

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 13, 2006

6:30 P.M.

Educational Services Center

The Board of Education of the Bloomington Public Schools, School District 87, McLean County, Illinois, met in Regular Session.

Ms. Marianne Clancy, Board Secretary, established a quorum and the following Members were present: Mrs. Janet Smith, Mrs. Cheryl Jackson, Mr. John Dirks, Mr. Michael Harrison and Mrs. Millicent Roth. Mr. Joseph Butcher and Mr. Keith Davis were absent.

Present from the administrative staff were Dr. Robert Nielsen, Mr. David Wood, Mr. Barry Reilly, and Mrs. Teresa Hill.

Ms. Linda Aschenbrener, Public Relations Facilitator, was also in attendance.

Present from the news media was Ms. Michelle Steinbacher, The Pantagraph.

Mrs. Smith presented the Minutes for approval. It was moved by Mr. Dirks, seconded by Mrs. Roth, that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on November 8, 2006 and the Minutes of the Closed Meeting of the Board of Education held on November 8, 2006 be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried.

Mrs. Smith stated that we will now have a Public Hearing for the Tax Levy 2006. She stated that "In accordance with the Truth in Taxation Law (35 ILCS 200/18-60) the Board of Education will now hold a public hearing on the 2006 Tax Levy for the Bloomington Public Schools, District #87.

The District prepared a 2006 Levy Report which the Board reviewed at its November 8, 2006 meeting. The Board also approved a resolution which determined the amount of money estimated to be necessary from the property tax for the next fiscal year at that meeting.

Notice of a Public Hearing on the 2006 Levy was published in *The Pantagraph* on December 1, 2006.

The proposed 2006 levy, including debt service, is \$36.8 M, an increase of 2.3% over the 2005 levy and a 5.5% increase over the 2005 extension. The primary need for additional funds is to pay increases in salary, benefits, and purchased services and to offset changes in state and federal funds.

Mr. David Wood, Chief Financial and Legal Officer for District #87, will summarize the 2006 levy and the Board and members of the public will be given an opportunity to discuss the budget.

Mrs. Smith asked Mr. Wood to please summarize the 2006 levy.

Mr. Wood indicated that nothing had changed since the Levy Report was presented in November. The Levy assumes the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) grows 6% and the tax rate is reduced from \$4.48 this year to \$4.46 next year. The 2006 Levy raises \$36.8 M for the District of which \$34.3 M is for Operations (Education Fund, \$26.5 M and O&M Fund, \$4.1 M) and \$2.5 M is for Debt Service. The Operating Levy is \$0.7 M more than the 2005 Levy (2% increase) and \$1.8 M more than the 2005 extension (5.5% increase). The

additional \$2.5 M to be extended by the County for debt service is \$0.1 M more than the 2005 extension.

Mr. Wood pointed out that EAV is likely to grow less than the 6% assumed in the Levy. If EAV grows closer to 3%, the same as this year, the tax rate will remain at \$4.48 and the District will collect \$1.1 M more than last year, a 3% increase.

The specific amount paid by each taxpayer will ultimately depend on their particular assessment and the final tax rate.

Mrs. Smith asked "Is there any discussion from the Board?"

There was no discussion by the Board

Mrs. Smith asked "Is there any discussion from the public?"

There was no discussion from the public.

Mrs. Smith stated "The Public Hearing is now concluded."

Mr. Dirks stated that there was a Facilities Meeting a couple of weeks ago where we talked about the Bent School playground and the north side of Bloomington High School (BHS).

Mrs. Jackson stated that the Board should have received a memo from Mr. Doug Blair, the Cornbelt Division of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Field Advisor, which contained several dates for future IASB Cornbelt Division Meetings including Tuesday, March 6, 2007, which will be the Spring Dinner Meeting and the Fall Dinner Conference will be October 9, 2007.

Mrs. Jackson also stated that the IASB Conference in Chicago held in November, was the largest Conference in history and was very successful. She stated she hoped that the Board enjoyed the sessions they attended.

Mrs. Smith stated she attended the last meeting of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission. A new President and Vice-President were elected for next year. She stated that Mr. Butcher will be taking over the District 87 appointment on the commission starting in January.

Mrs. Jackson stated that she attended the State Testing Review Committee Meeting last week. She stated that it is a good thing that Pearson Educational Measurement is taking over the Illinois State Achievement Testing (ISAT) contract. She stated that hopefully the ISAT results will be received in a more timely fashion so they are actually usable.

Representative Dan Brady addressed the Board on the State Special Education rules that are about to be taken under advisement by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The General Assembly has requested that ISBE not act on these proposals until the General Assembly convenes in January. ISBE has this on their agenda as a recommendation to send to the Joint Committee of Administrative Rules (JCAR).

