

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

Seneca Valley Senior High School Auditorium -- 8:00 p.m.

May 24, 2004

MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Mr. Berkebile, Board President, called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

A. ***Moment of Silence*** - The meeting was opened with a moment of silence.

B. ***Pledge of Allegiance*** - Mr. Berkebile led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

- C. ***Roll Call*** - Roll call by Joan Rinaman, Board Secretary, showed the following Board members present: Mr. Paul Adametz, Mr. Dean Berkebile, Mr. Ken Brennan, Mrs. Eileen Connors, Mr. Anthony Evans, Mr. Robert Hill, Jr., Mr. William Paul, Mrs. Ann Reale, and Mr. Anthony Storti.

Others present included: Dr. Gerald Malecki, Superintendent; Dr. Donald Tylinski, Superintendent Elect; Dr. Denise Chappell, Assistant Superintendent Secondary; Dr. Mary Ann Marchi, Assistant Superintendent Elementary; Mr. Lynn Stewart, Administrative Assistant for Financial Affairs; Mr. Jerome Straughter, Human Resources Director; Mrs. Linda Andreassi, Public Relations Coordinator; Mrs. Joanne Meredith, Supervisor of Special Education; Mr. Ronald Lamneck, Supervisor of Buildings, Grounds, and Security; Mr. Kevin Prady, Director of Transportation; visitors on attached list; and press representatives.

2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - Mr. Hill motioned, seconded by Mr. Storti, to adjourn to executive session to discuss personnel issues. Motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m. and reconvened at 8:11 p.m.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - There were no public comments on the action items.

4. **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

A. ***Student Adjudication*** - Approve the student adjudication #2003-04-16.

B. ***I-79 Ramp*** - Approve letter of support for I-79/SR 3025 missing ramps. Mr. Brennan created the letter provided in the backup. His only suggestion to the commission was to increase the bridge to four lanes instead of three to reduce emissions caused by traffic backups.

Mr. Hill motioned, seconded by Mr. Paul, to approve student adjudication and ramp support resolution as listed above. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

5. **PERSONNEL**

A. ***Sabbatical Leave*** - Approve educational sabbatical leave request of Donald Faust effective the 2004-05 school year.

Mr. Hill motioned, seconded by Mr. Storti to approve the sabbatical leave as listed above. Motion failed to carry with all those present voting no.

6. INFORMATION

A. 2004-05 Budget

1. Scorecard Feedback - The scorecard is included in the backup materials.

Mrs. Reale thought that the directions for the scorecard vote were not clear. Under item #18, paraprofessionals, the wording "to retain" to her meant that new positions would be retained. Mr. Berkebile responded that it meant retain cost of program that was not mandated by federal or state regulation or by contractual obligation. Again, Mrs. Reale believed that the vote on #18 was on whether to add new positions into the budget not to retain the positions already in the budget.

2. Public Comments - Mr. Berkebile handed out a sheet welcoming the public to speak and outlining rules for public comments. He also proposed a point of personal privilege, also attached, allowing Board members to address comments at any time.
 - a. Denise Minton had comments on her e-mail and responses from Mr. Adametz. She stated that he was uninformed and she did not appreciate his comments and name-calling. Mrs. Minton asked for Mr. Adametz's resignation.
 - b. After reviewing three years of budget figures, Brian Hroncich felt the revenues are under inflated. Taxes must be rolled back by saying no to some demands and looking at long-term fiscal responsibilities. Mr. Berkebile asked if Mr. Hroncich would want to chair a citizens' budget advisory committee, which he said he would. Further, Mr. Berkebile asked the Board if they would be willing to send people home, suspend the committee at large, and take Mr. Hroncich up on his offer. No member made a motion.
 - c. John Mitro felt that he and members of the public were insulted by Mr. Adametz's comments. It squashes public input when those that speak are insulted. He also suggested Mr. Adametz resign.
 - d. Tax dollars are to be used for reading, writing, and arithmetic was A. G. Neel, Jr.'s comment. Parents need to fund their children's activities themselves.
 - e. Activities such as plays, sports, and other activities also provide a quality learning experience countered Randy Hart. Supporting these types of programs are more cost effective than having to pay for incarceration and other costs if students don't have something to do. Board members must act in a responsible manner and take the action that is necessary.
 - f. Shelly Oswald supports programs that benefit all of the students. She does not want to support activities that benefit special groups.
 - g. Moderation in the budget process is Erin Walsh's request. Her children elect not to participate in extra-curricular activities, but she does not want the district to only educate on the bare minimum.
 - h. Stating that the real estate tax is the one tax not based on the ability to pay, Stevie Mick suggested that the system be revised at the state level. He commends Mr. Berkebile for accepting public input, but feels there should be no increase this year. Mr. Adametz should be credited to sticking up for his beliefs.
 - i. Diane Repp spoke in support of keeping all paraprofessionals, as they are valuable assets to the district.
 - j. Colleen Hroncich was disappointed in how the Board members voted on the scorecard and did not consider any of the suggestions provided by the public. The Board must work to keep tax rate lower than those in Allegheny County or people will move out. Comments other speakers made without knowing the financial situation of audience members also offended Mrs. Hroncich.

