

Solvang Elementary School

Science Discovery Center, Upper Campus, Solvang School
565 Atterdag Rd., Solvang, CA 93463

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Feb 11, 2008

5:30 pm Closed Session

6:00 pm Regular Meeting

MINUTES

AMENDED AGENDA

Action item 15.6 added

1. Call to Order: 5:34 pm by President, Alfred Holzheu.

Board members present: Alfred Holzheu, Peter Haws, Cris Avery, Felix Fischer. Michele Saunders joined the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Administration present: Chris Whitmore, Supt.; Meg Perry, Business Manager; Cynthia Micale, Admin Asst.

Staff Present: Ann Delavan, Annette Schaeffer

2. Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Mr. Haws.

3. Closed Session

3.1 Review of Interdistrict Transfer

3.2 Personnel: Administrative Configuration for 2008-09

3.3 Negotiations

4. Announcement of Action Taken in Closed Session: At 6:15 p.m. Mr. Holzheu called the meeting back in to open session.

Others in Attendance: Terry Frazier, Kathy Frazier, Heather Lopes, Mark Lopes, Amy McConnell, Susan Jaques, Lois DeMeyer, Traci Callow, Melanie Lee, Anita Brau, Jennifer Pedersen, Deborah Gray, Teasha Blackman, Miren Armenta, Christy Damas, Heide Moir, Angela Bisbee, Sean Walwick, Linda Burrows, Sherry Shultz, Chris Bowman, John Padfield, Cindy Fredette, Kris Walters, Barbara Johnson, Tony Micale, Lissa Slean, Jodi Jacobsen, Cindy Duncan, Janet Fraye, Jules Manfreda, Albert Brau, Peter Aichinger, Melody Hunt.

Mr. Holzheu announced there was no action to report and closed session would continue at the end of the regular meeting. Any action taken will be announced after that time.

5. Introductions/Recognition: Mark Lopes, parent.

6. (M) Approval of Agenda: A motion to amend the agenda, adding action item 15.6 and to move the Board Member Reports to follow the Supt. Report was made by Mr. Fischer and seconded by Dr. Saunders. The motion passed 5/0.

7. (M) Approval of Minutes: Jan 14, Jan 23 and Jan 29, 2008. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Haws and seconded by Mr. Fischer. The motion passed 5/0.

8. Public Comment: Mark Lopes addressed the board, asking about the pending construction projects and bidding processes. Mr. Fischer told Mr. Lopes that all phases of the construction will go through a bidding process, coordinated by our architect from Westberg and White (who was selected through a bidding process). Mr. Avery said that plans showing the footprints of phase 1 construction are available for viewing in the district office. Melody Hunt addressed the board expressing concern over the terms of Mr. Michaud's separation agreement. She then read a letter to the board that addressed the separation agreement and the current situation with class size reduction. In addition the letter made recommendations to the board regarding effective communication, training for board members and the development of an accountability system for the district Supt. The letter was signed by parents and is on file in the district office with the permanent board records.

9. Correspondence/Student Council Report: None.

10. (M) Approval of Consent Agenda

10.1 Approval of Commercial Warrants(*) (1/11, 1/18 and 1/25/08)

10.2 Approval of Financial Reports(*)

10.3 Enrollment Report(*)

10.4 Approval of Athletic Coaching Schedule, Jan-June 2008

10.5 Acceptance of New Hire: Emily Leon, Bi-lingual ELD Aide

10.6 Acceptance of Resignation: Pam Krivulka

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Dr. Saunders and seconded by Mr. Fischer. Mr. Fisher commended the coaches for giving their time to Solvang School students. The motion passed 5/0.

11. Construction Update: Don Hertel, Architect, Westberg & White: Mr. Hertel could not be present and will give a construction update at the March meeting.

