireley, CCHS Assistant Baseball Coach – Volunteer, effective April 16, 2008
3. Terry Shively, CCHS Assistant Baseball Coach – Volunteer, effective April 16, 2008

L. *Field Trips:*

1. CCHS – Speech and Debate Teams to the National Forensic League National Tournament in Las Vegas, NV on June 12 (or 13) – June 21, 2008
2. CCHS – Band & Guard to Chicago, IL on May 15 – May 17, 2008
3. CCHS – Show Choir (City Heat, City Lights, City Soul and Crew) to Chicago, IL on April 26 - April 27, 2008
4. CCHS – FFA to Michigan State University on April 26, 2008
5. CCHS – FFA to Danville, IN on May 2 – May 3, 2008
6. CCHS – FFA to Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN on June 16 – June 19, 2008

M. *Donations:*

1. Accept monetary donation from Target for the students of Mary Raber Elementary School.
2. Accept painting from Dr. Laura Huffman for the purpose of CCHS scholarship.

N. *Permission to discard non-working equipment:*

1. None

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Alternative Learning Program Agreement for 2008-2009 School Year – With a motion by D. Hiss and a second by N. Baker the Board voted unanimously (8-0) to approve the agreement as submitted in the Board packet. Discussion prior to the vote: One Board member wanted to confirm that if the number of students attending could be expanded if necessary. Mr. Bloomfield responded that Mr. Yoder, Guidance Counselor at CCHS, has been doing a great job of being the liaison between WCCS and YIC.

Proposal to Refinance Existing Bonds – An 8-0 consensus from the Board to have City Securities watch the market and if it is favorable then go ahead and refinance the ISMS Bonds.

Re-Award 2008 School Bus Bids – Mr. Zickgraf shared with the Board that there was an error on the bus bids that they awarded at last month's meeting. The previous bid didn't include the cost of radios and cameras. Mr. Zickgraf recommends that the Board re-award the 2008 bus bids to

Kerlin Bus Sales in the amount of \$710,017.⁹⁹. With a motion by T. Bloom and a second by J. L. Workman the Board voted unanimously (8-0) to table this item. Discussion prior to the vote: One Board member questioned why the \$4,000 discrepancy between the two bids for the 54 passenger special education bus? Mr. Zickgraf stated that he would need to go back and review the information and then the Board an answer to the question.

After a brief period (food service fund report), Mr. Zickgraf did some calculating and recommended to the Board to approve the purchase of the 6 – 84 passenger buses from Kerlin Bus Sales in the amount of \$613,393.⁴² and then table the purchase of the 54 passenger bus until the May work session.

With a motion by T. Bloom and a second by J. L. Workman the Board voted unanimously (8-0) to rescind the earlier motion to table this action item.

Then with a motion by T. Bloom and a second by J. L. Workman the Board voted unanimously (8-0) to approve the purchase of the 6 – 84 passenger buses from Kerlin Bus Sales in the amount of \$613,393.⁴² and to defer the purchase of the 54 passenger bus until the May Board work session.

Food Service Fund Report – Carol Heinold began by thanking the Board for the opportunity to present an update from the Food Service Department. She shared that 18 of the 43 food service employees have attained their Food Handlers Certification. The Food Handlers Certification is given to those individuals who have taken and passed a course pertaining to sanitation, preparing and serving food safely. Schools do not have the same legal requirements that restaurants have.

The Food Service Department began serving breakfast full-time in August 1994, after having a pilot program in May 1994 at the Thornecreek building. Currently breakfast is service in the dining rooms of each of the WCCS buildings with the exception of Indian Springs where breakfast is taken to the classroom wings. The second breakfast pilot program started in August 2007 when we began serving reduced price breakfasts at no charge to the student. We still claim those meals in the proper category for federal reimbursement in to order to stay in compliance with all rules and regulations of the National School Breakfast Program.

In 2006-2007 WCCS had a total of 269 reduced price eligible students and we served breakfasts on a total of 126 days from August through March. This averaged 37 reduced price breakfasts per day and 14% of those eligible.

In 2007-2008 WCCS has a total of 313 reduced price eligible students and serving a total of 128 days during August through March. Our current average is 76 reduced price breakfasts per day for 25% of those eligible. We do intend to continue this program without the pilot status next year.

Carol proposed to the Board that WCCS remain with the same prices for the coming 2008-2009 school year for lunch and breakfast with the exception that reduced price breakfast be continued at no charge.

This item did not require action from the Board members.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Current / Future CCHS – “The Cost of Doing Nothing” Mr. Rod Wilson of City Securities Corporation reviewed for the Board and community the recent legislative decisions and referred to House Bill 1001. Some of the new rules passed in the legislative session do not apply since the 1028 hearing took place prior to June. There are some other rules that may apply but are more technical.

