



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

for

February 9, 2015

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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 Cliff Vann called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those trustees present were: Gary Long, Craig Nelson, Jason Nordberg and Kelsy Ployhar. Jill Thornton, clerk, and David Allen, Principal, were both in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda) Jesse Salter asked to have additional recess time discussed on the next agenda. It will be included with the calendar discussion.

Consent Agenda

Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$25,204.70, Total Payroll = \$63,308.80

Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.

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

Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – Beg. Balance Dec 31, 2014 - \$21,553.21; End Balance Jan 31, 2015 - \$22,376.01

Kelsy moved to approve the consent agenda. Jason seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

“How Students Say We’re Doing”

Cliff asked some representatives from last year’s 8th grade class to talk to the board about their transition to High School. There were a variety of responses:

- Potomac’s math preparation for high school did very well. They felt more than prepared.
- They all felt their writing and grammar skills could have been more stringently taught while at Potomac.
- There is less bonding in High School.
- The pace in High School is much faster.
- One student feels 5 shorter school days work better than 4 days, more homework time. Plus a 5 day school week provides the possibility of joining more after school activities.
- Students in High School are not allowed study halls during Freshman and Sophomore years. They liked the independent study at Potomac and don’t have that option at High School.
- No homework at Potomac is nice, but leaves them unprepared for High School homework expectations.

Teacher Presentations

Justine Luebke presented how her kindergarteners are using the software OSMO that she purchased with the grant she received from ‘One Class at a Time’. The software uses iPads with puzzle shapes, letters and drawing to teach skills to the students in a very fun and interactive way.

She also presented the class pet Bubbles. And during Martin Luther King week they discussed kindness by filling in a sentence “I can show kindness by.....” and “I have a dream that.....”.

The kindergarteners also participated in the Spelling Bee by each picking out two words to learn and then standing up in front of everyone and spelling those words. They also predicted the weather during ‘Groundhog Day’!

Kristy Pohlman presented “the 2nd grade in the “rearview mirror”: There were 3 winners in the spelling bee. They learned the importance of recycling and they saw that there is over 600 square miles of plastic in each ocean. This led to a classroom project making milk jug luminaries. They are working on a worm composting farm, and a small greenhouse they are planting seedlings in. There were 10 2nd graders in the MCT play. They won 1000 dojos to be able to celebrate ‘pajama day’. And they are following the life of an abandoned seal.

Principals Report

School

- MCT was fun and successful
- NAEP assessment tests (Nat'l Assessment for Educational Progress) for 4th and 8th grades are taken in Feb
- 'Raptors of the Rockies' will be presented by Kate David on February 26th.
- SpectrUM is coming to Potomac on March 18th. It is an interactive Neuroscience program.
- Recess has been an issue and needs to be longer than our current schedule allows. This is being discussed with next year's calendar. At this point, the staff has found that every additional 15 minutes added to a school day adds a full week to the calendar year.
- Registered Sex Offender
- The focus on 'Respect and Responsibility' has achieved results.
- Hanna Brown won our Spelling Bee and will be attending the county bee with Mrs. Schmill on Feb 26th at Sentinel High School.

Activities

- Girls Basketball starts today
- The last day for Robotics club is February 10th. A big thank you goes to Kristina Davis.

Grants

- Mr. McDonald is looking over the phases of the Athletic Field. We are scheduled for a meeting next week. Gary will be included in this meeting.
- Potomac has been awarded \$5,000 from Knife River.

Clerks Report

Jill presented the amount currently in the 8th grade fund as well as the form that will be used to have past 8th grade classes sign off on forwarding their remaining funds to an 8th grade clearing fund. This fund could be used for future 8th grade classes.

She also presented an issue concerning theft at the school. Fundraising income has been stored in a locked file in the front office. The fundraising amounts are noted by whoever leaves the funds with Janette for deposit and Janette usually counts them again. When Jill counted the funds for deposit, two of the amounts were missing funds. The 8th grade was missing \$320, and the Krispy Kreme fundraiser for the Outdoor School was missing \$300. Neither of these had been counted a second time after they had been left in the office. After discussing the issue with the auditor, the procedure for the funds has been changed. They are now counted in front of Janette before they are left for deposit, Janette also counts them, and they are then placed in a secure place that is not accessible. In the past, a teacher or parent often held on to the funds until they were all collected. Jill said it would be better if they were deposited immediately and she can give the teacher or parent the total amounts whenever they ask. After Jill also counts the funds and prepares the deposit slip, all three counts are included with the paperwork for the auditor.

Board Professional Development Reports

Jason and Kelsy attended the Spelling Bee, Kelsy also helped and attended the MCT play, and Craig and Cliff attended the MCT play and then helped pack up the sets and clean at the end of it.

Personnel

David recommended the board approve Damien Gaglia, a certified teacher, as Potomac's long term substitute for Nancy Linnell. Damien has a clear background check. Craig moved to approve the hire of Damien Gaglia.. Jason seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

David recommended the board approve Dawn Downs as Potomac's Girls Basketball coach. Jason moved to approve Dawn Downs pending a clear background check. Craig seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Administrative Evaluation Schedule

David Allen’s administrative evaluation will be held on Monday, February 16th at 7pm. This will be discussed at the end of tonight’s meeting.

Student Homework

Jason brought this subject to the board to discuss. It seems that what is viewed as a ‘no homework’ policy does not work. The teachers added that the original intent of the term ‘no homework’ was not to stop unfinished work from the school day from going home, only to stop additional work. But that is what it has become, and some students who have trouble finishing their work during the school day are getting farther behind. The comment from High School students who are unaccustomed to homework is also interesting. By not having any homework at Potomac, they are unprepared for what they receive in High School. This issue will be addressed in the new student handbook.

Technology Budgeting/Levy Discussion

Cliff has asked teachers what the board can do to help them educate our students. They have all said better technology. It has not been possible to find enough funds in our budget to take care of the technology needs the school has. To help with this issue, the school has applied for grants and help from the PTC. Though extremely helpful, those approaches have not been enough in the past to deal with all the problems. The issue has been addressed this year by bringing on more technical expertise from Computer Guys. This has been helping by correcting issues the teachers have with our current equipment and system. As for the outdated computers, a beginning proposal is being developed. In order to continue, precise numbers along with a Technology Plan is necessary. With that as a basis, this discussion will have more concrete information to proceed.

Policy Revision Committee

The school board contracted with MTSBA to bring our policies up to date. MTSBA has finished its preliminary work, and the school board needs to review and approve any changes and/or additions to our policies. Cliff said he will work with Jill on setting up a schedule for the review. Jill will compare our current policies with those proposed by MTSBA so the number of policies to review is understood.

Administrative Evaluation Schedule (2)

Cliff closed the meeting and the board went into executive session at 10:13 pm

The meeting was opened at pm.

Adjourn

Board Chair Vann adjourned the Board meeting at pm.

Cliff Vann, Chair _____ date Jill M Thornton, Clerk _____ date