

# Seneca Valley School District



## SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

Seneca Valley Intermediate High School Auditorium

### MINUTES

June 7, 2004

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Mr. Berkebile called the meeting to order at 8:25 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 Mrs. Joan Rinaman, Board Secretary, showed the following Board members present: Mr. Paul Adametz, Mr. Dean Berkebile, Mr. Kenneth Brennan, Mrs. Eileen Conners, Mr. Anthony Evans, Mr. Robert Hill, Jr., Mr. William Paul, Mrs. Ann Reale, 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; Dr. Matthew McKinley, Senior High School Principal; Mr. Ronald Lamneck, Supervisor of Buildings, Grounds, and Security; Mr. Kevin Prady, Director of Transportation; visitors on attached lists; and press representatives.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - The following minutes were provided for approval June 14:
  - A. **Work Session** - May 3, 2004
  - B. **Regular Meeting** - May 10, 2004
  - C. **Special Meeting** - May 24, 2004
  - D. **Committee of the Whole Meeting**  
Curriculum - May 10, 2004

### 3. OPERATION REPORTS

- A. **Treasurer's Report** - A report will be provided next week.
- B. **Financial Reports** - The following reports are provided in the backup materials:
  1. Senior High Activities/Athletic Fund Reports

2. Intermediate High Activities Report
3. Middle School Activities Report
4. Earned Income Tax Report

C. **Agency Reports**

1. ***Vo-Tech*** - Information is provided in the backup materials.
  2. ***I. U. IV*** - Mr. Hill reported that the Intermediate Unit Board met with Secretary of Education, Vicki Phillips. Additional information is included in the backup materials.
  3. ***Clarence Brown*** - A meeting was held on May 27. Four Seneca students graduated from Clarence Brown this year.
4. **PAYMENT OF BILLS** - The General Fund bills provided in the backup total \$3,634,571.27.
  5. **ACTIVITIES FUND BILLS** - The Activity Fund bills provided in the agenda total \$29,034.41.
  6. **CAPITAL RESERVE FUND BILLS** - There were no Capital Reserve Fund bills.
  7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS** - Construction Fund bills will be provided next week.
  8. **INFORMATION REPORTS**

A. **Superintendent**

1. ***Student/Staff Recognition*** - Dr. Malecki will speak on the recognition items next week.
2. ***Community Relations*** - Committee will meet as necessary at 7:30 p.m. preceding the regularly advertised monthly board meetings in the Intermediate High School auditorium.
3. ***Dates to Remember***

<b>June 9</b>	Retirement Luncheon - Hartman's Waterhole Restaurant, noon
<b>June 15</b>	Kennywood Picnic

4. ***Legislative*** - There is nothing new to report.
5. ***Strategic Plan*** - Dr. Marchi reported that the Strategic Plan Committee met on June 2 to review the mid-point report which is due to PDE in September.
6. ***Enrollment Update*** - The numbers from June 1 are provided in the backup. Next week the year-end comparison with last year will be provided.
7. ***SVJRFA Request*** - The of Seneca Valley Junior Football Association North asked permission to pipe water to the football concession stand at the Evans City field. Mr. Lamneck will meet with the group to provide feedback from the architects/engineers.

B. **Assistant Superintendents' Reports**

1. ***Secondary***
  - a. **Principal Reports** - Principals' reports are provided in the backup materials.
  - b. **Grant Programs**

- Title IV - Drug Free Schools
  - County Drug and Alcohol
- c. National Occupational Competency Testing - Seneca Valley student results on the Workplace Readiness and Account-Basic tests are provided in the backup materials.

2. ***Elementary***

- a. Principal Reports - Principals' reports are provided in the backup materials.
- b. Federal Programs Report
- Title I - Improving America's Schools - Remedial Reading
  - Title IIA - Improving Teacher Quality
  - Title IID - Educational Technology
  - Title III - Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students
  - Title V - Innovative Education

C. **Business/Finances**

1. ***Budget Report*** - The latest budget report will be provided next week.
2. ***Transportation Committee*** - There was nothing new to report.

9. **ACTION ITEMS** - The following items were reviewed for action next week:

A. **Administration**

1. ***Board Policies*** - Approve the following Board policy:

Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies/Department of Welfare (#225) - <b>BACKUP - Salmon</b>	New	Adoption
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2. ***2004 Graduates*** - Acknowledge list of graduates from class of 2004 provided in the backup materials.

B. **Instruction**

1. ***Secondary***

- a. Safe and Drug Free Schools Grant - Approve submittal of Safe and Drug Free Schools grant in the amount of \$28,000.