Mr. Hill asked to use his point of personal privilege. He stated that residents are seeking out Seneca Valley over other Butler County schools because of the services Seneca Valley provides.

- k. Evans City PTO member, Kim Brown, was concerned with proposed cuts in paraprofessionals. They are valued members of the staff and their jobs could not be covered with volunteers.
- l. Kim Lucatorto does not dispute the importance of extra-curricular activities. The personal and financial situations of all taxpayers must be considered before they are asked to fund each activity. The Board must examine what can be cut, as government should not be taking care of children instead of parents.

The Board adjourned at 9:30 p.m. for a ten-minute break.

- m. Schools are not corporate America declared Pam Beauseigneur. Volunteers, due to confidentiality and HIPAA regulations, cannot complete the duties of paraprofessionals. When families choose schools, they look at activities and the educational program. The district needs to provide both. Mr. Adametz is not representing the members of his constituency.
- n. Fred Muellner asked the Board to trim \$1.3 million from the proposed budget. The red group is not looking to cut programs completely, but to look at ways to trim each program of discretionary items. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to give input.
- o. Edwin George asked the Board to add funding into the budget for a strings program.
- p. Donald Ord had several suggestions regarding field maintenance that would cut costs.
- q. Categories such as red, green, and yellow are labeling people. Mike Cummings asked that the administration go back and look at the entire budget and find areas to make cuts. He also asked why funding is not consistent between schools in the state.
- r. Robin Redding stated that she is in favor of keeping programs and keeping taxes low. In her opinion, the current budget was prepared by the administration with lots of fluff. She feels the Board represents the entire community whether they have children in the schools or not. She hopes the entire community can work together for a compromise.
- s. Diane Brenner is on a fixed income and has decided to grow old here. She would like to keep some activities but cut the costs. The district could cut three mills by just maintaining current programs.
- t. Residents should not have to move out of the area to avoid real estate tax increases stated Cathy Rape. Seneca has students who are smart and talented and take advantage of every opportunity. There are others who can't read and add. Money should be spent to teach the basics and not increase taxes to pay for extras. Contracted items should also be looked at to see if they could be re-negotiated.
- u. Bill Adams stated that Catholic schools educate students for \$3,800 per year. Education affects not just the children, but also the parents who are stressed from providing funding for taxes.

Mr. Hill stated that parochial schools do not have transportation costs. District schools are not allowed to choose their students.

2. Board Discussion

- a. Mr. Hill motioned, seconded by Mr. Evans, to reconsider the recommended funding level for PSBA. PSBA provides many services to the district including liability and travel insurance for Board members. Mr. Paul concurred with Mr. Hill's comments. Motion carried on a roll call vote with Mr. Hill, Mr. Evans, Mrs. Reale, Mr. Paul, and Mr. Berkebile voting in the affirmative and Mr. Storti, Mrs. Connors, Mr. Adametz, and Mr. Brennan voting no.
- b. Mrs. Connors voiced concern with the entire scorecard activity. It is fiscally irresponsible in a \$75 million budget, to focus on items that total only \$7 million. She suggested looking at the entire budget to consider a proportionate reduction on all items, including contractual obligations.