13. Principal's Report: Lisa O'Neill gave a run down of things that students had been involved in this past month including 2 Amgen assemblies, the Skydome Planetarium, 5th Grade Science Camp, K/1 celebration of the 100th day of school, 4th grade's trip to the Santa Barbara Mission and the Presidio and the Show of Shows. She announced that 2 aides had been hired into the EL program and their positions are funded with categorical money. The Curriculum Committee is recommending a reading remediation program for grades K-5 similar to READ 180. In addition they have been discussing a "response to intervention" training program. Writing assessments will be given next week. Mrs. O'Neill as well as Dr. Whitmore would like the School Climate Committee to act in a steering capacity, making suggestions to the principal on how the staff and community can make Solvang School a positive work place. The Climate Committee also has developed a process for student placement in classes. There has been further discussion about a CPR requirement for teachers and a possible "Tribes" program for our students at all grade levels. Mrs. O'Neill attended the PTO meeting. The main focus of the meeting was the development of the letter that was presented to the board this evening. In addition PTO had supported another successful Family Fun Night as well as a 4th grade Spaghetti Feed. Upcoming PTO activities will include 3 on 3 basketball, Dad's Volunteer Day and the annual Golf Tournament.

14. Superintendent's Report: Dr. Whitmore reported that he had been working with the calendar committee, attended the Climate Committee meeting and is currently working on staffing options for next year. He announced that due to budget constraints, there may be a need for program changes. Regarding class size reduction, the first grade adjustment made recently (Option 2 as suggested by the CDE) seemed to be running smoothly. He had met with Don Hertel and Mike Anderson in order to be informed on the construction plans. Jodi Jacobsen expressed concern over the class sizes in kindergarten. Cindy Fredette and Amy McConnell also commented on the class sizes. Mr. Holzheu asked Dr. Whitmore and Mrs. O'Neill to explore any other possible options regarding this issue.

12. Board Member Reports (shifted per the amended agenda). Dr. Saunders reported on the success of the girl's tennis team as they finished their first season.

Mr. Avery commended the PTO for organizing the successful spaghetti feeds. He also said he had met with Ray Kirchmaier from the high school and Mr. Kirchmaier had told him that the high school food program is attempting to serve less pre-packaged foods by utilizing their ROP students for fresh food preparation. He thanked all the volunteers and teachers who were responsible for the Show of Shows.

Mr. Fischer also praised the success of the spaghetti feeds. He then responded to the letter previously read by Melody Hunt. He prefaced his comments by saying they were his opinions and did not have input from other board members. He called attention to the Unfair Labor Practice charge that had been filed by SFT. He felt that it was unfortunate that personal opinions about an employee's job performance had been included in the document and cautioned that those statements when stated as fact in a public document may be libel as character defamation. He said that the accusations that the board was negotiating in bad faith were unfair. The state budget was the main issue that is impeding negotiations and is the primary reason that the initial offer had been withdrawn. He said that two years ago after negotiations were complete, he expressed concern over the reduction of the district

reserves and deficit spending. He said last year he had the same concerns. This year, the budget will get worse and he called attention to the fact that the interim review by SBCEO that was included in the board packet is no longer valid. He stated that we must present a budget that shows we can afford the negotiated increases which means we need to negotiate from a realistic stand point. He called attention to the step and column increases that teachers receive contractually and the fact that many teachers reap the benefits of step and column increases annually independent of negotiations. He reminded everyone that the cap on the health and welfare benefits is \$7600 and the district has been able to pay over that cap each year with "one time" money. He said people need to realize that money is a form of salary increase. He also called attention to the fact that the cap in Buellton school district is \$6900 and their employees do not receive "one time" funds above the cap. He assured everyone that the board is attempting to give every available dollar to teachers but the budget must show solvency three years out when looking at an increase. Regarding Mr. Michaud's separation agreement, he stated that the separation was warranted and the reasons have to be kept confidential. He assured everyone that the agreement had been reviewed and approved by the district's legal counsel, Bruce Barsook from Liebert, Cassidy and Whitmore. He said there were considerations that came into play that presented an opportunity for potential liability for the district and therefore Mr. Michaud was given the opportunity to resign as part of the severance agreement. He explained that when hired, the district assumed the liability of Mr. Michaud's sick leave from many years of previous employment. If Mr. Michaud's employment terminated, the district retains the liability. However, if Mr. Michaud accepts employment elsewhere in the STRS system, that liability will then transfer to the new employer. He asked people to remember some of the key things Mr. Michaud had accomplished while working for Solvang that brought money into the district including the formation of the Santa Ynez Valley Special Ed Consortium which has saved the district approximately \$200,000 per year and his willingness to serve as Supt./Principal thus eliminating for two years an additional administrative position at \$100,000 per year. He also recognized that Mr. Michaud was primarily responsible for guiding the district through the passage of the bond initiative that has generated approximately \$11.6 million dollars for our upcoming construction as well as pursuing and successfully obtaining over \$1 million dollars in extreme hardship money from the state for the re-roof project just completed. Mr. Fischer acknowledged that there was a mistake made with the Class Size Reduction calculation this year. Mr. Michaud had informed the board that the district would not meet some of the requirements but it was an oversight to not meet the requirement at first grade. He said that when the CDE had been contacted they told the district this was a common mistake and that many districts were in similar situations in this tight budget year. Mr. Fischer told Mrs. Hunt that he felt her letter was inflammatory and was not sure on the best way to accomplish effective communication and cooperation between the board, parents and teachers. He did however request a positive approach going forth. He reminded those present that the board members are elected officials and the constituents are expected to seek out information if they are interested. He stated that it would be unrealistic for the board to provide constant information to the school community via hard copies. He acknowledged that perhaps the school website would be a good place to post information or that PTO could administer the distribution of hard copy information from the board. With respect to education and seminars for board members, he said those expenses had been cut from the budget approximately 3 years ago with that money being spent on salaries and benefits. He said that 6 years ago he was asked to run for the board and called attention to the fact that he ran un-opposed. Since that time there have been 5 openings that have come up and no one running has had any opposition. In addition, there have been 3 mid term openings that had to be filled in the last three years and there was very little interest in those openings. He said that all the board members feel they have something to offer the district and they all work for the board for the benefit of the students. They have nothing to gain by negotiating in bad faith. He encouraged others to participate and invited impeachment if people are unhappy.

