



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

for

September 10, 2012

Phone (406) 244-5581

Fax (406) 244-5840

www.potomacschoolmontana.us

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

UNOFFICIAL SUMMARY – OFFICIAL MINUTES SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL

Call to Order

Board Chair Robert O'Boyle attended via Skype and called the meeting to order at 7:38 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) None.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included:

1. Minutes for August 13, 2012
2. Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$29,110.55, Total Payroll = \$47,233.47
3. Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.
4. Petty Cash – Supplemental to monthly warrants used between Board Meetings – Reimbursed thru Claims.
5. Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – Beginning Balance \$15,437.92, Ending Balance \$15,242.63

Victoria moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Jim seconded the motion.

Discussion – Victoria asked where the money came from for the new mower. Jill said 50% came from Pioneer Field grant money, and 50% came from the school maintenance fund. Victoria then asked what the description in claim check #7894 to the Petty Cash Fund meant when it referred to a 'Petty Cash Activity Reimbursement'. Jill said the school paid up front for some elective class costs that were then reimbursed with student payments for the class. The student payments were in cash, which was deposited into the Petty Cash fund, and then reimbursed to the school through a deduction in the check.

Bob called for a vote on the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

Principals Report

Community

- WOW (Web On Wheels...through the Missoula County Library) bus here twice a month for adult education opportunities related to technology. Tim met with the bus staff, and had a conversation on how to utilize it more and create more attention to what the Missoula County Library has to offer with this 'Web on Wheels'.

School

- Explorers Program: 22 Students attended covering ALL grades. It was a great start.
- Kindergartener testing revealed 1 grade acceleration and 6 subject accelerated students
- Well and irrigation scheduled to be completed before freezing temps – will be discussed more with the Pioneer Field discussion.

- Buses have on board video and audio recording capabilities from front and rear of bus to help with discipline reporting. Tim said it has changed the atmosphere on the bus for the better, which was echoed by Bob, and he feels the cameras help him with his job.
- 4-day school week has reported cautious optimism:
 - Working out breakfast and lunch logistics
 - Kids seem to be energetic through the end of the school day
- Open House was full and went well.
- Terri Klein beginning her 30th year!!

Activities

- In need of Head Boys Basketball coach.

Grant Writer update

- Meeting as a team to discuss specific grants the impact the general fund. They are setting goals, with enhancing the General Fund monies a priority.

Vision Impact

- There appears to be a positive energy toward changes.

Jim asked how the new bus routes are working. Tim said the bus routes were redesigned to make the time on the bus for the students equal. They were also scheduled so those students who are on the busses first in the morning are dropped off first in the afternoon, with the result that students who spend the longest time on the bus in either the a.m. or p.m. spend the shortest time on the bus for the other ride of the day. To answer Jim's question, he has not heard of any concerns at this point.

Gary asked how many students are in Kindergarten. Tim said 22.

Jeff asked what the student count is for the whole school. Tim said we are now at 100 students.

School Board – Professional Development

Victoria attended the MTSBA Fall Legal Primer. Felt it was very informative. She also attended the open house and enjoyed talking to the other parents.

Bob asked Victoria how this helps her as a board member. Victoria said it's good to see other parents and hear what's going on at school. The Legal Primer was also time well spent and gave her information to bring back to the school on open meeting information, updates needed in our handbook, as well as other areas she is still reviewing in her notes.

Bob said he feels the Legal Primer is the best one to go to each year.

Gary said he has been looking through the Daily Dispatch the board receives. Much of what he is reading is other district responses to the fiscal problems we all have. Some districts are planning levies or bond issues, but he's not sure if that could work in Potomac. He has also been following the news on what other districts are spending on facility development.

Bob said he sees that everyone is dealing with funding shortfalls.

Gary said his son is helping out at Potomac with a robotics class Kristina is teaching. He has also applied for some funds from Lockheed Martin to help fund 'Mind Spring Kits'

Jeff said he has also been reading the Daily Dispatch.

Jim has been continuing work on negotiations, and would like to hold off his comments for the Strategic Planning part of our agenda.

Bob went to a meeting with our grant writing team. They discussed the needs of the school, and how to offset General Fund money while moving towards enhancements for teachers. At this point the grants that have achieved the best results have been for Pioneer Field. He has heard comments on how good the school grounds are looking, and the

perception of the school is being enhanced by the grounds. He feels that Pioneer Field will increase that positive perception of the school even more.

He also attended the open house. He commended Tim on his tremendous work on the website, and feels the videos especially get people to look at the school in a different way. The Friday Explorers' day has also been a great hit at his home. Both of his children are very excited about it and he thanks both Tim and Melissa McAuley for volunteering their Fridays to provide this opportunity. He also said he was very pleased to see other parents he knows using the three day weekend for family get-aways!

Strategic Planning

Bob started the discussion stating a Strategic Plan was an integral part of moving forward – on negotiations, grants, goals, etc.