Mrs. Roth stated that she attended the Triple I Conference in November. She stated that the proposed Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Resolutions at the Conference that the District 87 Board did not support did not pass and the ones the District 87 Board did support passed. Mrs. Roth stated that based on discussions she took part in she believes there will be discussions in the near future regarding restructuring the IASB dues and how districts are required to pay.

Mr. Dirks stated that in mid-November there was a meeting of the Achievement Gap Taskforce. Mr. Dirks reminded the Board that one of the subcommittees is a technology taskforce and that he, Dr. Nielsen, Mr. Jim Peterson, District 87 Technology Director, and some representatives from McLean County Unit District No. 5 (Unit 5) will be visiting the Naperville District tomorrow to see what they have in the way of technology. Mr. Dirks stated that another subcommittee is for after school programs which Mrs. Hill chairs. He stated State Farm Insurance Companies has given both District 87 and Unit 5 a grant for \$36,000 each, \$21,000 to fund an Early Start Program at one school in each District (Sheridan School will house the program in District 87), and \$15,000 for an After School Program in each District. He stated this is a great result from forming the taskforce.

Mr. Dirks stated that he attended the School Board Convention and he has materials to share regarding questions that school boards should ask. He also attended sessions on Community and Communication and on *Good to Great: Boards and Districts*.

Mr. Harrison stated that he attended the School Board Conference. He stated that it was an excellent Conference. He attended a session on student achievement that addressed narrowing the gap between students. He stated he brought back a lot of materials that could be useful to the District.

Mrs. Smith stated she attended the School Board Conference. She stated that she and Mr. Butcher attended a session on Student Discipline. She stated Mr. Butcher has the information to share with anyone interested that was handed out at that session.

Mrs. Smith stated that she, Mrs. Jackson and Dr. Nielsen attended an intergovernmental meeting between Unit 5, the Town of Normal, the State's Attorney and the Town of Normal Police Department. She stated that we were there as observers. The City of Bloomington was invited to attend but was unable to do so.

Mrs. Jackson stated that the information on alternatives to the juvenile court system, discussed at the intergovernmental meeting, was very interesting and sounds promising.

Dr. Nielsen presented the following Board of Education Policy for First Reading: 6.320, High School Credit for Proficiency. He asked the Board for any suggestions or comments on these policies. He stated that this policy will be brought back in January for Second Reading.

Dr. Nielsen presented the following Board of Education Policies for Second Reading: 5.280, Educational Support Personnel; 6.130, Services for Academically Talented Students; 6.340, Student Testing and Assessment Program; 7.060, Residence; 7.100, Health and Dental Examinations,

Immunizations, and Exclusion of Students; 7.240, Conduct Code for Participants In Extra Curricular Activities; 8.030, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property; 8.090, Parent Organizations and Booster Clubs. He asked the Board if they had any changes they would like made. There were no changes suggested. Dr. Nielsen stated that these policies will be brought back in January for Board consideration.

Mrs. Hill stated that each year the District receives a grant from the Secretary of State's office that supplies some funds for our school libraries and media centers to purchase materials to add to their collection. We come to the Board each year to provide a report on what the status is of our school libraries and media centers. We currently have a full time school library or instructional media center in each of our schools. Those centers are staffed by a certified teacher who can provide additional assistance to classroom teachers with finding resources for their students, both for research and for finding things that will enhance what they are doing in the classroom. We receive about \$3,800 per year for this grant. It is allocated to the schools based on a per pupil allotment. The schools are able to decide how to use the allocation. Typically it is either for adding books to the current collection or for purchasing items to promote reading including the quizzes for our Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) program and Reading Counts Program. This money is in addition to the money that is allocated for each media center and library from the building level. She stated that we are working with our library media specialists and our principals to help revamp our library media curriculum. We will be reviewing our State Standards on how to promote information literacy, the ability for students to be able to find research, to use the internet, etc., e.g. to use the things they will use in the workplace later in life. We will also be looking at the current technology standards to make sure we are supporting teachers in teaching those kinds of skills.

