



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

for

October 14, 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 Chair Robert O’Boyle called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those trustees present were: Jeff Hahn, Gary Long, Cliff Vann and Jim Wrobel. Tim Johnson, principal and Jill Thornton, clerk, were also in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda) None.

Visiting Speaker

Dr. John Matt, chairman, Department of Educational Leadership at the U of M gave a presentation on School Budgets. (see Addendum 1 for a synopsis of Dr. Matt’s presentation.)

Consent Agenda

Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$54,883.45, Total Payroll = \$58,486.73

Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.

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

Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – Beginning Balance Aug 15 - \$20,102.60; Ending Balance Sep 15 - \$19,784.02

Jim moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Principals Report

Community

- Centennial Circle bricks are installed

School

- 106 students
- All School photo on Facebook (100th)
- Student Council representatives
- MUSAP (Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Program)/Missoula County Tobacco prevention piloting a new format at our school. Will be 5 period presentations on “How can we help you make god choices?”
- Abby Stitt: took 3rd graders on a Naturalists field trip to Kelly Island
- Linnell: WOW bus is utilized through English Language Arts (ELA) grades 5-8
- Explorers:
 - Trips to: Morrell Falls, Travelers’ Rest, Rock Climbing
 - 2 University Students to assist in core subject enhancement/tutoring
 - Robotics: EV3 units arrived (more complex programming capability)
- AYP Plan for achievement (including Math):
 - Data Collection: Identify through current data needs, qualitative study of lower performing students. Tim and Kristina are working on the data for more information.
 - Title staff using pullout rather than in-class support (math, reading)
 - Explorers: utilizing alternative topics to practice math, reading. Bob said this could be understood with Principal Components Analysis to find what variables are significant.
 - Singapore Math supplement: using current resources to prepare for MCCS
 - WMCSPD: professional development regarding MCCS, Singapore Math
 - Increased expectations (100% for reading and math)

- Going to Smarter Balance testing system
- Contacted by a fourth parent in the last four months regarding how to attend Potomac (gifted/talented). Bob asked at what level are we going to need another 1.0 FTE. Tim said we are at that point. He also asked if we want to follow something like a gifted/talented curriculum to bring students into our district. Jim asked if it was in our strategic plan. Tim said we are already doing it with our acceleration in Math and Reading programs. Jim asked if by accelerating some students, would we be losing others? Tim said that accelerating one student it doesn't mean you are decelerating another. Serving Gifted and Talented will be put as an agenda item on the next agenda.
- Race To Nowhere summit in Potomac, January 14th

Activities

- Flag Football finished with two wins. Looking forward to home games next year!
- Girls Basketball winning record; tournament begins next week

Vision Impact

- I was contacted by Mary Ellen Earnhardt (OPI director for 21st Century Grant) regarding attending a conference in Seattle about 21st Century recipients in Montana. We will be presenting and attending seminars related to 21st Century in Washington. The department within the US Department of Education, which focuses on innovative education, will be attending and taking input from the Montana delegation among others.

Clerks Report

Jill presented the data in the Budget vs. Actual and Expenditure Detail reports, showing how the fund details and totals in the Expenditure Details are cross referenced in the object totals under each program and function in the Budget vs. Actual report.

The General Ledger of Miscellaneous Funds shows the income and expenditures in the same sheet for each project the school has in our fund 115.

School Board – Professional Development

Cliff brought two man teams into the school for science demonstrations. The students had a great time! Bob talked to the combined classes 5/6 and 7/8 about his job in archeology. He also brought in the head of the Irish Language department at the U of M and set up an Irish Language teacher for Melissa McAuley's music classroom. Bob went to the girls Basketball games and found it great to see the older students mentoring the younger ones. Gary also attended the Basketball games. Jim attended a couple meetings related to agenda items, one of them being on Performance Pay detailed below. He also took the lawn mower into Triple W for annual maintenance.

Multi District Agreement

Last meeting, Tim said there was a need for additional teacher help. His suggestion was to add the additional teaching staff through a cost sharing agreement with Sunset school. Concerns were expressed at that meeting with how an agreement with Sunset would be set up. Tim said he would bring information on the impacts for our school at this October board meeting.

He said the important pieces of the agreement are first, the agreement would be that Sunset School would hire a teacher for their needs, and contract the teacher out to Potomac for .22 FTE to fulfill our teacher needs. Tim was part of the interviewing team for the teacher. Our agreement with Sunset sets a three month probation period for the teacher.

Jim moved to approve the Multi District Agreement between Sunset School and Potomac. Gary seconded the motion.

Jim asked Tim to clarify the employment of the teacher - was this our employee, or Sunsets. Tim said we were contractors with Sunset only, and the new teacher was their employee.

Gary asked if Sunset also conducted background checks. Tim said they did. **Passed 5-0.**

Performance Pay

Jim and Gary met to develop a plan for Performance Pay. Jim said they discussed what was necessary to move forward, and recommend further discussion. They developed a list:

1. Last year the final decision on available funds and disbursement was made by June 15. They feel that is a good date to determine it by this year.
2. All staff has the ability to participate.
3. Create proportions of Performance pay per group, as was done last year.
4. An MOU is necessary to state there is no guarantee of amount. It also needs to state 'same salary'
5. Performance Pay will not be any part of a contractual agreement.
6. No recipients have control over how funds are expended. It is imperative that a mechanism is set to neither degrade nor increase the funds available.

Bob said that John Matts suggestion for using line items to record available funds could be a place to start.

Cliff said he understood last year's reason for using performance pay was because the budget was so tight. What is the driver in a year like this?

