

WILLOW RUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Ypsilanti, Michigan

REGULAR MEETING

May 17, 2007

The regular meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. at Willow Run High School, 235 Spencer Lane, Ypsilanti, MI, 48198, with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Those present were:

Claudette Braxton, President
Andreas Blakita, Vice President
Brenda Clay, Secretary
Travis Greer, Trustee
Clifford Smith, Trustee
Dorothy Stewart, Treasurer
Sheri Washington, Trustee

Members of the Administrative Council Present Included:

Ron Ciranna, J.D., Superintendent
Joe Ann Allen, Principal, Ford Elementary School
Melvin Anglin, Principal, Willow Run Middle School
Rosalind Coffey, Principal, Holmes Elementary School
Don Goven, Principal, Kettering Elementary School
Dr. David Houle, Controller
Dr. Walter Jenkins, Principal, Willow Run High School
Laura Lisiscki, Principal, Kaiser Elementary
Bryan Schroeder, Assistant Principal, Willow Run Middle School
Shannon Smith, Assistant Principal, Willow Run High School
Lana Tatom, Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Regina Williams, Curriculum Coordinator

Willow Run High School Report

Mr. Kevin VanRiper shared the highlights of the Eighth Grade Transition to High School Program, which includes a question and answer session, gym-time, class scheduling and visits to high school classrooms and media center.

Joeseeph Smith and Corey Favors explained the structure of the Robotics Team. They shared the team members run the middle school's First Lego League for the middle school students, the robot building season, safety awareness, competition and the promotion of the team and the District.

Cadet Colonels Anna Powdhar, Victoria Lucas, Kathryn Thomas, and Kayla Vega shared information about the many awards received by the Willow Run High School Junior R.O.T.C. Program, which teaches student cadets leadership and community service skills, with a focus on building strong character.

The high school program continued with the presentation of academic awards, the first was the Allen C. Lawson, Mathematical Scholarship, which was given to Joeseeph Smith, this was followed by the "Dr. Joe" Most Improved Student Awards, given to the following students: Shauna Whitlow, Cheney- 5th, Williams Myles, III, Ford - 5th, Abdourahmane Kaba, Holmes -3rd, Ashley Mallion - Kaiser - 5th, Christah Caddell - Kettering - 5th, Moronica Hokins - WRMS - 7th, Richard Jackson - WRHS - 11th.

Citizens' Time

Beth Vonck, Holmes Elementary School teacher, implored the board to make a decision regarding the closing of schools. She pointed out we are one school district and said it is not about a building, it is about the community, staff and the people who make Willow Run what it is. Ms. Vonck said this community can handle anything, but only if decisions are made in a timely manner. She said the District's purse strings are getting very short and urged the board to take a good hard look at us and only do what we can afford, even if it means closing a building.

Mahlon Williams asked everyone to think about why we are here. He said to consider whether it is to make money, or to impact and make a difference in the lives of children. He said we should all be here to give guidance, knowledge and wisdom to children on the road called life. Mr. Williams said he sees the fire in Willow Run is out and everyone-teachers, Para pros, bus drivers are upset, due to the fact that nobody knows if buildings are closing. He added Willow Run is a very unique place in that students can easily leave us and cross the street to attend another district. He said we can use this to our advantage by attracting students to our side of the street to attend here. Mr. Williams wrapped up his comments by saying it is easy to follow a good leader, it is when you get in front of a leader that it becomes a mess.

President Braxton called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Consideration of Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

Dr. Ciranna made the following changes to the agenda:

Deletion – V.B. Purchase of Textbooks

Addition – Items IV.H. and I. – Acceptance of Recommendation – Student Suspensions.