2. ***Elementary***

- a. YMCA Summer Program - Approve YMCA school age, summer childcare program for 2004.
- b. K-4 Report Cards - Approve the revised K-4 report cards effective the 2004-05 school year. Dr. Marchi noted that the update is due to changes in the language arts curriculum.

- c. D.A.R.E. Grant - Approve submission of 2004-05 D.A.R.E. grant application in the amount of \$19,544 (retroactive to June 4, 2004).
3. ***GRLS Agreements*** - Approve the following contracts with Glade Run Lutheran Services for the 2004-05 school year:
- a. Education Placement Agreement
  - b. Diagnostic Placement Agreement
  - c. Private Residential Rehabilitation Institute (Act 30) Agreement

**C. Business/Finances**

1. ***Buildings and Grounds***

- a. CVE Roof Project Approval - Acknowledge PDE approval of Self-Certification Application for Non-Reimbursable Construction Project for the Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School roofing project.
- b. Roof Bids - Reject bids for Connoquenessing Valley Elementary roofing project and authorize administration to rebid the project in the winter.

2. ***Budget Transfers*** - Approve budget transfers.

3. ***2004-05 Budget*** - Adopt annual budget for 2004-05 in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ requiring a millage increase of \_\_\_\_\_ mills. (Details will be provided next week.)

4. ***Transfers/Bill Payment*** - Authorize administration to:

- a. Approve budget transfers after auditors adjustments; and
- b. Pay June and July bills.

5. ***Re-enactment of Taxes*** - Approve re-enactment of the following Act 511 taxes:

- a. Flat Rate Occupation Tax - \$10
- b. Earned Income Tax - 1%
- c. Real Estate Transfer Tax - 1%

6. ***Insurance Premiums*** - Approve insurance premiums for 2004-05 with Garman Murray Insurance.

7. ***Tax Exoneration*** - Approve real estate tax exoneration.

8. ***Food Service Bids*** - Reject food service supply bids. Mr. Evans questioned why the bids were rejected. Mr. Stewart responded that he was not happy with the bids received and has decided to use the Western Pennsylvania Food Co-Operative.

9. ***Gas Distribution Contract*** - Approve natural gas distribution contract for Rowan Elementary.

**D. Personnel** - Personnel matters will be discussed in executive session.

10. **COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Lynda Eagle
- B. Colleen Wilson
- C. Linda Scalamogna
- D. Mirka and Stephan Fatschel
- E. Oscar Hagan
- F. Judy and Joe McCosby
- G. Lynn and Bruce Richards
- H. Nancy Frishkorn
- I. Stephen Graham
- J. Michele Meanor
- K. Laurie Hochberg
- L. Frederick Mullner
- M. Lynda Eagle
- N. Robin Redding
- O. Brian Hroncich
- P. Audrey Zelanko
- Q. Kathy Millroy
- R. Sue McElhone
- S. Lauren Hassen
- T. Rebecca Stern
- U. James P. Boyd
- V. Jennifer Coyle
- W. Kathy Keenan
- X. Dr. Kevin Handerhan
- Y. Sara Snyder
- Z. Rozann Lamberto
- AA. Pam Brizzi
- BB. Mary Jo Kress
- CC. A Concerned Citizen

The Board adjourned to a short recess at 8:39 p.m. and reconvened at 8:48 p.m.

## 11. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Denise Minton stated that members of the public have been ignored by some members of the School Board in not listening to the majority of the speakers. Each Board member is accountable to the public. The vast majority of those attending do not support the cuts; the administration does not support the cuts. She asked that the remainder of her four minutes be given to Mr. Storti, her representative, to address his position on the budget. Mr. Storti replied that the items on the scorecard were items that were to be looked at but became a game. The board, public, and administration have lost why we are here. For example, the activity buses, is one run enough? He is not saying to cut the item, but suggested the administration take another look at it and seek the value of each item. Mr. Adametz added that he has responded to every e-mail he has received.
- B. Ruthie Pickett noted that she has a daughter and grandchildren who are students in the district. She has volunteered extensively and has been a PTO co-president. One point of clarity, to get volunteers to cover all duties of paraprofessionals is not possible. In a large setting such as the elementary cafeterias, the duties cannot be accomplished with volunteers such as in a small school. Also, please keep the team concept at the middle schools.
- C. Brian Hroncich thanked the Board members who lent their voices in setting some fiscal stability in this budget by sending a message asking administrators to give the budget another

