

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, September 14, 2009
7:00 p.m.

Grass Lake Middle School
Library/Media Center

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark Burnett
Darrell Hart
Florine Herendeen
John Paterra
Loretta Ryan
Tim Waskiewicz
David Wright

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

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

GUESTS:

David Carter
Ken Grant
Margaret Henthorne

Kelli Lambrix, PFM
Shannon Maynard
Andrea Mead

Jennifer Taylor
Fred Ulloa
Kellie Ulloa

PRESIDING OFFICER:

Tim Waskiewicz, President

Certified Correct

John Paterra
Secretary, Board of Education

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I. **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.

II. **Approval of Agenda**

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

III. **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Member Hart, supported by Member Paterra, to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of August 10, 2009, and the Special Board Meeting of August 24, 2009, as presented. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

IV. **Presentation of Bills for Payment**

Moved by Treasurer Burnett, supported by Member Ryan, to approve paying bills in the amount of \$682,784.45. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

V. **Correspondence**

None

Special Presentation – Kelli Lambrix, of Public Financial Management, Inc. (PFM Group)

Kelli Lambrix gave a presentation on Qualified School Construction Bonds. She explained that investors who purchased bonds would receive a tax credit. Grass Lake Schools received an allotment of \$1,750,000.00, which would have to be repaid over 15 years, if the district used the money. There were two ways to obtain the funds. The first was a UTGO, or traditional voted bond. The maturity would be 15 years. The alternative would be an LTGO, which could only be issued if a district's outstanding bonded indebtedness was less than 5%. Because of current bond debt, Grass Lake would not qualify for the

second option. Ms. Lambrix reported that there were discussions being held about developing legislation to allow school districts to only include non-voted indebtedness in determining eligibility for the LTGO option.

She added that there was a third option being proposed, which would put all schools involved in a pool. It hasn't been structured and there were no details yet. There would be a possibility of Grass Lake participating in this pool, but the plans might not be ready in time for the district to be involved.

The district could decide to move forward with a voted bond issue or wait to see about the possibility of the other two options. The voted bond would mean that the district would levy the same mills for a longer period of time, with no millage increase. Mr. Hamilton commented that the board would have to look at the pros and cons and decide which way to go.

Ms. Lambrix answered questions from the board members. She stated that the district could choose not to use the money. The board should make a decision in the next few weeks about doing a bond campaign. She added that February would be the ideal time if the board decided to go to the voters because the project should be started within one year of when the money was allocated.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the money would be used to add onto the high school and the middle school. There would be a tight timeline if the board decided to move forward. The plans were already drawn for the proposed addition, but a construction firm would have to be selected and the public educated to prepare for the election. The plan would be to start construction in summer and complete by fall.

The board could wait to see if the state started a pool. The caution for going this route would be that the money would have to be repaid annually with general fund money. We would want to make sure we wouldn't be laying off staff or cutting programs to make the payments.

Member Waskiewicz suggested creating a small committee to review the options before the next board meeting and then the committee could make a recommendation to the full board. Members Hart, Herendeen and Paterra volunteered for the committee. The committee will meet on Monday, Sept. 21, at 7 p.m., in Superintendent Hamilton's Office.

Superintendent Hamilton reminded the board that this project would have a direct bearing on Strategic Goal #1, "High School of the Future."

VI. Hearing of Citizens

Andrea Mead expressed her concerns about the changes in the transportation policy that meant her children had to walk to and from school. She explained that the sidewalk her children had to use had poor lighting and would be dark in the winter. She also

complained about the poor lighting in the elementary parking lot. Ms. Mead said that she came to the board meeting to ask that her children be allowed to ride the bus home three days a week.

President Waskiewicz replied that these concerns would go to the transportation committee for review. He asked Ms. Mead to give him a bulleted list of concerns, the number of children involved, their ages, the days they would need transportation, and their household address.

David Carter addressed the board next. He explained that he lived on Clark Street. A school bus stopped 100 yards from his house, but his daughter couldn't ride the bus because she was in 7th grade. He was concerned about his daughter walking to school in the dark and how well (or not) that the sidewalks would be cleared in the winter.

Frank and Kelly Ulloa had the same issues. They had five children and lived on West Michigan Avenue. Their two younger children could ride the bus, but their three older children could not. They were concerned about the weather, darkness, the care of sidewalks, and that three registered sex offenders lived within 1.5 miles of the area their children had to walk to school. It took their children 30 to 35 minutes to walk to school and home. Also, they were concerned that since some of the intersections did not have four stop signs and traffic was often heavy, their children had difficulty crossing some of the streets.

Ken Grant had a high school student who had to walk a mile to school. He reported that a bus drove right by his house and stopped at other houses in the subdivision. Also, people drove faster than the posted speed limit in the subdivision and he was worried about this daughter walking.