Jim said in the past, staff felt the school had more funds than were made available for a pay increase. They did not feel we had a need to maintain contingency funds. The board and school contend that setting aside contingency funds is a very important consideration to maintain financial solvency. By using performance pay, contingency funds that are not needed by the end of year can then be opened up to reward staff.

Tim said by opening up possible end of year funds, we help create more trust between the staff and board.

Cliff said he and Jim's discussion did not use performance as a component of end of year pay outs.

Jim added that the first focus for the committee was where the funds would come from. Then all staff has the opportunity to benefit. One difference in our district is that we only have the General Fund for most of the schools needs. Other school districts have access to other funds, such as Maintenance and Technology, which frees up more of the General fund.

Bob pointed out that money negotiated at the beginning of the year needs to consider what the increases on the matrix and pay does to future years, as money on the base continues in those future years, increasing overall pay.

Gary said if we call it Pay for Performance, we need good, measureable goals. If we only use end of year funds without goals, it should be called something else.

Cliff said his question is "What's in it for us? Is there money, and how do you judge performance?"

Gary said it goes back to the goals and strategic plan.

Jim said he feels that this year it is put forth as a bonus, with the stipulation that Pay for Performance is worked on to have a plan in place by the end of the year. That would give all employees time to set and reach goals for next year. The plan would also determine if the goals would be whole group accomplishments, or individual accomplishments. Last year the teachers preferred to be dealt with as a group. At this point, he feels it is too late to do it this year.

Gary agreed that we need to lay the groundwork for a good plan throughout this current year, but the financing component can still be done at the end of this fiscal year.

Jim would like to have Jill's ideas on how to work the budget and Tim's views on staff input.

Tim asked if they were looking for feedback this month, with the expectation of a decision at the November board meeting.

Bob asked if Tim was referring to an MOU to sign in November?

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Jim said all the recommendations are a result of a brainstorming session only.

Bob said Pay for Performance had urgency at the beginning of this year. If we are still at the brainstorming stage, then we will have to move it forward to next year.

Jim feels another important aspect of this is it cannot be tied into negotiations with any group.

Cliff summarized his understanding – we choose a goal for the board and a goal for the school, and use the Performance Pay to answer “What’s in it for the staff?”

Jim said the number one aspect that is most important to him is we are a small district with a limited budget, stuck with end of year dispensing of funds, and negotiating without the consideration of any possible funds left at the end of the year.

Bob feels this can build a better team at the school through appreciating all the staff does.

Tim feels it’s a process. He’s read the contracts for all staff, and there is no language in any contract for ‘Teamwork’. The current contracts are only employment contracts, not performance contracts. Using Performance Pay model has the opportunity to put the teamwork in the contracts.

Gary asked how you measure that.

Tim said it is qualitative, not quantitative. It’s more than doing your job at the average level. Bob said he sees as an example – Nancy is in the stands cheering for the 8th grad girls in sports. She doesn’t have to do that.

Tim remembered the amazing list of work and volunteering already being done that was turned in last year at the end of the year. He feels it will be done this year too. His suggestion is to follow that process. Bob agreed that last year’s list was amazing.

Gary said he had a problem with everyone being paid the same. He doesn’t feel that is Performance Pay. He felt that last year was a good first step, but it was subjective. If we call it Performance Pay, it’s individuals working towards the goals and strategic plan. Cliff agreed and added we need to get to a point where everyone knows what they’re working towards, and they know whether they made it or not.

Jim agrees that in order for Performance Pay to make sense it needs to be individual.

Bob said we need to start looking at a draft proposal, not just more ideas. If we can get that draft proposal the process will get started.

Jeff said it seems too late for this year, that we need to have the plan set up before the year starts. And he also agrees it’s not a group thing, it should be individual.

Jim asked where to go from here. Should we continue with Performance Pay this year or not? It was agreed the board needed something in place before the start of a year.

Contract Negotiations

Tim is in contact with the PEA and PACE to set up meetings.

Personnel

Tim recommends the board hire Victoria Richardson as a substitute. Jim moved to hire Victoria Richardson as a substitute. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

MTSBA Personnel Maintenance Contract

Jim moved to approve the MTSBA Personnel Maintenance Contract. Jeff seconded the motion. Jill said she was looking into the savings associated with it but had not talked to the MTSBA about it yet. This item will be held for the next meeting.

Extra Duty Contract Form

Jim moved to approve the Extra Duty Contract form. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Audit Contract 2013-2014

Jim moved to approve the Audit Contract 2013-2014. Cliff seconded the motion. **Passed 4-1**

Substitute Pay

Jim moved to increase the substitute pay. Jeff seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding what pay was reasonable.

Gary moved to increase the substitute pay from \$65 per day to \$80 per day. Cliff seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

The first motion was put to a vote. **Failed 0-5**

Pioneer Festival Participation

Jim would like to know the schools role in the Pioneer Festival, and would like it defined in writing. He also asked if any staff time for the festival is compensated by the school. How should the school district be participating?

Bob feels it's very important to participate as the 'culture of excellence' includes the whole valley as well as those who have moved outside the valley. He thinks that those who graduate from here should have a place to continue to interact with the school. Therefore, we should be active participants.

Tim said the intent of the festival to this point was to break even financially.

Jim said he feels we need an agreement with the Community Center board on the festival. Then he asked if the board preferred the June timeframe or August. The June date works the best for all parties.

The school board would like a written agreement with the Community Center concerning the festival.

Adjourn

Board Chair O'Boyle adjourned the Board meeting at 10:55pm.