

# Grass Lake Community Schools

899 South Union Street • Grass Lake, Michigan 49240  
(517) 522-5540 • Fax (517) 522-8195

## Grass Lake Community Schools Regular Board of Education Meeting

Monday, December 14, 2009  
7:00 p.m.

Grass Lake Middle School  
Library/Media Center

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Darrell Hart  
Florine Herendeen  
John Pattera  
Loretta Ryan  
Tim Waskiewicz  
David Wright

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mark Burnett

### **ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT**

Brad Hamilton  
Michelle Clark  
Doug Moeckel  
Andi Overmyer  
Jeanene Satterthwaite  
Brian Thompson

### **GUESTS**

Margaret Henthorne  
David Kleine  
Jill Kleine  
Shannon Maynard  
Chris Reul  
Nancy Rigg

### **PRESIDING OFFICER:**

Tim Waskiewicz, President

Certified Correct

John Pattera, Secretary

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1. Call to Order

President Waskiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Member Hart, supported by Member Paterra, to approve the agenda with the change of moving VIII B to VII C. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Member Paterra, supported by Member Hart , to approve the minutes as presented. All present voted Aye.

4. Presentation of Bills for Payment

Moved by Member Hart, supported by Member Paterra, to approve paying bills in the amount of \$532,660.72. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

5. Correspondence

Superintendent Hamilton called attention to the certificate recognizing the district for a 100% pass rate in school bus inspections and thanked mechanic Jr. Ambs for his good work.

6. Hearing of Citizens

David Kleine informed the board that after he heard that budget cuts from the state would be pretty drastic, he and his wife and other concerned parents had met and would like to offer their support and help to the board. They felt that the health of the Grass Lake community depended on the health of the school system and it would take the whole community to come together and support the school during this difficult time. He felt it was important that Grass Lake should be the island that is better than every place else, so that people would continue to move to Grass Lake and send their children to the school.

President Waskiewicz thanked Mr. and Mrs. Kleine for their support and encouraged them to get involved with any of the number of organizations that were rallying people together. One of

the organizations was SOS, "Save Our Students, Schools and State." Phone calls and letters to legislators were also important, as well as showing up on the steps of the capitol building. He added that the financial situation in the state was a vast unknown right now. The district was fortunate to have a good group of professionals leading the district who had risen to challenges before and he was confident that they would do so again.

## 7. Reports of the Superintendent for Information

### A. Strategic Planning Goals

Mr. Hamilton reported that the technology steering committee had recently met. Mrs. Overmyer had identified a few areas that needed focus, including professional development for teachers. Some has already been scheduled at the high school, on compression of files and good use of bandwidth.

Mr. Hamilton continued that the building leadership teams would be meeting to talk about school improvement plans for each building and make sure they were aligned with the district goals.

Mr. Hamilton has been working on the bond campaign. He has met with the architect and construction manager and they were working on drawings. They planned to conduct town meetings and meet with various community groups to make sure the community was well informed about this unique opportunity.

Mr. Hamilton informed the board that Jackson Community College was offering more classes at Grass Lake for the second semester. There was a listing of 49 classes right now. This was a tremendous opportunity to be a satellite for a community college. Community members and students could take advantage of the classes.

### B. Budget Update

Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Waskiewicz recently attended a meeting about shared services throughout the county. Discussions were ongoing about shared business services, technology, transportation and healthcare.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the original intent of the stimulus money was to plug the funding hole for a year or year and a half, until the economy improved. But, the economy was not improving as quickly as they had hoped.

Superintendents were bombarded from various associations on a daily basis, asking them to contact legislators. Mr. Hamilton questioned why they should contact the legislators, because the legislators should understand that the economy was in trouble and the schools needed help. Also, he said it was important for legislators to hear from board members and community members, because they already knew what the school administrators thought. The legislators said that they didn't hear from people so everything must be okay.

Mr. Hamilton was concerned that, because of term limits, different legislators would come into office with no history of school funding.

Mr. Hamilton reported that the Governor had paused the additional \$127 per pupil cut until after the revenue conference in January. Mr. Hamilton thought this was just a delay and the cut would still happen. He added that the state funding was probably playing out to the worst case scenario.

Mr. Hamilton asked that the Ad Hoc Finance Committee schedule a meeting. He asked what additional information the board needed to assist them in making decisions?

Member Hart asked for a list of class sizes by grade level and for information about configuration options. Member Herendeen asked for a list of values associated with possible cuts.

Member Paterra asked if the board should wait until there was more information from Lansing. Mr. Waskiewicz said that the board shouldn't wait because the legislature took so long to make decisions. The board needed to be more proactive and needed to create what-if scenarios.

Mr. Paterra suggested that the board should decide how much of the fund equity should be spent. Mr. Waskiewicz added that quality of education was a major concern.

There was a discussion of class size. Mr. Hamilton reported that the latest research says that adding several percent to class size has no affect on student's learning. He said it really boils down to the quality of teaching. He added that the teacher associations would battle for smaller classes and parents and teachers would argue that students couldn't learn as well in larger classes.

It was agreed that the Ad Hoc Finance Committee would schedule a meeting in January.

#### C. Memorandum of Understanding – Race To The Top

Brad explained that "Race To The Top," was a program that involved states competing for stimulus money. If Michigan won some of the money, it would be allocated through Title I funding. Many reforms had to be voted in for Michigan to qualify. Mr. Hamilton had listened to a webinar that explained the program. He said most of the reforms could be lived with, but some could be problematic. All districts had to have a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Superintendent, Board President and Union President by January 7, in order to participate. The maximum that Grass Lake could receive if Michigan was successful was \$36,000.

Mr. Hamilton wasn't sure that teachers would support the program because it would link standardized scores with teacher and principal evaluations and merit pay. He said that, in case of a tie between states, a state with more teacher buy-in would be selected.

Mr. Hamilton said that this program continued in the same pattern as in previous years. To be true reform, learning had to be the constant and time the variable. Right now, the reverse was true.

Mr. Waskiewicz tentatively scheduled a special board meeting for Monday, January 4 to vote on signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

8. Reports of the Superintendent for Action

A. Adopt Resolution Calling for the Election

Moved by Member Hart, supported by Member Herendeen, to adopt the resolution calling for the election. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

B. Approve Leave of Absence Extension for Brooke Larm

Moved by Member Herendeen, supported by Member Ryan, to approve the Leave of Absence Extension for Brooke Larm. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

C. Approve Tenure Status for Chris Reul

Moved by Member Paterra, supported by Member Wright, to approve tenure status for Chris Reul. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

9. Unfinished Business

Mr. Waskiewicz reported that he had attended the December meeting of the Jackson County School Board Association at Napoleon Schools. They received a presentation about their alternative education program, which had over 60 students enrolled. They seemed to be making good progress with the program. The JCASB also talked more about areas of interest for shared services and decided that the meetings were a good time to share ideas and successes.

Mr. Hamilton reminded the board that they were invited to attend the staff holiday breakfast on Wednesday morning at 7:30, at the middle school.

10. Executive Session – Contract Negotiations

Moved by Member Paterra, supported by Member Ryan, to move into Executive Session. The board voted by roll call: Member Wright – yes, Member Ryan – yes, Member Herendeen – yes, Member Paterra – yes, Member Hart – yes, Member Waskiewicz – yes.

Moved by Member Paterra, supported by Member Ryan, to move out of Executive Session. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Member Hart, supported by Member Ryan, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.