President Waskiewicz asked everyone to provide written information so the Support Services committee could meet and discuss the concerns. The committee, consisting of Members Hart, Paterra and Ryan, scheduled a meeting for Monday, September 21, at 8, following the QSCB committee meeting.

VII. **Reports of the Superintendent for Information**

A. Start of the School Year Update

Superintendent Hamilton reported that it was a normal start of the school year. Enrollment was down slightly, for the first time in several years. The enrollment was currently 1255 and Mr. Hamilton had budgeted for 1260. The Elementary had 584 students, the Middle School had 292, and the High School had 379. Also, there were 74 preschoolers and another 74 students in Kids Club. The preschool and Kids Club would help keep the budget where it was originally predicted.

Mr. Hamilton added that the trend of declining numbers had finally hit Grass Lake, although enrollment should stay fairly even for the next few years.

There was a question about the Ignition Program. Mr. Thompson replied that the beginning of the year went well and he would be able to tell more as the year went along.

B. Strategic Planning

Superintendent Hamilton commented that he had spoken earlier about Goal #1. He stated that they were still letting the goals focus what the district worked on.

- Goal 2 - new Smart Boards and computer carts.
- Goal 3 - connected with Goal 1, to provide new and well maintained facilities. Moving and repairing the bleachers and building a new press box at the middle school field took care of safety issues, and the middle school gym bleachers would be replaced sometime this winter.
- Goal 4 - work on Best Practices every day. There were a number of in-services before school started.
- Goal 5 – Mr. Hamilton recently met with the new director of the Grass Lake branch of the Jackson County library.
- Goal 6 and 8 – Mr. Moeckel was working on these goals. He was still trying to find the right niche for the community ed. classes.
- Goal 7 - How were we going to develop leadership skills in our students? This was a constant challenge and very important. We especially needed to keep looking at gender issues and make sure boys were not excluded.

C. Transportation Issues

This was covered during Hearing of Citizens and a committee meeting was scheduled. Mr. Hamilton reminded the board members that it was up to them to set policy and then the administration would implement the policies.

Mr. Hamilton gave some suggestions for the board to consider in their discussion on the transportation policy:

- Was the distance in the policy something they were comfortable with?
- What about safety, lighting, traffic, sidewalk issues, darkness, etc.?
- With sidewalks in new areas, was that policy still applicable?
- Were we asking people to walk in a safe environment?

Mr. Moeckel distributed village maps to the board members and Mr. Hamilton encouraged them all to drive and/or walk the areas in question and to look at stop signs, street lights, etc.

D. Qualified School Construction Bonds

This was discussed during the presentation by Ms. Lambrix earlier in the meeting.

E. Policy 5722 - School Sponsored Student Publications and Productions

Mr. Hamilton explained that this was a recommendation from NEOLA. He said he had given a copy to all administrators and asked them to look at what they were currently doing so it could be discussed at a future meeting.

VIII. **Reports of the Superintendent for Action**

A. Accept Middle School Bleacher Bids

Mr. Hamilton distributed a copy of the winning bid for the new middle school bleachers from Adams Building Contractors. He commented that it was a really good bid and saved the district about \$10,000 from what they had expected the bids to be. The bid of \$84,386 did not include some additional options, such as end panels to keep children from running under the bleachers (\$1,493.00), and painting/floor finishing behind and under the bleachers (\$3,600.00). Mr. Hamilton added that this was the same company that did the high school bleachers.

Moved by Member Hart, supported by Member Paterra, to accept the bid of \$84,386 from Adams Building Contractors. All present voted Aye. Motion Carried.

B. Accept Annual Report

Ms. Overmyer presented the 2008-2009 Annual Report and demonstrated how to find it on the district's web page.

Moved by Member Ryan, supported by Member Wright, to accept the Annual Report as presented. All present voted Aye.

C. Approve the Adoption of the New/Revised/Replacement Policies from NEOLA

Mr. Hamilton explained that these were all law or school code changes, so they had to be approved.

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

IX. **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Waskiewicz and Mr. Hamilton updated the other board members about the legislative breakfast that they had attended. Three legislators were present and spoke about what they're working on in Lansing, including the challenges with the budget and healthcare.

Mr. Hamilton reported that the Senate had passed a budget, all on cuts, which included a \$600 per pupil cut. The House was still working on their budget. The House, Senate

and Governor all had to have a proposed budget to work together and come to a consensus. Mr. Hamilton asked everyone present to contact their representatives and complain about them not having a budget done yet. On the other hand, he reminded them that the legislators were not miracle workers and the State was in serious trouble.

Mr. Waskiewicz reminded the board that Member Herendeen would lead the discussion of the next section of the Systems Check Level III at the September 28 board meeting.

X. **Adjournment**

Moved by Member Paterra, supported by Member Ryan, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.