Approval of the Agenda

#06070504 Ms. Clay moved that the Board of Education accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Greer supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Minutes

#06071505 Ms. Clay moved that the Board of Education approves the minutes as presented from the regular meeting of April 19, 2007, from the closed session of April 26, from the special meeting of May 3, from the work/study session May 3, 2007 and from the special meetings of May 7, 8, 9 and 14, 2007. Mr. Smith supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Payment of Bills

#06070506 Ms. Stewart moved that the Board of Education approve the following General Fund checks, check #44261 through and including check #44545 with the exception of voided checks as noted on page 15 of the General Fund Check Register for the amount of \$2,124,101.70; and no Building & Site Fund checks. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Consent Items

#06070507 Mr. Smith moved that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Items, as originally presented at the May 3, 2007 Work/Study Session: 1.) Out-of-State Field Trip – WRMS, 2.) Out-of-State Field Trip – ROTC. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Communications

Dr. Ciranna acknowledged the Willow Run Community Schools' staff and shared that he, along with Ms. Tatom, distributed certificates of appreciation and \$100,000 candy bars to all staff members. He said the staff does an excellent job and everything everyone does is very much appreciated. Dr. Ciranna also pointed out a proclamation of School Nurses Day and thanked Lori Day, R.N., for the wonderful work she does for the District.

Approval of Policy – 7400 – Selection of Materials

#06070508 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve Policy 7400, as attached. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

First Reading of Policy – 1300 - Meetings

Ms. Clay moved, Ms. Stewart seconded, that the Willow Run Board of Education carry Policy 1300 –Meetings forward for consideration.

Mr. Greer Moved, Ms. Clay seconded, that the Willow Run Board of Education carry Policy 7630 – Graduation Requirements forward for consideration.

No vote is necessary to carry policies forward for consideration.

Discussion

Ms. Washington said the board has not collectively discussed the effectiveness of Work/Study sessions. She added she does not want to go away from them, but the board needs the ability to vote at these sessions. She said if the board approves changing the language, action can be taken, if needed.

Mr. Smith said when community members see a board meeting, as opposed to a study session posted; they know it means the board will be taking action. He said you can do whatever you want at a board meeting, whether it is presentations, discussions, or a vote, but he added, the community needs to know.

Approval of Contract – Head Start

#06070509 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the Contract between Willow Run Community Schools and Washtenaw County Head Start, for the 2007-2008 school year, in the amount of \$528,653.⁰⁰, to be paid to the District upon completion of the Contract. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried.

Approval of Purchase – COPE Slots

#06070510 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the purchase of a total of 12 COPE slots for the 2007-2008 school year, in the amount of \$81,000.00. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Adoption of Resolution – WISD Biennial Election

#06070511 Ms. Stewart moved that the Willow Run Board of Education designates Sheri Washington as its representative to serve on the 2007 electoral body responsible for electing members to the Washtenaw Intermediate School District Board of Education.

This board supports candidates Diane Hockett and Mary Jane Tramontin for two positions on the Washtenaw Intermediate School District Board of Education for terms of six-years.

The Board directs its representative Sheri Washington to vote for candidates Diane Hockett and Mary Jane Tramontin and at least on the first ballot taken at the June 4, 2007, election.” Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: Ms. Washington, Mr. Greer, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith,
Mr. Blakita, Ms. Clay, Ms. Braxton

Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip – WRMS

#06070412 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Community Schools Board of Education approve an out-of-state field trip to Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio on Monday June 4, 2007 for the Willow Run Middle School Student Council, National Junior Honors Society, Cross Country Team, and Track Team. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Acceptance of Recommendation – Focus Group

Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education accept the recommendation to continue to operate all existing programs and buildings for the 2007-2008 school year and develop one elementary building into a K-6 school and provide for a 5th grade pilot program in the middle school with a minimum of two 5th grade classrooms. Mr. Blakita supported.

Discussion

Ms. Stewart said it is late in the year and considering we are hiring a new superintendent, we do not want to saddle her with developing a K-6 School and a fifth-grade pilot program at the middle school. Ms. Smith agreed.

Ms. Braxton said with a new superintendent coming into the District, we need to give that person the opportunity to help us through this transition. Ms. Braxton added we cannot name a building to close tonight, because there has been no due diligence. She said we are past the point where a building can be closed the right way.

Mr. Blakita said we need to make it clear to students the intent is to keep building open this next school year.

Ms. Stewart said the board has not seen the cost associated with the Focus Group's recommendations, nor any planning. Ms. Washington asked for names of buildings to close, saying this motion is 180-turn from the Task Force recommendation. Ms. Washington said the most important thing is to have a transition plan in place and added we need to let the new superintendent come in and review this. Mr. Smith said there is not enough information to vote on the closing of schools tonight.

