

WELLSBORO AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Work Session
March 1, 2016

MINUTES

Called to Order by President Matthew Feil at 6:30 PM in the high School LGI Room, 225 Nichols Street, Wellsboro, Pennsylvania.

Roll Call of Members: Mr. Duane Cotner, Mr. Chris Gastrock, Mr. John Hoover, Mr. Wayne Hackett, Mr. Timothy McCratic, Mr. Stewart Burrous, Mr. Matthew Feil and Mrs. Susan Judlin;
Member absent: Ms. Denise Sherman

Present were the following: Administrators: Mr. Patrick Hewitt, Acting Superintendent; Mrs. Bonnie Thompson, Business Manager; Mr. Steven Adams (arriving at 6:45 PM); Mr. Michael Pietropola; Mrs. Amy Repard; Mr. Daren Bryant (arriving at 6:33 PM); Press: Natalie Kennedy (Wellsboro Gazette); Diane Eaton (Williamsport Sun Gazette); Mrs. Linda Gamble, Board Secretary; Visitors: Christie Blackwell; John DeLeonardis; Donna Burrous; Lauren Morral; Linda West; Tina Kreisler; John Johnston; Ben Miller; Jeff Wilson; Richard Miskovitz; Shane Mascho;

Linda Gamble, WASD Board Secretary, read into the Minutes the Notice of Work Session.

IV. Discussion – RACP Grant

President Feil made a statement about the RACP Grant. The Board has been made aware that District did not comply with the requirements of the RACP grant, namely in receiving competitive bids. This was communicated to the District in October 2015. The Board was made aware of this in January 2016. We are working with the RACP Department to resolve the issue, but we may not be able to save the grant. Pat Hewitt advised the Board that a phone conference was arranged for tomorrow at 11:00 AM to find out how we can get in compliance with the grant. There was discussion about the competitive bidding requirements. There was a question as to whether this happened. The phone conference is for the purpose of finding out whether the Office of the Budget would accept what the District has done. If not, to find out what we have to do. Pat also advised that AstroTurf has asked for a meeting to determine when they can start moving the project. Board Member Tim McCratic asked to see if we could have another representative appear on behalf of AstroTurf. He felt Dan Driscoll was unprofessional when he appeared at the last board meeting.

V. Discussion - Budget & Finance

Bonnie Thompson reviewed with the Board the meeting of February 25, 2016. She also reviewed health insurance premiums and life insurance reductions. Several handouts were given out to the Board Members (budget worksheet totals 2016-17; General Fund 2016-17 Fiscal Year Account Codes – Act 82; Technology Budget 2016-17; Buildings & Grounds Maintenance; 2016-17 General Fund Budget Revenues Summary; 2016-17 General Fund Budget Expenditure Summary 2016-17; Discussion followed with Mr. Hoover asking where we were with the budget. Mr. Hewitt replied that the District would be using PSERS and fund balance monies to keep us afloat.

VI. Discussion – Technology enabling the public more accessibility to work sessions and/or board meetings.

Shane Cleveland addressed the Board to this issue. Board Member Sue Judlin felt that the more we can make our meetings more accessible would help. Mr. Hewitt announced that we do have the equipment available in the District.

VII. Review of revised Wellsboro Weight Room Guidelines

Discussion was held among board members, Business Manager Bonnie Thompson and Acting Superintendent, Patrick Hewitt. John DeLeonardis spoke to the board about the cost for members for those whose permanent address is in the

WASD; cost for members for people who are not residents of the WASD; other policies such as elementary age students from WASD will only be permitted to use our facilities to do body weight exercises and must be accompanied by an adult to participate.

Mr. Dee spoke on the insurance waiver. The District has never had one. Mrs. Thompson advised that our insurance carrier recommended the waiver. It is much like the Parks & Recreation waiver. Mr. Hoover asked if we advertise for the weight room. We do not. Mr. McCratic advised that he had been at the weight room several times and on a couple of occasions, there were basketball games going on in the gym. He asked whether we have the basketball players sign a waiver. Someone thought they were playing basketball through Parks & Rec.

There was discussion concerning people who used the gym lived in the District and those who did not live in the District. Mr. Hewitt stated currently the fees we collect go to the refurbishing of the gym. Board Member Sue Judlin questioned whether at some point (if we open it up to anyone), would our athletes not receive the aggressive training that they need to compete. Mr. Dee stated there is no charge to our athletes. He also stated that our athletes have priority to the room. Mrs. Judlin asked if we are charging enough to sustain the weight room? Mr. Dee stated that most of the equipment came from grants, donations, etc. There is not anything in the room paid for by the School District.

Public Comment - Richard Miskovitz asked what the cost of operating this is? You are running a business – you are financially viable. Did anyone ask what are the costs of running this? Board Member Chris Gastrock replied to this question.

