South Fayette Township School District

Committee Meeting of the Whole

Minutes

Tuesday, November 17, 2015
7:00 PM

The Committee Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:00 PM in the Pride Room in the Administration Building by President Alan Vezzi with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Teresa Burroughs, Jen Iriti, Bill Newcomer, Alex Czaplicki (arrived at 7:06 PM), Lena Hannah, Len Fornella, Paul Brinsky, Alan Vezzi

Absent: Todd Petrillo

Others: Fred Wolfe, Tucker Arensberg, P.C.; Dr. Bille P. Rondinelli, Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Michael Loughead; Director of Finance Brian Tony; Assistant Director of Finance Maria Brewer Aguilar; High School Principal Aaron Skrbin; Athletic Director Mark Keener; Teachers Dana Diulus, Beth Poluszejko, and Shane Coyne; Ron Dufalla, Circuit Rider for PA Schools; David Esposito, Eckles Architecture; Cassi Renninger, Eckles Architecture; John Taormina, PJ Dick; Kelli Springer, Jodi Velazquez, Stephanie Garland, Scott Garland, Nicholas J. Rodi, Bruce Ramsey, and Cynthia Geisler, Superintendent’s Assistant/Board Secretary

Dr. Rondinelli announced for the record Mr. Tony is participating via phone.

Dr. Rondinelli introduced Dr. Ron Dufalla, Circuit Rider for PA Schools who presented the Basic Education Funding Formula to the Board and explained how the formula is calculated.

Dr. Rondinelli proudly announced the District has won the 2014-2015 Sportsmanship Award. She added students Carley Kilgus, Katie Nelson, Aaron Pfeil and Anthony Frost attended the ceremony at the Heinz History Center. Dr. Rondinelli thanked Mr. Keener, students, parents, coaches, and spectators for winning this award for the fifth consecutive year.

Cassandra Renninger, Eckles Architecture provided an update of the High School Additions and Alterations Project. She reviewed the following timeline:

- November 16 – the project went out to bid
- November 19 – Contractor pre-bid meeting at the High School Conference Center
- December 16 – Receive and open bids in the Pride Room
- January date to hold a Special Board Meeting to award the bids
- January 11 – possible date to start construction

The Board agreed to hold the Special Meeting on Monday, January 4, 2016 at 7:00 PM in the Pride Room. Other areas reviewed included:

- Interior finishes and materials
- Bid Alternates
- Land Survey update, awaiting final survey
- Board approvals of the next stages of PlanCon,
  - PlanCon F – teleconference to be determined
  - PlanCon G & H – approval at the February 23, 2016 Board meeting
Dr. Loughead presented the Kaplan Pre-Testing Services agreement which would begin in the second semester of the 2015-2016 school year. Dr. Loughead asked for Board approval at the November 24 meeting. Dr. Loughead added the District will be sending a letter to parents regarding purchasing iPads or Revolves at a discounted price. The District will not make any money from the selling of these computers.

**Minutes**

The Board considered approval of the Minutes from the following Board Meetings:

- Committee Meeting October 20, 2015
- Regular Meeting October 27, 2015

**Financial Reports**

The Financial Reports were provided to the Board for review and will be included on the Agenda for approval at the Regular Meeting.

**Superintendent’s Monthly Report – Dr. Bille P. Rondinelli**

Dr. Rondinelli announced the following:

- December 1 – Board Reorganization meeting, re-elected members sworn in, elect new President and Vice President and a new picture taken
- Congratulated the coaches and following fall sports teams on advancing to State playoffs:
  - Boys Soccer Team
  - Girls Volleyball Team
  - Football Team
  - Cross Country Teams
  - Girls Soccer Team
- November 19 – SHASDA Meeting with John Vogel of Tucker Arensberg
- November 19 – ES/IS Science Fair at the Elementary School
- November 19 – High School Pre-Bid Meeting
- November 25 – Middle School Turkey Bowl fundraiser
- December 1 – Stuff-a-Bus Toy Drive begins with a goal to collect 3,000 toys
- November 25 – Early Dismissal and Middle School Food and Gift Drive Turkey Bowl
- November 26 – Thanksgiving
- December 12 – Breakfast with Santa
- December 3 – Middle School Holiday Chorus Concert
- December 8 – Grade 5 Band/Orchestra Concert
- December 10 – Middle School Holiday Band Concert
- December 16 – High School Holiday Band/Chorus Concert