Tim has advertised for any parents who would be interested in serving on the Strategic Planning Committee. He has received interest from one parent, and would like to wait another week for more to respond. He said the Strategic Plan will be the document that will be used to work towards our goals and vision.

Jim feels the importance of the Strategic Plan is very high. In negotiations, what he needs now is more detailed information on our budget and expenses. We have been using the 80% maximum for payroll, with 20% monies left for all other costs as our model. At this point, even calculating costs with the 2011-2012 payroll numbers, the 80% is exceeded by more than \$13,000. This means that something out of the general fund is being impacted by the payroll costs. He feels we need to 'sharpen our pencil' to see what can or can't be compromised within that 20%. That is something the Strategic Plan will help with. He explained we have historically kept a financial buffer in our General fund to deal with emergency and/or unknown costs during the year. This year, with the reduction in the 20% portion of the fund that usually holds that buffer; he is concerned about where we could get any funds to use for negotiations.

For those negotiations, Jim is working with the legal department of the MTSBA. The MTSBA offers a Maintenance Contract to schools which lowers the costs of legal fees, and provides access to a large database of information. The most cost efficient way for the school to work with the MTSBA on negotiations is to sign the Maintenance contract, so that has been done.

Jim said what he has been talking about with Debra Silk at the MTSBA is how to move forward on performance pay for the staff. Her beginning thought was to create a 'Contingency Fund' within the General fund dedicated to performance pay. Jim said another thought Tim offered was we might be able to fund additional monies for the staff through grants.

One of the differences Jim sees in our school budget compared to other schools is that our General Fund covers most of what the school has to pay for, where other schools often have separate funds for Maintenance and Technology. With the necessity of taking those maintenance and technology costs out of our General Fund, monies for payroll and supplies is reduced.

Bob asked if we should consider a motion to restrict use of our General Fund to the 80% maximum in payroll costs, with the possibility of a board action to open up part of the 20% if the board feels it's possible. Jim said with the 80%/20% split not even possible with our current payroll calculations (which are using the 2011-2012 pay levels), we should wait for a very detailed budget to look at the possibilities.

Jill said if the board reviews a detailed budget before continuing with the Strategic Planning discussions, it would give them more direction, and help with the continuing discussions.

Bob called for a special meeting to review a detailed budget. After discussion, a meeting was set for Friday, September 21, 2012 at 5:00pm.

Pioneer Field

Tim said drilling the well for Pioneer Field should start the end of this week, with the irrigation starting a week later. The costs for the well have increased by \$10,000 due to the additional Department of Environmental Quality

requirements for a potable well. The overall budget for all phases has a built in contingency of 15%. Phase one, which is the well, irrigation and moving of the baseball backstop, is potentially higher than estimated. Though the entire plan was approved by the board, which included the 15% contingency, does the board need to act on increases within phases?

Jim said the motion passed by the board was to move forward with development of Pioneer Field with a net zero cost to the school. After reviewing the start of this process, he feels the original motion should be reviewed as the school and field are intertwined and should not be separated. As examples; 1) it would make no sense to have separate maintenance personnel, 2) the well is designed so it could be used for the school if the school well failed, and 3) the new mower that has just been purchased was chosen for its cost efficiencies in being able to handle both the school and field, as well as snow plowing for the school in winter. He would like to have the original motion brought back to the board at the next regularly scheduled board meeting for discussion and revision. He feels this is not only a language issue, but a perception issue, and would like to discuss it in order to make modifications that everyone will feel comfortable with.

Tim said we have all the money for Phase one covered. He is concerned though that the funds we have to pay grant writers are gone. Do we want to give the grant writers more funds for extra time? His intent is still to cover the costs of implementing Pioneer Field with grants, and there are more grants needed.

Jill will bring the original motion to the October board meeting for further discussion.

Appointment of Authorized 12-13 Rep to Missoula Area Education Coop Joint Advisory Board

Jim moved to nominate Tim as the authorized 12-13 rep to the Missoula Area Education Coop Joint Advisory Board. Victoria seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

Personnel

Tim recommended the hiring of Christopher Haxton as a substitute. Jim moved to approve the hire of Christopher Haxton as a substitute with a completed background check. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

Coaches

Jim moved to approve the listed coaches with completed background checks. Victoria seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

Board Meeting Times

Tim has a class through December that is held on Monday evenings. The class ends between 7:15 and 7:25pm. He cannot make it back for a board meeting until approximately 7:50pm. Jeff proposes we hold our board meetings on Tuesday instead of Monday. Jim moved to change our board meeting time to the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

Additional Credit Card for Nancy Linnell

Jill explained that Nancy Linnell has been the usual staff member to purchase supplies for the Book Fair, Student Council, and the 8th grade classes. She would like the board to approve a credit card for Nancy to facilitate the accounting procedure for these purchases. The process would still go through an approved Purchase Order before purchases are made.

Jim moved to provide Nancy Linnell with a school credit card. Victoria seconded the motion.

