

The May 5, 2014 28, 2014, meeting of the Moon Area Board of Education was held in the High School Board Room, 7:10 p.m., for general purposes. The meeting was CALLED TO ORDER by President A. Michael Olszewski. The following directors were present:

Mr. Olszewski	Mr. Harbaugh	Mrs. Tatone	Mr. Tranter
Mr. Testa	Mr. Bussard	Mr. Hauser	Mr. LaRue

Mrs. Schisler was absent.

Also seated at the Board table: Mr. Baker and Mr. Maiello.

Administrators present: Mrs. Johns, Mr. Haslett and Mr. Heck

There were approximately 6 people in the audience.

Personnel

IT WAS MOVED by Mr. Testa, SECONDED by Mr. Hauser, “that the Board of Education approve the personnel items listed:

I. Approval of Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach

“that the Board of Education approve the following coach for the 2014-2015 fall sports season per the recommendation of Mr. Ricci Rich:

Varsity Boys Head Basketball Coach

Head Coach Adam T. Kaufman*
(pending receipt and review of clearances)”

On a roll call vote, all directors voted in favor of Item I.

II. Approval of Childrearing Leave of Absence

“that the Board of Education approve a second year of Childrearing Leave of Absence to Kirsten Jones from her position as Social Studies teacher at the High School for the 2014-2015 school year. It is the recommendation of administration that this request be denied.”

Mrs. Tatone commented that on item 2, that it is a difficult decision individuals have to make and she completely understands that.

Mr. Testa questioned why is administration recommending that this request be denied? Mrs. Johns explained that, in general, we are not supporting a second year of leave, because there is so much work going on with curriculum, standards and educator effectiveness, when missing a second year of teaching, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to bring teachers up to speed.

On a roll call vote, all directors voted in disfavor (to deny) of Item II with the exception of Mr. Tranter and Mr. Testa, who voted in favor of this request. The motion for a requested leave of absence is denied.

Mr. Ricci Rich introduced Mr. Adam Kaufman to the board.

Adjournment

IT WAS MOVED by Mr. Bussard, SECONDED by Mrs. Tatone, that the Board of Education adjourn this meeting, 7:24 pm.”

The meeting reconvened at 7:25 pm:

Mr. Baker presented the 2014-2015 General Fund Budget presentation to the Board and public. Discussion was held regarding:

Mr. Baker’s presentation covered the following:

- 2014-15 GF Budget as of 5/5/14
- PSERS Total Employer Contribution Rate
- State Sources Revenue Summary
- PSERS as an Unfunded Mandate
- Position Control
- Other Personnel Not in Position Control
- Ready to Learn Block Grant
- Debt Service Schedule
- Debt Service Schedule
- Music Equipment Initiative
- All-Steinway School Initiative
- Major Uncertainties
 - MAESP negotiation for replacement contract
 - Resolution of arbitration finding with MAESP
 - Resolution of discussions with Questeq regarding IT service levels

Discussion:

Mr. Testa commented that the PSERS retirement fund is a huge problem for school districts. We need to seek help from legislators, etc., and Mr. Olszewski commented that we are basically underfunded due to the increasing costs to the retirement system.

Mr. Hauser commented that it is not the local teacher associations’ fault; it is the fault of our state government. They have not stepped up to the plate. All districts are struggling with this. Please don’t fault the people that teach your kids, fault the government.

Mr. Baker explained how the position control will work by looking at every single position in our district. Once in place, it will provide structure for licensure, managing each position, etc., and will help greatly with budgetary process. Position control is down to an individual employee level, compensation level, reflects all changes required under contracts and those folks that are not included in bargaining units.

Growth of positions, need a 3/5ths French position at the Middle School and one Life Skills teacher as well. Other than that, there are no other ads. All other organizational changes previously discussed are fully incorporated.