Mr. Reilly presented the first draft of the 2007-2008 School Calendar to the Board of Education. The calendar proposes the following:  
August 15th through 17th - Teacher Institute Days  
August 20 - 1st day of school  
December 21 - End of 1st Semester (finals would be held the week prior to Winter Break)  
December 24 through January 4th - Winter Break (school to resume on the 7th)  
March 20 - Good Friday/no school - now a legal school holiday defined by the IL School Code  
March 24 through March 28 - Spring Break (school to resume on March 31)  
May 27 - Last day of school if no emergency days are used

Mr. Wood described how the District surveyed 375 parents, approximately 10%, of the 3,743 students riding buses, concerning satisfaction with transportation services. To date, 75 surveys have been returned (approx. 20%). Most issues surveyed were identified by parents as "very important" or "important." In general parents were satisfied with current services and there were no overwhelming issues identified. Of greatest concern were bus crowding and student behavior. The next step is to finalize tabulation of the results and review them with a parent focus group. This will occur in combination with any information regarding transportation identified by the bullying survey.

Dr. Nielsen stated that in the past nine years, District 87 has continually implemented security measures in our District.

- We have developed emergency plans for the schools with the help of the Bloomington Police and Fire Departments. Crisis Plans for the current year will be presented to the Board this evening during the Closed Session and will be up for Board consideration at the January 13, Board Meeting.

- Community resource officers work full time at Bloomington Junior High School (BJHS) and Bloomington High School (BHS) in cooperation with the Bloomington Police Department.

- We installed locks on the inside of the classroom doors and offices.

- We needed to have communication between the classrooms and the offices so we installed intercom systems in schools and now can have instant communication throughout the buildings.

- Security cameras have also been installed in all of the schools.

There is limited access to all of our schools using video entry ways except BHS.

Dr. Nielsen stated that District 87 has adapted a Student Safety Survey from the Ministry of Education in Ontario making it age appropriate for District 87 schools. Three surveys are available online for students, staff and parents. This survey will help the District determine if, and where, changes should be made to reduce bullying in its schools and on its buses. After the results are in, the District will make specific plans to address any problems.

Dr. Nielsen stated that safety of the children and staff is our absolute primary goal. While all the hardware is important, it becomes disconnected if schools don't work on relationships. He stated we are working on relationships every day where students feel comfortable going to adults, which can be the difference between a safe school and an unsafe one.

Mr. Colin Manahan, Director of Facilities Management, proposed to the Board that several projects take place in our schools this summer. If approved, it will mark the fourth year of comprehensive summer renovations/additions. During previous years, infrastructure work was addressed and included electrical upgrades, air conditioning and misc. other work at each of our schools. This past summer, more noticeable work was performed as BJHS' addition was completed and Irving, Washington and BHS received much needed landscaping improvements. Indoor improvements are proposed to occur at many of our schools this summer, including new exterior doors, painting of classrooms, installing new carpeting and replacing blackboards with marker boards. However, the most visible proposed work is set to occur at Bent School and at the north entrance and parking lot of BHS, as each is slated to receive extensive streetscaping work.

At Bent School, architect Mr. Russell Francois proposes redesigning both frontal stairwells, planting shrubs and trees around the perimeter of school and playground, having defined entrances for the playground area (including moving the parking lot entrance to Walnut St), resurfacing the playground and replacing the existing fence and playground equipment. Additional lighting will also be installed. At Bloomington High School, Mr. Francois proposes to redesign and landscape the north entrance (off Empire St.). A courtyard and lamp posts, similar to the courtyard by the north gym, will be added to the existing entrance and the parking lot will be

reconfigured. New exterior signage will replace the existing Locust Street i-beam and new signage will be added to the exterior wall of the auditorium - visible from Empire St. In addition, a new entryway and lamp posts will be installed at the back entrance to the Area Vocational Center (AVC). The design is intended to mirror the existing south courtyard as much as possible.

If approved by the Board, this work will be funded by the Operations & Maintenance (O & M) fund as well as by revenue generated from capital improvement bonds that were issued by the District a few years ago. The Board of Education is scheduled to vote on the approval of these projects at their January 10th meeting.

Mrs. Smith presented the Consent Agenda for Approval. It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Harrison, that the Consent Agenda (Human Resources Report, Bills, Payroll, Treasurer's Report, Financial Summary, Bloomington High School Proposed Course Changes and Health/Life Safety Statements of Completion) be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried. (See with Original Minutes, Attachment 12-13-06/1)

Dr. Nielsen stated that this is the last Board Meeting of 2006. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Dirks, that the 2006 Levy Resolution be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried. (See with Original Minutes, Attachment 12-13-06/2)

Mr. Steve Perry, community member and District 87 parent, addressed the Board regarding his concerns about the lack of lighting around Bent school. He also is concerned that the new proposed landscaping at Bent school will eliminate parking near the school.

Dr. Nielsen stated that the District will be addressing both these issues in the future.

It was moved by Mrs. Roth, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, that the Board go into Closed Session for the purpose of considering the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of District 87, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity; and to consider security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff or public property. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mrs. Smith adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary