



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

for

May 13, 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.”*

Call to Order

Board Vice-Chair Jim Wrobel 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, and Victoria Richardson. Tim Johnson, principal and Jill Thornton, clerk, were also in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda) Wendy McDaniel said she is very concerned about having a combined 7/8 grade next year. She would like to see those grades separated.

Minutes

Gary moved to approve the minutes for April 8 2013. Victoria seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Board Reorganization

Victoria Richardson is leaving the school board after 5 active years! A very large thank you and round of hands was extended to her for her time and dedication.

Cliff Vann has been elected to take Victoria's seat and to fill the office of Trustee for the term of 3 years. He is now seated and a member of the board.

Gary moved to appoint Jim Wrobel to fill the office of Trustee for our second open position until the next annual election of the District. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Jim moved to nominate Bob O'Boyle to serve as board chair. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Jeff moved to nominate Jim Wrobel to serve as vice chair. Cliff seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Jeff moved to appoint Jill Thornton to serve as Clerk of the Board. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Gary moved to remove Victoria Richardson as an authorized signer for warrants issued by Potomac School. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Consent Agenda

Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$27,757.34, Total Payroll = \$54,862.93

Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.

Petty Cash – Supplemental to monthly warrants used between Board Meetings – Reimbursed thru Claims.

Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – The March 15 General Ledger was incorrectly included in this report instead of the April 15 ledger - Both the April 15 and May 15 Student Accts General Ledgers will be included in the June 10 2013 packet.

Jeff moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Principals Report

Community

- Picnic and community Game Day May 16th (open to the public). This has been our Field Day in the past. It will start at 11:00 am and go until 4 pm, with lunch served at 11:30.
- Appreciation Dinner (special thanks to Hannah and Jill for pulling it together)

School

- Field trips: Outdoor School (7th grade with Mrs. Davis), Battle of the Books (which was a literacy competition last month coordinated by Mrs. Linnell). And the Wildlife Film Festival.
- Kindergarten roundup (expecting approx 6-7 in fall)
- Survey results summary will be worked on in the summer – looking at how we will use the information and review the 4 day week schedule for an update in August.
- Job posting: two part time certified (Sped/Music and PE/Math); one regarding Explorers (combining a position with Explorers will be used as a way to attempt to create a position as close as possible to 1.0 FTE)
- 8th grade and kindergarten graduation will be May 30th at 7 pm.
- Math placement and review of the math program will be May 31st, the last Friday in May.

Activities

- Explorers: Model rockets are finished, Catapults will finish May 17th.
- Track: Meet of Champions May 23rd. We are in need of transportation.
- A school dance will be held May 16th.

Grant Writer update

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

Grant Awards

- Received \$2000 grant from Northwest Farm Credit Services for Phase II HUB development.
- Received approval for \$17,500 from Missoula County Parks Board. Awaiting County Commissioner approval. With this amount approved, PGCC can confirm with Heman Foundation that we have met the requirements of the challenge grant issued in 2012. This secured as additional \$25K for us in May 2013 for Phase II of the HUB.
- Albertson’s declined to support healthy snacks for Explorers Program.
- Plum Creek chose not to sponsor the Pioneer Festival. Plum Creek noted they do not provide consecutive years of funding. We will approach them again January 2014 for the HUB. I sent a copy of our proposal to Minta Johnson at her request. She suggested continuing to apply for funding annually.
- Awaiting news from PPL, Bair Trust, Northern Energy, Town Pump, First Interstate Bank, MFCU, and Two Rivers Bank and Cellular One in addition to local business donation requests for the Festival.

Grant Writing/Research

- Missoula County Parks Board - Submitted proposal for \$20K in support of Phase II Field Development on March 18th.
- Jerry Metcalf Foundation - Submitted proposal for \$10K in support of community history project: Potomac Days of Yore as founding project for Adult Ed on March 15th.
- Montana History Foundation - Submitted proposal for \$5K in support of community history project on March 27th.

