



# Potomac Elementary School

## School Board Minutes

for

January 21, 2013

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*“Potomac School equips each student for his/her future  
within a culture of excellence that values the small community experience.”*

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### Call to Order

Board Chair Bob O'Boyle called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those trustees present were: Jeff Hahn, Gary Long, Victoria Richardson and Jim Wrobel. Tim Johnson, principal and Jill Thornton, clerk, were also in attendance.

**Public Input** (for issues not on the agenda) Nancy asked why this meeting could not wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting so there could be more notice given. Jim said the negotiations have taken too long already to keep extending them.

### Contract Negotiations

Jim and Victoria met with the PEA on Monday, and realized they needed additional discussion with the board before negotiations continued.

The PEA proposed an MOU that states in order for the members of the union to agree to a freeze on the matrix for fiscal year 2012-2013, they wanted assurances that:

1. this is not a precedence and the board is not interested in negating the pay matrix
2. they were guaranteed steps and lanes increases for fiscal year 2013-2014

Tim said an MOU dealing with next year is not possible without budget numbers from the state for next year. Jeff added the request is not 'good faith bargaining'. Asking the board to guarantee increased pay next year without having knowledge of the budget granted by the state is not reasonable. Bob added he felt making promises on next year would be derelict as a board. We can't make promises on the unknown.

Jim asked the following question. Independent of what the increase pay amount added to the budget, would the board oppose including the guarantee of that increased pay in the MOU?

The entire board stated they would oppose that language.

Jim said going back to the requested assurances; the first request had to do with intentions. Jim feels our request to freeze the matrix this year is not intended as a precedent.

The rest of the board agreed.

Tim said the matrix could still be a problem next year though. Since the increases to teacher pay are based on a formula that does not consider what the state sets for our budget, we could be in the same position next year as we are in this year. The heart of the matrix is the steps, which increases teacher pay annually based on the matrix formula. When our budget decreases, the matrix still increases pay. The only method we have had in the past to control costs and keep the district out of default is to let teachers go to keep total payroll within 80% of our state set budget. If the budget continues to decrease, there is a point when reducing staff is not the best answer for the district and students. He feels the entire contract, including how the matrix affects the budget, must be included in future negotiations.

Bob agrees with the statement that the board is not trying to get rid of the matrix. He does feel that future discussions will be impacted by more than just the matrix though. This year, performance pay is intended to show

acknowledgement of the teachers. He is interested in rewarding the good things going on at the school. He feels that the reward in payments cannot be put on the matrix at this time though, as the matrix continues to increase each year based on what was put into it the previous year. When we discuss the matrix in future years, both revenue and expenditures need to be part of the discussion to keep the district numbers in balance.

Bob recently heard that the PEA stated they mistrust the intentions of the board. He personally feels that is heartbreaking considering his concern for the entire school. He would like to maintain the good things that have been started. If the PEA is concerned with the board, perhaps we need to bring a negotiator in who is outside of those presently working towards the districts future; and he would like to consider that option.

Jim stated that even with an outside negotiator, the board sets what they feel is in the best interests of the district.

Bob agreed, and then said his perspective is that we are still in the same position we were in when negotiations started last May. He feels the negotiations need to get done. They are negatively affecting the school, the staff and the board.

Jeff agrees with Bob. He feels the negotiations have been going on a long time. We've been dealing in good faith with the budget we've been given. And to hear there is a trust issue with the board when he feels the board has been negotiating in good faith is a big concern.

Victoria said that based on what she is hearing from the board, she and Jim are at an impasse with the PEA, unless the MOU can be written without demanding a pay increase on next year's budget. Perhaps it is time to bring in a professional negotiator.

Jim asked if the board feels the entire matrix should be under consideration in future negotiations. The board agreed.

Jim said the next issue brought up in negotiations has to do with how the total number of contract hours are scheduled. He feels that should be left up to Tim and the staff. Bob and Jeff both agreed with that statement. To do otherwise they said would constitute micromanaging.

The next issue Jim brought up is Performance Pay. The discussion began with the fact that our current budget has a very minimal buffer to protect the district from any 'surprise' expenses. If there are no surprises and we have not had to deplete the entire budget by year end, the board has already stated they would like some of the leftover funds used for 'Performance Pay'. The issue at this time is how to set the parameters for disbursement.

Jim suggests a rudimentary system this year as there is such a short time before year end for reviews and analysis.

Victoria feels this year needs to be a simple percentage system considering the time constraints we have right now, with a more complicated system set up to deal with future years. There just isn't enough time to set evaluations and reviews up.

Bob asked if everyone has to participate.

Jim said he felt that was not required. It could be whoever wants to participate in whatever is set up. He also feels it should be simple this year, but not a simple 'bonus' system. It should be used to reward goals and the future of the district.

Tim said the question should not be what issues are in the way of accomplishing a performance pay system. He feels we should set a goal to work towards, evaluate how the goal is achieved, and base pay on that.

Gary said he feels performance pay needs to be specific if it's to truly be pay for performance. First it has to link to established goals and objectives of the district, and second it needs to consider individual goals that benefit the students and district. He also feels it should be tied to student performance.

Bob summarized the performance pay discussion into three parts. First, where do the funds come from, second, what is the mechanism to provide funds to staff, and third, who is participating.

Jim said he agrees with performance pay philosophically, he’s just not sure it can be set up in time for this year. The question that comes up is how can evaluations be done without subjectivity affecting the final evaluations? And the PEA is only half the staff, the entire staff does not receive evaluations annually.

Tim agreed. He feels that evaluations need to be for everyone and a part of the discussion on how to achieve a performance pay model.

Bob set a committee of Jim, Gary, Tim, Jill, PEA representatives and PACE representatives. The PEA will talk to its members and provide a couple of teachers for the committee. Tim will talk to PACE for a list of representatives from them.

Jim asked how long the process should be limited to this year. Tim feels it has to conclude sometime in March.

Jeff agrees with Victoria and feels it’s too late to start a complicated performance pay model this year. He would like that to be worked on for next year.

Tim stated the model still needs to be sustainable for future years.

Gary asked if this would hold up finalizing negotiations. Jim feels we can finalize a contract and add an MOU after the contract is finalized to deal with performance pay.

Bob asked if the board needs to set up guidelines for a mediator.

Jim feels we could do that at the February meeting if it is required.

Gary proposed the first meeting for performance pay be on Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:00p. All agreed.

Bob closed the meeting with saying he feels we are all working towards a better school and a good working environment. He would like to acknowledge the positive without ignoring problems. He asks everyone not to let the little things overshadow the big goals.

Nancy Linnell inserted a quote – “See the good and praise it”

**Adjourn**

Chair O’Boyle adjourned the Board meeting at 9:08 pm.