What is not currently in position control and is being examined, is that the high school anticipates an increased enrollment and is asking for four (4) new positions (1) English, (1) Math, (1) Social Studies and (1) Science--hoping dual endorsed with Chemistry and Biology. At the present time, we are breaking down master schedules to see if we can accommodate this request within the schedules as opposed to hiring new teachers. If we need new positions, we will let you know either way.

Mrs. Johns commented that this is due to having a smaller senior class graduating this year, but we are expecting about 100 additional students.

Ready to Learn Block Grant – behaves differently depending on how your school has performed. We have performed well, so we are in the tier 4 – more available uses for the money as scores go up. There is also additional funding if we wish to go into a competitive grant against top tier schools---could add \$375,000 to our available funds.

Debt Service Schedule for all of our outstanding debt obligations was discussed. Build America Bonds have a reimbursement that comes back to us.

Mr. Baker explained the major initiative around the music area. This crosses easily into 6 figures and is substantial. The great thing about having one of the finest music education programs in the country, success breed success. Student participation is great. We do not have enough instruments at this time and we do not have enough band uniforms as the size of band is growing. This would be handled through capital lease. Need to make determination of how much we wish to increase our debt for this.

The High School music department is striving towards being recognized as an All Steinway school. (various tiers and costs associated with this). The recommendation to the board is that for something of this nature, this should be an engagement understanding. Suggestion if the board would see clear to fund \$1.00 for each \$2.00 raised as long as we make the threshold--1/3 local community, 1/3 approach foundations supporting the arts and 1/3 national funding and we would match.

Mrs. Tatone commented that this is a great initiative. She'd definitely want our district to pursue this and get the community to support this. She asked would we be able to write a grant for something like this. Mr. Baker said that yes, we would and would need to show strong community and district support that would help the grant credibility to being funded.

Mr. Testa agrees with this as well. Something like this would put our program over the top. We do have the Moon Area Excellence in Education 501c tax benefits to corporations that we may be able to utilize as well, and folks can donate as well. Need to get some more info out to the public.

Right now there are three (3) major areas of uncertainly being negotiated or discussed ---

- Ongoing negotiations with MAESP for an early contract
- Arbitration finding--some is reflected in position control
- Conversation with Questeq regarding IT service control

From an IT perspective the first order of priority is for us to improve the stability of the base system connectively. Second piece is to look as we grow and improve the IT system for the administration system, we look to have it hosted by third parties, and self-service in regards to our instructional system. Individuals on site to focus the classrooms and others to focus on administration.

Any refresh that we would bring forward would be recommended to the board would be that you hold the admin to a standard that you understand exactly where it is being spent and that the expectations fits into the strategic direction.

Mr. Hauser asked Mr. Baker if he has a sense of the state of the technology. Mr. Baker commented that we have a lot of work to do. A large technology purchase was made years ago, some of that technology is obsolete now. There's some really old technology out there. Promethean boards are in need of service. Infrastructure is not necessarily the most current and we have to deal with that as well. We need to figure out how to make technology work. Question on strategic plan – how do we intend to use technology in the first place? We will define what our needs are.

Mr. Testa mentioned that we need to watch PSERS closely and keep an eye on, need help from our legislators, dollar amounts are growing and will bankrupt some districts, and maybe mergers with other districts.

Mr. Tranter asked if we have entered into any discussions with our local legislators for block grants, etc.. Mr. Baker said that he has had conversations.

Mr. Hauser was not surprised that the high school needs new positions with the enrollment levels. He wondered why we are not seeing increases in elementary numbers. Mrs. Johns commented that we are actually very stable at the elementary levels.

Mr. Baker commented that the next stop for us to review a preliminary final budget next week.

Adjournment

IT WAS MOVED by Mr. Tranter, SECONDED by Mr. Harbaugh, that the Board of Education adjourn this meeting, 8:00 pm.”

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Brown
Clerk, Board of Education

Gia R. Tatone
Secretary, Board of Education