Mrs. Connors motioned, seconded by Mr. Brennan to suspend the line item analysis and send it back to the administration, or move accountability from the Board to the administration.

Mr. Evans motioned, seconded by Mr. Hill to table Mrs. Connors motion in order to have further discussion on certain items. Motion carried on a roll call vote with Mr. Paul, Mr. Evans, Mrs. Reale, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Berkebile voting to table, and Mr. Storti, Mr. Brennan, Mrs. Connors, and Mr. Adametz voting no. The motion was tabled.

Mrs. Reale would like to have all these items back in and reviewed again along with other items in \$78 million budget to see where they may fit into the mix by priority. Mr. Adametz read his statement which is included in the backup materials. Due to the late hour, the Board was asked if they would like to continue the meeting, or adjourn to a further date. The Board agreed to continue the discussion until 11:30 p.m.

Mr. Evans motioned, seconded by Mr. Hill, to retain non-IEP paraprofessionals currently in the budget, but add no new positions. Motion failed to carry with Mrs. Reale, Mr. Hill, Mr. Evans, Mr. Berkebile voting in the affirmative and Mr. Brennan, Mr. Paul, Mrs. Connors, Mr. Adametz, and Mr. Storti voting no.

Mrs. Reale asked if Board members should have administration say which items are necessary or do we debate every item they have given the Board? Mrs. Connors stated that the Board does not have enough information so the administration must put together the budget. Mr. Adametz suggested several categories that could be reviewed and reduced such as the large budget increases in printing, travel, communications, and supplies. Mr. Brennan repeated that the school can no longer be all things to all people. As the largest employer in the area, it is a business, but cannot be run like a business due to state regulations. The taxes must be set a rate that those on fixed income can afford but contain enough of the programs that people want.

Mrs. Connors amended her original motion to send the budget back to the administration with the objective of the administration providing a 0 mill budget and a 3 mill budget. Mr. Brennan seconded the motion. Motion carried on a roll call vote with all those present voting in the affirmative except Mr. Berkebile voting no.

3. Mr. Adametz's Requests - Answers to Mr. Adametz's requests are provided in the backup materials.
4. Mr. Brennan's Requests - Information Mr. Brennan requested is provided in the backup materials.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Sara Snyder
- B. Tom McChesney
- C. Roy Wagner
- D. Ronald J. and Teri W. Natoli
- E. Patrick Gilchrist
- F. Denise Hathazy-Davis
- G. Sandy Lambert
- H. Jacqueline Haber and Ruth Watson
- I. Mary Pearson
- J. Sarah Waldman
- K. Cynthia Kroepil
- L. Denise Minton
- M. Dave Matthews
- N. Aaron Graham
- O. Denise Minton

- P. Lynda Eagle
- Q. Denise Minton
- R. Ed Grimm
- S. Amy Buckley
- T. Carol Riesmeyer
- U. Donna Rose
- V. Marsha Hughes
- W. Janet Rodriguez
- X. Barbara Jespersen
- Y. Heather Mays
- Z. Mary Pearson
- AA. Melissa and Gerry Pindroh
- BB. Doug Lang
- CC. Taxpayer
- DD. Marta Dash
- EE. William Roccia
- FF. Dean Berkebile
- GG. Debra DiCianna
- HH. John and Lisa Patrick
- II. Teri and Ron Natoli
- JJ. Debra Boehm
- KK. George and Barbara Pacinda
- LL. Kim Brown
- MM. Erin Dispennett and Stephanie Lazzeri
- NN. Lynn and Bruce Richards
- OO. Melanie Zangrilli, Steve Adams, Robin Presco
- PP. Patricia and Steven Day
- QQ. Dawn Abbate
- RR. Jennifer and Matt Mallin
- SS. Beth Lowery
- TT. George and Barbara Pacinda
- UU. Monica Vakiner
- VV. Kitty Guttman
- WW. Shelly Oswald
- XX. Chris Bench
- YY. Diana McCauley
- ZZ. Rich and Kristi Miller

9. **ADJOURNMENT** - With nothing further to come before the Board, Mr. Hill motioned, seconded by Mr. Storti, to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 p.m. Motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.