Mr. Zickgraf reviewed operating costs, utilities and other maintenance on the current high school. He stated that the inefficiencies could add \$100,000 to the budget in 2008 and continue adding up every year until a new high school is built. The repairs at the current high school that would need to take place would have an estimated cost of \$6,705,000. Just a brief list referred to would be the deteriorating carpet and roof on the 1958 addition, parking lot conditions, parking availability, plumbing and heating repairs, the age and repairs needed to the green house, air handlers for the 1968 addition and the portable classrooms. ADA issues will also need to be addressed in order to provide quality education to every student. Some examples would be the need for a new elevator as the current one does not accommodate large wheelchairs, ADA access to the gym floor, as well as maintaining a safe and healthy building. He shared that the cost of operating the square footage of the current high school is the highest in the entire Corporation at this time and it isn't doing anything to improve education, referring to the costs needed simply for maintenance of the facility. Mr. Zickgraf encourages the public to come and view the conditions at the high school.

William Tucker, Board member, asked that if the project doesn't go forward, how would the repairs be addressed? Mr. Zickgraf responded that it would be a capital projects fund and bond issue and that a lot of the problems in a short period of time could result in a really severe crunch of cash flow. Mr. Zickgraf said “it is just the same as your 50-year old house; you don't know what is going to happen tomorrow.”

Dr. Huffman expressed concern about the safety of students using the portable classrooms as she shared statistics about how many students have used them over the grading periods. Another concern she shared was the security and exiting of the building to use the portables.

Board President, Don Armstrong, stated that this is not a healthy situation for the students, staff, or the community who use the portables.

Rod Wilson of City Securities then provided figures for the construction of a new high school. In 2008 the cost would be \$48,774,000. This figure represents different factors including that we would take bids yet this year. If the project gets delayed, the cost would be \$60,482,202 in 2013; \$73,585,847 in 2018 and nearly \$80 million in 2020 when all debt is paid. Mr. Wilson informed the Board and community that “the cost of doing nothing” now would not only be a loss in the educational opportunities but also nearly \$1.5 million in utilities, \$6.7 million in the repairs just to keep the current high school functioning and then you would have additional financing at approximately \$49 million. ***(PowerPoint presentation that Mr. Wilson displayed at the Board meeting is attached for your reference.)***

Mr. Wilson said this project is almost a slam dunk. The economics of doing this project now are clearly better than doing it later. He also clarified the petition process that the school board

members as well as any employee on their own time may work for the project that they believe in.

After the presentation, administrators and board members spoke on behalf of the project. Mr. Armstrong referred to the project as a sound investment as a farmer purchases additional acreage.

Dr. Huffman stated I don't for one second question the quality of people that we have but I cannot say that about the quality of our high school building itself. If we do not move forward with this project, we are holding our students back from their potential.

Mr. Bloomfield shared that he felt that the fast pace growth, changing and competitive world that we are living in we don't have time to wait. Mr. Bloomfield spoke about global education and then gave an example that currently we have no room for something as simple as mobile computers.

Mr. Bloom stated that the economic costs that come along with possibly delaying the project are dramatic but the single largest reason to continue forward with this project is to avoid the loss of educational opportunities for the students. Mr. Bloom's thought is that it would be inadequate for this community to reject the project at this time.

Mrs. Western shared with the board and community that recently she was told in a conversation with someone that stated of three high schools in the area Columbia City has the worst facility of the three.

Mr. Tucker added that he recently spoke with a representative from the local hospital who stated that they have difficulty recruiting physicians and the main reason is the quality of the high school. Mr. Tucker stated that this is a lost of cost opportunity for our community.

Board Member, Mrs. Hiss shared with the community that she is new to the board but asked the community to trust the Board members and community members that have worked and studied this project thoroughly as they have done their homework.

Education is and should be first priority per Mr. Langeloh. According to "Code Blue" website they are not against a new high school being built they are just against building it now. What doesn't make sense to Mr. Langeloh is the thought of not building the new high school now could cost the taxpayers double.

Mrs. Baker commented being a teacher herself she does understand how space plays such an important role in education.

Even having to pay higher taxes Mr. Workman stated that he is all for the project and is willing to pay for someone else's education as someone did for him. Someone helped my kids, grandkids and I will do the same for someone else.

Mr. Armstrong concluded the Board member and administration discussion by informing the community that this will impact our entire community and that more skilled training is going to be required. Mr. Armstrong also spoke of a conference he recently attended where they were

telling that the environment and surrounding alone can affect test scores by as much as 7 to 17 percent.

This is a win-win for our students and the community. Columbia City is the best community and is 1st Class!

Corporation Goals & Action Plans Update – This item was moved to the May 7, 2008 Board Work Session per the direction of Dr. Huffman and Mr. Armstrong.

CELEBRATIONS

Mrs. Turpin celebrated MRES' 5th grade class as they used their Lifeskills and good behavior as they visited ISMS today for transition day from elementary to middle school.

Mr. Fowerbaugh celebrated the following items:

- The 6th grade students' who attended the recent field trip and used their Lifeskills to the fullest and their behavior was wonderful.
- Carla Clifford and the entire food service staff at ISMS for all the well done jobs that they do every day and the Honors Breakfast.
- Welcomed Mr. Goewert to the WCCS family.
- Thanked Mr. Meyer for his years of service as activities coordinator at ISMS and wishes him well on his retirement.
- Applauded the Board for their efforts on behalf of our students.

Mr. Armstrong announced the Fine Art Scholarship Fund at CCHS that is supported by purchasing tickets for a painting donated by Dr. Huffman.

ADJOURNMENT

President, Don Armstrong adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Don Armstrong, President

Deborah G. Hiss, Secretary