Conducted weekly research on additional funding opportunities for HUB, Explorers, Athletics, History, and general operation support for School.

Other

- Reminded Administrator of local fundraising contacts to make. Established Google calendar to help with grant action items and deadlines.
- Meeting with AmeriCorps and Administrator to discuss work plan ideas.
- Meeting with Health Department representative, Kaila Warren, on March 19th to discuss programming and funding opportunities.

- Meeting with local food expert, Kristen Lee Charlson, on March 21st to discuss programming and funding needs for Farm to School Planning Grant.

Potomac Explorers

- Met with United Way of Missoula County March 12 to discuss funding opportunities and grant timeline/requirements.
- Received communication from Washington Foundation regarding eligibility to submit funding request.

Pioneer Festival

- Cellular One, MFCU, First Interstate Bank, Two Rivers Bank, Northern Energy, Town Pump Charitable Foundation
- Drafted agenda and facilitated second planning meeting of the year.
- Met with PSD11 Board Committee on March 10th to discuss fundraising ideas and Centennial display ideas.
- Drafted Agenda and scheduled third planning meeting of the year for April 19th.

PGCC

- Continued updating PGCC website and facebook pages to share community news.
- Received approval to purchase refurbished laptop and quickbooks program for PGCC to help in professionalizing the organization.
- Received Grant Station log in for grant research.

March Work Plan

Contract extension required for grant research/writing after March 2013.

Continue researching relevant grant opportunities and foundations

- Phase I activities: dismantle ballfield infrastructure. Pour cement footers and dugout floor. Construct backstop. Complete irrigation installation, including control box and electric hook up. Spray weeds and seed.
- Grant awards for Phase II field development.
- Explorers 2013-2014 school year
- Match funding for development of new Adult Education Program and founding community history project: Potomac Days of Yore.
- Unrestricted support
- Donations and Sponsorships for the Pioneer Festival and Centennial Celebration PLUS fundraising brick contacts for vendors/engravers.

Continue sponsorship requests for Pioneer Festival / Centennial Celebration from area businesses/orgs.
Mentor and support training of AmeriCorps VISTA member, Hannah Still.

Future Grant Opps/Deadlines:

- April 11: Grant award recommendations by County Parks Board
- April 15: Preliminary award notice for Jerry Metcalf Foundation
- April 22: Good Garden Grant for schools
- April 24: Farm to School Planning Grant due (awards October)
- April 30: Charlotte Martin Foundation grant due for Explorer's (awards June 15)
- May 1: Johanna Havrot Foundation / Hart Family Fund for Small Towns + Honda Foundation for Explorers
- May 13: Award notification by PPL
- May 30: Award notification by Bair Trust and Montana History Foundation
- June 1: Washington Foundation for Explorers (requires secured match up front)

Upcoming Meetings:

- Pioneer Festival and Centennial Celebration: April 19th
- Tobacco Prevention Department on April 18th

Vision Impact

- Presenting at AGATE conference April 11th (Kristina Davis, Justine Luebke, and Tim Johnson) Two parents queried about how to get their children to Potomac for embedded Integrated Studies programming (Gifted/Talented programming)
- Tim spoke at Substance Abuse Prevention Course at U of M regarding how to get prevention programs into and working in public schools with U of M students.

Jeff asked Tim if we have hired Alicia monthly. Tim said she has currently been hired only through March.

Clerks Report

Election absentee ballots have been sent out for the May 28th election. Concerns have been voiced over the language used in the ballot that referred to ‘taxes on a home with a market value of’, and what does market value mean in that sentence. The explanation from the auditor’s office is as follows. Market value as it is referred to when calculating taxes refers to a specific assessed value completed once every 6 years. The last assessment was in 2008. So when calculations are run to determine mills, they start with the market value used for taxes, not the current value if the home was sold today. Then, an example of the calculations are – for a home with a market value of \$100,000, that amount is then multiplied by the residential exemption, which in 2013 is 45.5%. So $100,000 \times 45.5\% = \$45,500.00$. That amount is then subtracted from the \$100,000 to reach the home value used to determine the mills. In this case, $\$100,000 \text{ minus } \$45,500 = \$54,500$. So \$54,500 is the home value used for mill calculation.