Mr. Greer said he is concerned about amending the motion, because people are excited about this and to put this off is not the right thing to do. Dr. Ciranna said he has met with the curriculum department and middle school administrators, that the materials are laid out, teachers have volunteer and the next step is to get the information out to parents.

Ms. Stewart requested information about planning and the cost for the pilot program. She asked for a presentation of this at the next meeting. Ms. Washington said these are noble ideas and will draw students, but said the board needs more definition about the programs, logistics, cost, etc...

The board discussed the idea of moving ahead with the programs, but capping the number of students allowed into them during the pilot year.

Ms. Stewart said she is concerned about people leaving the middle school and if fifth-graders are introduced to the middle school, we do not want them to leave too. Mr. Schroeder said 80% of those leaving out are moving out of the District. Ms. Stewart requested all information regarding where our students come from and where they go from Mr. Schroeder.

Ms. Braxton moved the discussion to the possible closing of Thurston, saying she supports closing Thurston, because in talking with Ms. Reidner of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), about the Deficit Elimination Plan, Ms. Reidner said we need to take this seriously. She said the MDE is requiring an updated plan and we need to be demonstrating to them we are moving with that plan.

Mr. Smith said the only program to be concerned about moving from Thurston is Head Start. He said he spoke with Ms. Pat Horne-McGee, Director of Washtenaw County Head Start who told him we can move the program without any problems with changing the licensed location. He said she told him we have a couple of schools that can accommodate the program and she will work with us hand-in-hand over the summer and even offered us playground equipment for our program. Mr. Blakita responded to this saying, she may be the head of Head Start, but she is not talking to any of us.

Ms. Goven said Ms. McGee expressed concern over moving the program and told her there is no playground equipment or adequate fencing for the program at our other buildings.

Mr. Greer requested Ms. McGee be invited to share options with the board prior to their voting on closing Thurston.

- #06070413 Ms. Stewart moved that we continue to operate all five elementary buildings for 2007-2008, that we establish pilot programs for K-6 buildings and a fifth-grade pilot program in the middle school, each limited to a maximum of 54 positions to be applied for by parents, and to initiate the closure of Thurston immediately.

Ayes: Ms. Washington, Mr. Greer, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith,
Mr. Blakita, Ms. Clay, Ms. Braxton

Nays: 1 – Mr. Blakita - Motion carried

Acceptance of Suspension

- #06070514 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education suspend the student presented for expulsion on Thursday, May 17, 2007 at 5:30 p.m., through the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Acceptance of Suspension

- #06070515 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education suspend the student presented for expulsion on Thursday, May 17, 2007 at 6:00 p.m., for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: Ms. Washington, Mr. Greer, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith,
Mr. Blakita, Ms. Clay, Ms. Braxton

Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Payment - Dyntek

- #06070516 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve payment of invoice DTKQ7415 in the amount of \$13,267.20, to Dyntek, for antivirus software. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Revised March 2007 CD-4848

Dr. Houle reviewed the attached revised March 2007, DS-4848. He explained that this report is filed monthly with the Michigan Department of Education. The report he presented replaced a report submitted previously to the Board. The revisions involved updating the Projected To-Year-End column with known changes that Dr. Houle has discussed

with the Board since September 2006 and throughout the year. The revenue revisions involved an improvement to Local Source revenue from increased interest income, decreased State Aid due to declining enrollment and a possible "proration" and finally, a \$30,497 adjustment to Act 18 funding. As for expenditures, Dr. Houle indicated that Instructional expenses are expected to increase from budget by approximately \$250,000 because the District was not able to negotiate the changes to teacher health care insurance that were anticipated. Business Operations are expected to exceed budget by \$188,775 due to increased interest expense on working capital. Finally, General Administration expenditures are expected to be \$179,296 lower than budgeted from not permanently filling the Superintendent position during the 2006-2007 year. Central Office expenditures are expected to increase by an offsetting amount as Dr. Ciranna had performed as Interim Superintendent in an extended capacity

April 30, 2007 Budget Update

Dr. Houle presented the attached update to the April 30, 2007 budget update in the line item format to which the Board was accustomed. He indicated that the report had been modified to include the Projected To-Year-End estimates included in the DS-4848. He led the Board through the line item changes that comprised the budget revisions.