- look. Things are done much differently in private and in school settings. Very little has been said in what this budget is buying us such as test scores and academic improvements. He has asked for line-by-line budget listing and did not receive it from the administration. The current numbers do not add up. The general supplies budget is just outrageous. Questions need to be answered. Communications and printing are other areas of concern. Revenues are often deflated and used as distortion tactics by Mr. Berkebile and the administration. More information needs to be handed out to help to find alternatives. Mr. Evans responded that PSSA scores were addressed in May. The writing scores showed significant improvement. Mr. Hroncich was at the meeting when those scores were presented.
- D. Robin Redding thanked the Board for sending the budget back to the administration and thanked the administration for taking on the task. The basics are not being met at this time. Mrs. Redding's daughter sent a letter asking why electrical appliances and homemade furniture were being taken from her classroom. Mrs. Redding also sent a letter. Neither received a response. Are people going to be heard and when will a response be given? Dr. Malecki responded that a letter was sent to the principal and teacher addressing the concerns noted in letter sent by the entire classroom. A copy of those letters will be sent to Mrs. Redding. A response to Mrs. Redding's letter dated May 28 will be sent.
- E. Fred Mullner thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. He appreciates the hard work put into the budget and the information from the state website and Mr. Berkebile. He was unaware of the funding issues and appreciates that information. If that is the hand dealt, we have to work with that challenge. All in the budget process must work to drive down expenses. Together it can be accomplished.
- F. Pete Scolieri noted that no one wants to see their property taxes increase, but education is not just about reading, writing and arithmetic. The Board has made great strides in willingness to make fundamental changes in our athletic program. The district is heading towards a top-notch football program. A few members looking for cuts at any cost could jeopardize these efforts. Seneca Valley is still a good bargain. We are a low cost producer of education. The residents are to blame as we chose to move here and require services. At the recent academic dinner, recent graduates spoke to the students and encouraged them to become involved in extra-curricular activities in preparation for college applications. Mr. Scolieri also suggested that residents need to go to Harrisburg to ask our legislators to take care of us.
- G. Debbie Crosby stated that in 2002 the softball coaches were put up for a vote to continue in their positions. They were then put on an improvement plan. Has that been done? Dr. Malecki responded that this is a personnel matter not discussed at a public meeting, but he assured Mrs. Crosby that as soon as the athletic director is appointed, all programs will be reviewed. Mr. Evans, Mrs. Reale, and Mr. Storti agreed to serve on a softball review committee.
- H. Diane Brenner thanked Eileen Connors for getting the Board back on track and force accountability to fiscal matters. When Ms. Brenner went to school there were many fundraisers for activities. Her suggestion is to teach students if they want something, they must earn it. They could raise money by selling services such as raking leaves or cutting grass. Fees for parking permits could be raised or limit parking to those that need it for after school jobs. She also asked the Board to keep paraprofessionals.
- I. Kathleen Marcinko has been a parent volunteer for her three children in the district schools. She wondered why the antagonism towards the music programs. The teachers put energy into these programs. At many of the programs and adjudications she hears comments from judges from different parts of the country praise the programs at Seneca Valley. Mr. Brennan responded that he is not after the programs per se. The instrumental and vocal programs have grown drastically. He was just concerned with the cost of this program. Mr. Adametz also mentioned the programs looking only at the percentage increases.
- J. Cathy Rape thanked the Board for taking extra time to reconsider the budget and glad they voted to send the budget back to the administration. She agrees with Mrs. Connors' earlier

- comments. Other companies are downsizing and employees are told they will be a more productive staff. Students should have opportunities, but does not want her hard earned money to pay for it. She asked the Board to make decisions with the lowest impact possible and come up with a better plan for next year.
- K. Myrna Paine has three children in the district. She is concerned with proposed class size at Rowan increasing at a higher rate than other elementaries. Please do not raise class sizes in any of the buildings.
  - L. Lisa Parey has a third grader and kindergartener at Rowan. She is also concerned about raising class size with eight second grades moving to seven third grades next year. Paraprofessionals do a very good job and she does not think the building could run without them. Students require sports and quality activities for a well-rounded education. She would like the current activities to be in place when her children can take advantage of them. Mrs. Parey does not want her taxes to go up, but would rather that than have these items cut.
  - M. Rebecca Hester is both a teacher and parent in the district. She is upset with many of the proposed changes. She chose to work and live here because the district is fabulous. Seneca Valley was the only choice after teaching and living in many other areas. Removing teachers or paraprofessionals would not benefit students. One mill of assessed valuation is 10% of appraised value. Appalled and insulted asking if we are providing a well rounded education. The increase is not that great for what we are getting.
  - N. Bill Adams thanked the Board for taking the time to listen to all of the speakers. Some of what is going on in the district is taking a lot more money from residents than what it needs to. Other schools are educating at \$3,000 when we educate for \$9,000 and still asking for more. School districts are a monopoly taking more money than it needs. The state needs voucher system so customers can say what they want to buy. The Board is the only thing coming between the administration asking for more and more money. It is not a question of whether someone has the money the district is asking for, it is money people do not have. 60-70% of the population would go against asking for more money.
  - O. Jackie Flynn stated that maybe things can be cut that won't affect the classroom experience. Class size will affect the classroom experience. Mrs. Flynn did a classroom presentation for a class of 21 students. They were excited, asking questions, and she was exhausted when she was done. It is not possible to educate a student for \$3,000. She recommended the Board look at items rather than class size.