The Missoula County Schools had this problem with semantics a few years ago, and changed the language to say ‘assessed value’. This seems to be more acceptable to the district voters there, so we can try that in future elections.

We have also received our updated budget based on the changes made by the legislature. The new number we received show an increase of \$30,000 over what was calculated before.

Cliff said he is concerned about how our budget seems to be a ‘numbers game’ to the public. He needs to understand it before he can explain it to anyone else.

An explanation of how school budgets are controlled comes down to ‘fund’ accounting. The State controls multiple accounts that schools can use for their expenses. The main account is the General fund that is used to pay for employees, supplies, maintenance and all main expenses related to education. Then there is a Retirement fund that can only be used for Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, and Unemployment costs; a Transportation Fund that can only be used to transport students to and from school (not for any extracurricular trips); and a Miscellaneous Fund that Federal, State and local grants are placed in, with allowed expenses from each grant only those specified by the grantee. Money in each fund has specific requirements for how it is expended.

The General Fund has been reduced by the State by over \$46,000 *actual* dollars in the past two years (as opposed to the greater loss when inflation is put into the mix). With the legal requirement that the State supply funds for education at an annual percentage increase to cover increased costs each year, which the State has not done, lawsuits have been brought to bring State support up to the levels it is required by law to maintain. This loss of funds was exacerbated by the influx of federal stimulus funds that the state used to supplant money it would have provided to schools. After the State supplanted its support for education, it did not bring their support back up to what it would have been before when the Federal stimulus funds disappeared. This shortfall has been disastrous to many school districts. For Potomac, the state reduction in our funding has resulted in reduced staff (by two teachers), and costs cut to a point that cannot be sustained and still provide a good education to our students. By law, money from other funds cannot be transferred to supply what is needed in the General fund. And now we also have the added legal requirement to follow Common Core, without any additional funding to support it.

School Board – Professional Development

Gary went to a ‘Looney the Robot’ presentation at the U of M.

Missoula Public Library

The Missoula Public Library support of a branch at Potomac School has opened up some issues. Using the old Kindergarten building for a library, as well as a classroom and Adult Education, brought up the problem of accessibility. Our current layout does not comply with Missoula County codes. So through discussions with the Missoula County building department, PTC, staff and community members, a plan has been developed to deal with the problems. This plan has been approved by Missoula County and has been given to three contractors for bids. Only one contractor supplied a detailed bid for the project, and that cost (which included a patio that is not part of the building remodel) came to \$21,700. The other contractors did not submit detailed bids. One of the other contractors did a bid only for the Centennial patio as the original request was to have the redo completed by the Centennial Festival and he did not feel he could complete the work by then. Tim told him the festival date was a preference, but if necessary we would consider a later completion date. So that contractor will continue to develop his bid for the building.

Gary said he thought the library proposal did not have a cost to the school.

Jeff said he felt it was a difficult issue that we could not pay enough teachers for education, but could redo a building for a library, classroom and adult education.

Tim said this is where understanding Fund Accounting, as explained above, is necessary. Funds that can be used for the building cannot be used for teachers or other student needs. Also, there has been work on using a variety of funding possibilities to use on this project:

- The student council has offered to provide the upfront cost for the bricks for our Centennial patio, the cost of which will be reimbursed by selling engraved bricks similar to what has been done at the U of M. The Student council will then be reimbursed for their purchase. The cost of the entire patio would be covered with the sale of 60 bricks.
- The PTC has been working on moving the library out of the basement and into this building for a long time. They have been the impetus for creating a Potomac branch of the Missoula Public Library, and have raised funds in support of this.
- Adult Education funds can be used to help set up a place to offer classes.
- We also have 'One time only' building and maintenance funds received from the state for projects like this.