Public Comment – Christie Blackwell addressed the Board concerning a travel team using the gym.

Board Member Stewart Burrous commented changing “students” to “teams” consisting of students (some from Wellsboro, some from Southern, some from Northern) using the gym. He felt they should pay a minimum of \$4.00 a day. That way, they can still use it and it will not break them. John Hoover disagreed with that. He felt that our kids should have the competitive advantage. Mr. Pietropola respectfully disagreed with opening up the facility to travel teams. Board Member Hoover suggested that it be open to only district students. The other travel teams could do the Facility Use Request form.

Public Comment - Donna Burrous commented to the Board that it should be about Wellsboro kids. We are the people paying the taxes and we take care of our own first.

Board Member Sue Judlin recommended that we keep the policy as is. Board Member Tim McCratic stated that we are in a deficit and he felt we should open it up to everyone.

There was discussion about having “Administrative Rules” as opposed to “Policy”. It was decided to send it to the Solicitor for his opinion.

VIII. Discussion – “Friday Bills” – President Feil announced that the Board has been made aware of the District writing “Friday checks”. This process has bypassed the Board and public in knowing about these payments. As an example, this school year beginning 2015 -16 these payments total more than \$742,000.00 (over 1 million per school year.) This practice is unlawful and has been reported to the Auditor General for the State of PA. The Auditor has recommended that we conduct an audit of these payments as well as other accounting practices as part of their investigation. With me tonight, I would like to make this a public record - this is a ledger of the bills that were paid from July 1 – through end of January 2016. None of them were reviewed by the Board or the public. It doesn’t mean that they were not correct payments but were payments not approved and not viewed by the public.

Bonnie Thompson, Business Manager made a comment to this statement. What you are talking is not just this school year but for many many years. This is a past practice.

IX. Discussion – Review of Policy 616 – Payment of Bills;

Bonnie Thompson indicated she would like to change our policy and add something to it. She read to the Board what she wanted added to the policy. Discussion followed among the board members. The Business Manager would like to have both versions of the policy on the Agenda for approval of one.

There was public comment (Richard Mistovitz, Linda West and Donna Burrous) among the visitors concerning the audit that will be conducted by the newly approved auditors.

X. Discussion – Proposal to add Middle School Baseball/Softball for the Northern Tier League – Mr. Hewitt commented on this. What is being asked to eliminate JV baseball/softball, move it to Junior High School - it would become 7, 8 and potentially 9th grade. There is a shift in cost from JV coach at the high school level becoming Middle School Coach. The JV games would become Middle School game – lateral shift in costs. You do run into some discrepancies in the teachers' contract. There is no column under MS baseball coach. There was one principal in the Northern Tier not in favor of this, the remaining were. Shane Mascho, HS Baseball Assistant Coach, commented on this as to its accuracy. Lengthy discussion followed among administrators and board members. Mr. Hewitt requested that it be put on the agenda for approval/disapproval.

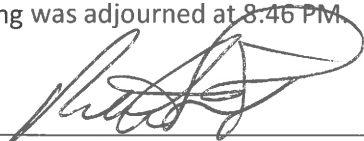
XI. Discussion – Request for Exception to Sick Leave Policy Guidelines – Mr. Steve Adams commented on this matter to the Board. Mr. Hewitt asked if others could do the same. President Feil answered that it would have to be done on an exception basis. It was directed to put this on the Agenda for approval.

XII. Discussion – Review of proposed 2016-17 School Calendar - Mr. Hewitt advised that we have a team to set the dates. We have a committee that does a couple of different calendars and this one is the latest version. We were trying to get to the first full week of June to spread things out with Keystone exam and final exams trying not to have everything happens on the same day. There was much discussion among the board members and administrators. Board Member Hackett felt that the holidays should be observed (whether it snows or not).

Public Comment – Richard Mistovitz, Wellsboro, PA commented on the status of the stadium. He told the Board that the District does not have a legal contract or guarantee of control of costs. Who controls the bids? What are you doing to control costs? He also commented on the number of teachers to student ratio. You need to tell the community how you are going to control costs. Mr. Mistovitz advised that the minutes were incorrectly posted to the website. President Feil commented that the Budget & Financial Committee spent two hours last week on controlling costs. The public is invited to attend these committee meetings.

John Johnston, Wellsboro, PA spoke to the Board concerning payment of Friday bills. We have a running total of this year. Do you see misuse or inappropriate spending? President Feil addressed that there were funds not made known to the Board or to the public. The gravity is that you can't spend funds without approval of the board. Mr. Johnston asked if the Board knows how much it will cost (the audit)? President Feil commented that he will follow the Auditor General's recommendation. Donna Burrous, Wellsboro, PA questioned the Board about the Friday bills.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM



Matthew Feil, Board President
Wellsboro Area School District



Linda Gamble, Board Secretary
Wellsboro Area School District