

WEST BRANCH AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
MORRISDALE, PA
SPECIAL MEETING

February 7, 2006

The Special meeting of the West Branch Area School Board of Directors was held in the High School Library on February 7, 2006, beginning at 7:05PM.

ROLL CALL Members present: Anna Mae Pezulla; Ron Mollura; Tom Veres; Larry Allen; Timothy Eyerly; Robert Smith; Mary Ann Couteret; Erling Anderson. Members absent: Larry Cowder (Roll call was not taken).

OTHERS PRESENT Others present: Arleen P. Multhauf, D.Ed., Superintendent; William Hayward, Middle School Principal; Sherry Yontosh, Elementary Principal; Wendy Fernburg, Supervisor of Special Education; Paul Carr, Business Manager; Miriam Ennis, Board Secretary; Jamie Bumbarger, The Progress; Jennifer Lannen; Brittany Bell; Jen Glace; Holly Michael; Shari Buck; Amy Fry; Jackie Tarner; Ethen Tarner; Carlene Houston; Lori Hahn; Phyllis Gable; Rose Pearce; Kenneth Hahn; Jennifer Brickley; Jane McDowell; Jennifer Sproull; Rebecca Houser; William Thompson; Jerry White; Rhonda Trude; Scott McClelland; Jeff Eyet; Laura Coble; Gerald Coble; Savannah Mabie; Dennis Mabie; Charles Howe; Michelle Turner; Laurie A. Josephson; Joe Kovalcin; Sheila Kovalcin; Kaylin Teats; Rachelle Turner; Cheryl McGonigal; Sue Betts; Michelle Bamat; Patricia Paul Wood; Martha McCamley; Bruce E. George; Carl D. Mellow; Betty Fry; Kim Struble; Cindy Williams; Adam L. Carr; Scott McCamley; Joshua R. Carr; Clayton W. Miller, Jr.; Jane Catanzaro; Karen Kochkodin; Alan Larson; Karen Bosak; Len Coval; Joe Matson; Preston Raymond; Holly Petriskey; Lynn Brewer; Alice Wilson; Stefanie Sattesahn; Lynne Rockey; unknown; Tammy Beveridge; Debra Liegey; Sally English; Allison Koleno; Chad Koleno.

Robert Smith motioned, Ron Mollura seconded, to approve the following motion:

CURTAIN EXPENSES Superintendent shall curtail all non-mandatory spending and this shall continue in force until further action by the Board.

Voice roll call: 7 yes, 1 no.

Joe Kovalcin, WBAEA President, told the Board that they were violating their own policy which states, "Visitors are encouraged to participate; however, such participation shall be conformity with law and Board Policy No. 006.1. Public comment shall be received at three separate times: (1) at the recognition of visitors concerning items on the agenda, (2) at the time any non-agenda items arise upon which the Board is taking action, and (3) at the end of the meeting to permit comment on items which were not on the agenda and which did not otherwise arise for action during the meeting." Since there was no agenda, the visitors had a right to speak on the motion before approving the motion.

At this point in the meeting, Anna Mae Pezulla, Board President, telephoned David Consiglio, School Solicitor. David Consiglio advised the Board to vote to rescind the motion and open the floor for public comment.

Ron Mollura motioned, Larry Allen seconded, to rescind the following motion:

MOTION RESCIND Superintendent shall curtail all non-mandatory spending and this shall continue in force until further action by the Board.

Voice Roll call: unanimous approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT Sharon Josefik agreed with the Board taking a stand on freezing spending. The new renovations only produced one classroom. The taxpayers are facing a 33-mill increase.

Kenneth Hahn, parent, would like to know the definition of non-mandatory and how long will the spending be curtailed.

Anna Mae Pezulla responded that the spending would be curtailed until June 2006. She considered mandatory expenses to be paper, books and toner for printers.

Joe Kovalcin questioned the Board as to what a non-mandatory expense would be and are there incidental items compelled by law.

Cindy Williams, parent, questioned Dr. Multhauf concerning meeting the needs of the special education students. IEP's are contracts and the district is obligated to meet the needs of the special education students according to their contracts. Mrs. Williams wanted to know if Mr. Carr received another raise and how much the solicitor cost the district per hour.

Charles Howe questioned the Board if the Solicitor was a mandatory expense.

Robert Smith motioned, Ron Mollura seconded, to approve the following motion:

MOTION SUPERINTENDENT SHALL CURTAIL ALL NON-MANDATORY SPENDING AND THIS SHALL CONTINUE IN FORCE UNTIL FURTHER ACTION BY THE BOARD. ROLL CALL VOTE: Erling Anderson – yes; Mary Ann Couteret – yes; Robert Smith – yes; Timothy Eyerly – no; Larry Allen – yes; Tom Veres – yes; Ronald Mollura – yes; Anna Mae Pezulla – yes. 7 yes, 1 no.

Anna Mae Pezulla addressed the audience concerning the reason for calling the special board meeting. The district is \$1 million dollars short in the budget and expenses need to be curtailed. She is requesting that the staff work together over the next six months that are left in the budget.

Mary Ann Couteret spoke to the audience. She assured the group that the children would not suffer. Mary Ann Couteret said that the community and teachers are jumping the gun. She suggested that "common sense" should be used where expenses are concerned.

Kim Struble, guidance counselor, said Mr. Hayward is juggling two positions and is handling those extremely well. The district has created honors classes so that our students can achieve in college. The district has lost Laura Frye and Mr. Matchock. Mr. Matchock's position was not filled. The staff is concerned about possible cuts in other positions.

Anna Mae Pezulla said that on December 30, 2005, Dr. Multhauf sent the board a note concerning the \$1 million short fall. She directed Paul Carr to contact the PUC as soon as possible if Penelec, Engineers and Architect cannot find a solution to the electric bill going up. She also has faith in Dr. Multhauf's ability to pick and choose what is essential. The Board will also cut down on travel expenses.

Larry Allen questioned the district spending \$4,000 on the athletic fields. He would like to know if there is a cheaper way to maintain the fields. Dr. Multhauf responded that it is the district's responsibility to keep the facilities maintained.

Ken Hahn requested the documentation that Anna Mae Pezulla had concerning the \$1 million dollar short fall. Mrs. Pezulla responded that she had newspaper articles and the beginning cash balance.

ADJOURN Robert Smith motioned, Ron Mollura seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Ennis
Board Secretary