Gary said asking for a levy, and then remodeling a building makes it difficult to explain to the community why we asked for the levy in the first place. Perhaps we could put up a large sign showing how the remodel was financed so the community sees it is not from their taxes.

Jeff agreed, he says the perception of the public will be we can't pay our teachers but we can build.

Jim asked at what point we should do what's right for the school and students. Is the perception more important than that? Tim agreed that the perception should not be the reason for the decision. Jim asked the board if they feel the multi-purpose classroom makes sense for the school. Gary said the plan made sense.

Cliff agreed after hearing the explanations and seeing the plan.

Cliff moved to approve the remodel of the old Kindergarten building per the design presented. Gary seconded the motion.

Gary was concerned we get multiple bids so we know what we're paying for and would like to see a sign to show the community where the financing came from.

Cliff said such a sign, and education to the community, will help with any future levy we request also.

Jim called for a vote. **Passed 4-0**

Performance Pay

Last month Tim said the performance pay model for the first year is for the board to review the school climate and the actions that worked towards improving it. The goal that refers to this is goal #15 – "Improve the visibility and

communication regarding Potomac School to the broader community”. For this first step in working out a performance pay model, and only for this year due to the short time frame we are working with, each group –i.e. teachers, classified, administration and clerk will be responsible for showing how this goal was achieved. This information will need to be presented to the board at the regularly scheduled June board meeting. Jim said this is Tier 1, with next year’s plan to be developed.

Tim prepared a google doc to give the groups a guideline in presenting their evidence and outcomes. After these are presented to the board, they will then have an additional meeting in June to determine the financial split for performance pay.

Jim said the end of year numbers will be needed to determine what is available for performance pay. Jill said she will bring the end of year budget to the June meeting.

Tim also said he will bring the list of needs that are being developed by the staff, listed in priority of what needs to be completed this year as that will affect our end of year numbers.

Schedule Principals Evaluation

Jim asked if Tim had the previous evaluation form. Tim said he did and will send it to the Board members through e-mail.

Jim said the completed forms should be sent to Bob, who will schedule a meeting when he has all the responses.

Personnel

Tim said he is advertising for two positions – one at a 0.4 FTE for music and special education, and one at a 0.6 FTE for PE and math. He is also advertising for a 0.25 for Explorers. This position could be combined with the 0.6 FTE to give more of a full time position. It could also be filled separately. He is also considering a Program Development and Resource coordinator position that would cover grants as well as manage Explorers. This position could be paid for from larger grants that include staffing costs.

Cliff has concerns about a grant writer also managing Explorers. They seem like two separate jobs with different pay scales. He feels grant writers are an expensive position while the person who would manage the day to day activities is not one that would be paid at the grant writer rate.

Jim suggested time should be taken to consider and refine how that position would work.

Tim then recommended the rehire of Justine Luebke, Terri Klein, Brenda Harrold, Abby Stitt, Sarah Schmill, Kristina Davis, and Nancy Linnell.

Jeff moved to approve rehiring Justine Luebke, Terri Klein, Brenda Harrold, Abby Stitt, Sarah Schmill, Kristina Davis, and Nancy Linnell for the 2013-2014 school year. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

MUST 2013-2014 Contract

Gary moved to approve the MUST 2013-2014 contract. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0.**

Potomac School’s Logo

Tim asked if the board would be interested in reviewing and updating our school logo. The board said he should investigate it and bring a proposal to a board meeting.

Transportation Fund Expenditures

Tim presented a preliminary proposal to pave the school and community center parking lots with transportation fund dollars. The proposal needs more work.

Policies

Jim would like to wait for the next meeting that Bob O'Boyle attends to discuss the policies.

Adjourn

Vice-Chair Wrobel adjourned the Board meeting at 10:40 pm.

Robert O'Boyle, Chair

date

Jill M Thornton, Clerk

date