Approval of Contracted Services Extension - Controller

Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the attached Contracted Services Agreement Rider, to extend the Contract between Willow Run Community Schools and the WISD for the services of a Controller for Willow Run, from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009. Ms. Clay supported.

Discussion

Ms. Stewart pointed out the requested adjustments were not included in the Contract as presented. Dr. Ciranna said they are in the memo the board was given from Brian Marcel and said the board could read the adjustments into the motion.

#06070517 Ms. Stewart moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the attached Contracted Services Agreement Rider, to extend the Contract between Willow Run Community Schools and the WISD for the services of a Controller for Willow Run, from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009, with the following conditions: 1.) Willow Run Community Schools has the right to terminate the Contract, with a reciprocal 90-day termination clause. 2.) The indirect rate will be 3%. Mr. Greer supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Layoffs - WCEA

#06070518 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the layoff of eleven (11) employees due to economic necessity under the terms of article 21.0100 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Willow Run Board of Education and the W.C.E.A. These layoffs will become effective as of June 30, 2007. We ask the Board to advise, consent and approve this action. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Citizens' Questions

Ms. Emily Brumbaugh asked if an elementary school has only 130-150 students in September, if it will be staying open. Ms. Braxton said the board voted that tonight.

Mr. Williams asked if the motion for the pilot program and the Thurston program means Thurston is closing by September and questioned where the kids will go. He said he loves the idea of a fifth-grade program, but is troubled about the sixth graders going back to an elementary school, expressing concern about them receiving the same program options as the middle school's sixth-grade students.

Ms. Noncy Fields asked the board for a contract for the teachers. She asked for some decision to help heal the District. She proposed the Willow Run Way Forward plan be put to use, which would show how actions fit into the District's plans and demonstrate to the staff and community why actions are taken.

Ms. Cheryl McClee said there are 120 parents who need to know where their children are going to go, adding it will be a disservice to the Head Start Program to break it up between buildings. She said she wants to know which building the program will be located in.

Mr. Mark Wilde asked if there is a timeline in place for next year for when to properly start the process of closing buildings.

Ms. Kathleen Miller said looking at the over-all picture, if you take 54 fifth graders and put them into the middle school and you take 54 sixth graders out of the middle school and only get 30 who actually end up wanting to go, how you tell them "I'm sorry, you have to go." She said there are a lot of decisions to be made and said you have to plan for them.

Ms. Miller also questioned if we are going to get a superintendent who is going to be Human Resources Director, or will we need to get a Human Resources Director.

Ms. Anita Smith said in speaking of the DEP in the winter the possibility of redistricting was discussed. Dr. Ciranna said he and Ms. Searcy are working on that, as well as looking at low-cost, short-term leases for buses to use to pick-up more students.

Ms. Beth Vonck said she is concerned about the sixth-grade students coming to the elementary buildings, pointing out kids are very excited to be going to the middle school. She said it would do them a disservice, because they would not get the same electives or level of classes.

Ms. Karyn Goven requested Ms. Horne be contacted as soon as possible and asked why it is okay to give time to the elementaries for transitioning, but not to 120 Head Start, plus, Alternative and Adult Education students.

Superintendent's Comments

Dr. Ciranna announced June 13th will be the last day of school and June 11, 12, and 13 will be half-days for students and full-days for staff, with the exception of the 13th, when staff may leave after completion of their check-out.

Board Members' Comments

Mr. Smith said he and Ms. Stewart would like a contract for the new superintendent approved subject to negotiations. He said Mr. Williams told him Dr. Hope-Jackson did not take the interview at Benton Harbor, because she wants to work at Willow Run. He said he and Ms. Stewart will contact Dr. Hope-Jackson to talk about contract issues and she is excited to be coming here.

Ms. Clay reminded everyone that the Prom is this weekend at the Eastern Michigan University, Student Activity Center from 8 -12 p.m., Saturday night. She also told the board to disregard the confidential packet they received regarding the Athletic Boosters.

President Braxton declared the meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.