Melody Hunt said that she thought there was non-profit support that would pay for board trainings. Mr. Avery then informed all that the board would be deciding on an administrative configuration that would meet the district's fiscal constraints. He applauded Mrs. Hunt's input and acknowledged that we can all do better to work together. He welcomed the idea of PTO financing a board training workshop.

15. Board Action Items

15.1 (M) Consideration for Approval: Declaration of Fiscal Emergency. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Fischer and seconded by Mr. Avery. Mr. Fischer said the board would be facing challenging times. In response to a question he said that parcel taxes are sometimes used to get through fiscal emergencies but cautioned against budgeting with temporary money. Dr. Whitmore said the governor's budget calls for a 0% COLA, a 2% reduction in Average Daily Attendance funding and a 7% reduction in state funded categorical programs which include Class Size Reduction. In addition, MAA (MediCal) funding will end in June of 2008. He called for a freeze on all non-essential spending. He stated that the budget will have an impact on staffing and programs for next year. The motion passed 5/0.

15.2 (M)(*) Consideration for Approval: Consolidated Application for Funding Categorical Aid Programs, Part II. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Haws and seconded by Dr. Saunders. The motion passed 5/0.

15.3 (M)(*) Consideration for Approval: Valentine's Dance Sponsored by Drug Free Club 2012. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Saunders and seconded by Mr. Haws. The motion passed 5/0.

15.4 (M)(*) Consideration for Approval: 2008-09 Academic Calendar. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Saunders and seconded by Mr. Fischer. The motion passed 5/0.

15.5 (M)(*) Consideration for Approval: Nomination of 2008 CSBA Assembly Delegate for Santa Barbara County. A motion to approve Karen Anderson as the SB County CSBA Delegate was made by Mr. Avery and seconded by Mr. Fischer. The motion passed 5/0.

15.6 (M) Consideration for Approval: Acceptance of Finalization of Project 5026.01 Extreme Hardship Re-Roofing. A motion to approve as made by Dr. Saunders and seconded by Mr. Fischer. The motion passed 5/0.

16. Board Informational Items: First Interim Report Analysis and Recommendations by SBCEO. No comment.

17. Future Agenda Items: Mr. Avery suggested there may be a need for a special board meeting to approve a search firm. Mr. Fischer brought up the possibility of sharing a Supt. with a neighboring school district for the next year. In response to a question he said unification had been explored twice in the past 6 years and there is no financial incentive to be found. In addition, the process takes 30 months. Dr. Whitmore pointed out one draw back of unification is the loss of local control.

At 7:57 p.m. the meeting was called back in to closed session to continue discussion of items 3.2 and 3.3. The meeting was re-opened with no action to report at 8:30 p.m.

18. Adjournment: 8:30 p.m.

Signed

Attest

(*) Supporting material contained within the Board packet

(M) Motion Item (R) Roll Call Item