## 12. BOARD BUDGET DEBATE

The administration provided information on a 0, 3, 4, 5, and 6-mill budget. Mr. Adametz hoped to get to a 0-mill budget. The administration was asked for direction to get to one of these options. These are recommendations for further review. If the administration's recommendations don't 100% correspond to the Board's choice, members can make amendments until there are 5 votes to pass the budget.

Ken Brennan stated that people continue to want everything for everyone. Every household has to adjust their budgets to meet their income and the Board must begin to look at the budget earlier next year; the debate must begin July 1. He cannot accept the fact that the average person wants to raise taxes and have no modifications to the budget. The reputation of the district must be maintained. It would be wrong to vote on a 6-mill budget. The legislators are the people that taxpayers need to address regarding funding issues so that we can work within the parameters of the legislature. He would vote for a 3-mill budget.

Mr. Adametz would like to see the administration take his budget proposal and run with it. It does not affect the main concern of existing teachers cut. It holds the line on personnel for this year. In a few years we will need another building and he would support an increase at that time.

Mr. Evans responded that this budget started off at a 10-mill increase that was whittled down to a 6-mill increase. Many of these items lower than 6-mills are maintenance items. If things are not maintained, we will pay later. Mr. Brennan stated that the \$1 million extra revenue is equal to 3-mills. All of these programs were approved over the year reminded Mr. Evans. Mrs. Conners responded that when there is not a plan, then that could happen.

Dr. Tylinski was asked where he wanted the district to go. He responded that when he was interviewed, the Board was concerned with technology. At Seneca Valley, the technology program must be reviewed, especially in the elementary program. They do not have similar programs, operating systems are not the same, and computers are over five years old. There are two platforms in the district. As far as the budget, we now have no increase, only holding the line. Must evaluate the platform by people who are adept at evaluation programs. The district needs to have teachers and administration evaluate the programs. The administration has worked for all people to make this program work. He understands fixed income; but believes there is not fluff in the budget. Cuts will hurt the areas that he was asked in his interview to enhance.

Mrs. Conners stated that educators K-12 do not have budget experience. Cost efficiency is something that has been learned and we must honor experiences of private sector, too. Dr. Tylinski responded that changes must be made as a committee and should be done through the strategic plan.

Mrs. Reale acknowledged that when someone from out of state is moving to our area, they want to know where the best schools are. Seneca Valley is right at the top. Because not only do we have the best schools, but we also have the best tax rates. School boards are unique committees that come from all walks of life that bring their experience and history that come together to make decision. In the beginning Seneca Valley was not very progressive. There was a high pregnancy rate, parents were not educated, and they did not push their kids academically. Now parents are proud to say their children graduated from Seneca Valley because they were prepared by Seneca Valley educators who did a very good job. The value of homes has gone up more than the amount of the rise of property values because of the school district. Mrs. Reale does not ever want to be accused of taking things away from students. The state government has put us in this dilemma we did not create. We need to ask our legislators to go to Harrisburg to work for us. As always, you get what you pay for. If you live in the Seneca Valley School District, you should be proud of your investment.

It was suggested that the administration put together a 0, 3, and 6-mill increase for next week

Mr. Hill commented that when he came on the Board he also had some ideas on how to reduce spending. After learning more about the operations of the district through questions that were quickly answered, he now trusts the experience of the administration to do their job. It comes down to do we pay now or do we pay later.

Mr. Paul reminded the public that Board members do not get a discount on their taxes, so they are also voting to raise their own taxes as well.

13. **ADJOURNMENT** - With nothing further to come before the Board, Mr. Hill motioned, seconded by Mr. Paul, to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 p.m. Motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting was adjourned.

Mr. Dean Berkebile, Board President

Mrs. Joan Rinaman, Board Secretary