

Richmond School Board Meeting Minutes **August 19, 2009**

Present: Jon Milazzo, Julie Waite, Steve Znamierowski, Scott Lowe (arrived at 6:50 P.M.) John Alberghini, Principal Dave Cobb

Guests: Diane Wester (representing the Times Ink)

The meeting was called to order at 6:41 P.M. Jon noted that although Dave Cobb has already been in his new position for seven weeks, he would like to formally welcome him as RES' interim principal.

Public Comment: None

Negotiations Committee Update: John and Steve said the board has formally invited the teachers' union to begin negotiating a contract for 2009-2010. At this point, the union has not accepted. The board will discuss the matter in executive session at the end of tonight's meeting. As far as support staff negotiations are concerned, John said the parties are at impasse. The next step will be for the board and the support staff union to work with a mediator.

Superintendent's Report: John said central office staff will soon begin the process of changing their HR and accounting software. The new software is called Unifund Business Solutions. The changeover will begin in September and will likely take a full year. John said virtually all CESU staff vacancies have been filled in preparation for the beginning of the school year, and administrators have been doing in-service this week.

Consent Agenda:

- **Principal's Report:** Dave submitted a written report and said he wanted to commend Lauren Wooden for all her efforts in making a smooth transition. He said she has left the school in great shape. As far as enrollment is concerned, 264 is the current K-4 enrollment. Preschool enrollment is 39 students. Dave said he believes there will be additional new students enrolled in the next couple of weeks, including several students with academic and/or behavioral challenges.
- **Previous meeting minutes:** Julie noted that Steve Znamierowski was present at the meeting on June 23, 2009, though his name is not listed. Minutes were amended. The minutes from the June 17, 2009 meeting were approved as presented.
- **RES Warrants:** Warrants in the amount of \$37,276.50 were approved for payment.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - Curriculum: No recent meetings
 - Policy: Jon said he has informed both the executive committee and Pat Connelly that RES will not be sending a representative to the policy committee meetings. With so many policies being mandated by law and with so many model policies available, Jon said he questions whether CESU really needs a standing policy committee or if a smaller, ad-hoc committee might be appropriate.
 - Transportation: The most recent meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum, and John noted that attendance has been a challenge. Scott said he feels there has been some confusion about the role/function of the committee. Jon said it seemed that the executive committee has been assuming some of the duties/roles of the transportation

- committee. John said it might make sense for the committee to hold off on meetings until a more clear direction is established.
- Executive: Jon said the committee recently reviewed and approved the three-year CESU technology plan, got a summer school program update and looked at preliminary plans to expand the CESU bus garage.

A motion to accept the consent agenda was made by Steve Znamierowski; seconded by Julie Waite. The motion passed.

Policy Review: The board reviewed the following draft policies: Volunteers and Work Study Students, HIPAA, and Student Attendance. Jon said he would bring back any comments/suggestions to Pat Connelly, and he noted that these drafts are based on model policies from the VSBA. These policies will be up for adoption at the next meeting.

Discuss Increasing Head Cook/Agent's Hours: Jon reminded everyone that food service director David Horner had made a request that the board authorize an additional hour of pay each day for the RES head cook/agent. John said the additional hour would cost \$2960 over the course of the 182 day contract, and this salary is not currently in the budget. John noted that although the food service budget is separate from the general RES budget, it is the board's responsibility to cover the deficits. Dave noted that there is a planned price increase for adult lunches, which should help offset the additional salary expense. Jon said he believes that RES parents have been extremely happy with recent changes in the food program and would support the additional salary.

There was some discussion about whether the installation of the POS system might streamline the head cook's duties enough that the additional time would not be needed. Scott asked if RES was able to secure any grant funding for the costs of the POS system, and Dave said the grant application was not successful. Julie said she believes that Karyl would be able to use the extra time to focus more on expanding the program. Dave said they have strengthened the wording in the parent handbook in order to make sure everyone understands that the food service program is a fee-for-service business rather than a program that is supported by the general fund. ***A motion was made by Julie Waite to increase the head cook/agent's work hours from 7 to 8 hours per day; seconded by Scott Lowe.*** Steve said he wondered if it might be prudent to establish this change on a trial basis, and Jon pointed out that the board can always reconsider the decision at any time. Dave suggested that November might be a good time to invite Karyl and/or David to come to the board meeting and give a status update, and everyone agreed. ***The motion passed.***

Capital Improvements: As discussed at the June meeting, John said the board needs to act quickly if they wish to apply for a zero interest bond. All projects must be approved by the voters before the application can be submitted. As the board requested, John said he contacted three architectural firms to request preliminary estimates and scope of work for the following five projects/improvement areas: roofing work, heating system work (including possible wood pellet system,) replacement of parking lot lighting, shut-off valves for plumbing system and erosion control on the grounds. John said he received prompt replies from both Rob Fitzgerald of Dore and Whittier as well as John Alden of Scott and Partners. However, as of this evening, John said the only "official" information he had to share with board members was prepared by Rob Fitzgerald. John said he has worked with Dore and Whittier on a few other projects, and they have been competent and professional.

Steve asked about the estimated costs for the parking lot lighting and whether the cost given reflected the fact that RES would share this expense with Camels Hump. John said he was not sure and could check it out. Steve also said he has some concerns about the reliability and accuracy of the information contained in the original facilities assessment done by VSI. John agreed that their assessment did not seem complete. Steve said he wondered if it might be worthwhile to engage a different firm to perform a thorough facilities assessment. John agreed that this might be a good idea, but he pointed out that there is not sufficient time to do this if the board wants to pursue the zero interest bond option.

Steve said he is uncomfortable going to the voters without complete, concrete information on the actual needs, and others agreed. Steve suggested that the board and administrators might interview two or more architects in order to choose who would complete the facilities assessment. Scott agreed that the zero interest bond would be a good opportunity, but he said it feels irresponsible to rush into any decisions.

Sidewalk Concerns: Julie expressed concern over the condition of the portion of the sidewalk that is maintained by the town of Richmond. Steve suggested that she might check with the town manager to see if he is able to authorize patching of the sidewalk or if he needs the approval of the select board in order to do so. If he does need the select board's approval, Steve said the board could consider writing a letter to express their concern and support for the repairs. Julie said she will follow up on this.

Front Porch Forum: Julie noted that the board has previously discussed potential ways to engage the community and keep them informed of the happenings of the school board, and she suggested the board consider posting board meeting agendas on the town's Front Porch Forum. She offered to do the posting each month, and everyone agreed this would be a good idea. Steve suggested that Julie might even include a link to the CESU website where people can find agendas, minutes from previous meetings, etc.

Lunch Price Increase: Jon noted that the board hadn't officially approved an increase in the price of adult lunches at RES, and he suggested they should do so. The price is currently \$3.00, and board members remarked that there aren't any other work places where an employee can buy a quality meal for that price. After some back and forth discussion, ***a motion was made by Steve Znamierowski to increase the price for adult lunches from \$3.00 to \$3.75; seconded by Scott Lowe. The motion passed.*** The student lunch price (\$2.50) will remain the same.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 6:30 P.M. in the RES library. Agenda items will include the appointment of a truant officer for 2009-2010, review of principal and superintendent goals, discussion of budget process & schedule. Jon noted that the first draft of the budget will be presented at the October meeting.

A motion was made by Steve Znamierowski to adjourn into executive session for the purposes of discussing contract negotiations; seconded by Scott Lowe. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 8:21 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Turner

Unofficial until approved