**Business Office**

1. In accordance with Act 1 of 2006, The Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony recommend Board approval of the resolution for any property tax increase for the 2016-2017 fiscal year not to exceed the district's base index of 3.2%. A copy of the approved resolution will be filed with the Pennsylvania Department of Education in accordance with the provision of Act 1 of 2006. By doing so the Board adopts Resolution 15-10 Not to Exceed the Index.

   Mr. Tony added the base index of 3.2% equals 0.8357 mills.

2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval to continue participation in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Joint Purchasing Board for 2016.
**Personnel**

Personnel items were discussed in Executive Session.

**Education**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Aaron Skrbin for Board approval of the Interact Club in the High School. The trial period will be the remainder of the 2015-2016 school year.

   The students who organized the club, Katy Allen, Margot Beck and Lexie Keeling explained the club will partner with the Bridgeville Rotary, who will provide resources of places to volunteer in addition to the club developing their own projects. They added Mr. Yerace will be the sponsor.

2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Aaron Skrbin for Board approval of the following cost increases to the High School Early Learning Academy program:
   - $175 for a two-day student ($100 non-refundable registration deposit to hold spot and $75 due by August 26, 2016, to remain in class), up from $135 total;
   - $275 for a four-day student ($150 non-refundable registration deposit to hold spot and $125 due by August 26, 2016, to remain in class), up from $220 total

**Transportation**

There were no items discussed.

**Athletics**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener and Head Varsity Swim Coach Matt Tucker for Board approval to permit the Boys and Girls Varsity Swim teams to travel to York, Pennsylvania to participate in a swim meet from Friday, January 22, 2016 through Saturday, January 23, 2016. Students will be responsible for all school work during their absence. Appropriate adult to student ratios for supervision will be assured by the administration. There is no cost to the District.

2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener and Head Varsity Wrestling Coach Rick Chaussard for Board approval to permit the Varsity Wrestling team to travel to Bedford, Pennsylvania to participate in a wrestling tournament from Thursday, January 28, 2016 through Sunday, January 31, 2016. Students will be responsible for all school work during their absence. Appropriate adult to student ratios for supervision will be assured by the administration. There is no cost to the District.

3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener and Head Girls Varsity Softball Coach Olesia Stasko for Board approval to permit the Girls Varsity Softball team to travel to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to participate in a softball tournament. The tentative plans are to travel from Tuesday, March 22, 2016 through Saturday, March 26, 2016. Students will be responsible for all school work during their absence. Appropriate adult to student ratios for supervision will be assured by the administration. There is no cost to the District.

4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener and Head Boys Baseball Coach Ken Morgan for Board approval to permit the Boys Baseball team to travel to Cocoa Beach, Florida to participate in a baseball
tournament. The tentative plans are to travel from Tuesday, March 22, 2016 through Saturday, March 26, 2016. Students will be responsible for all school work during their absence. Appropriate adult to student ratios for supervision will be assured by the administration. There is no cost to the District.

The Board discussed the JVB team aspect of the baseball itinerary and asked for more extensive itineraries for all of the trips to include checking bags, curfews, and chaperones. The information is to be provided no later than Monday, November 23.

5. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener and Head Girls and Boys Varsity Indoor Track Coach Scott Litwinovich for Board approval to permit the Indoor Track teams to travel to the following indoor track meets:

- Spire Scholastic Open on January 15, 2016 at Geneva, Ohio
- Kevin Dare High School Invitational on January 23, 2016 at State College, Pennsylvania

Coaching personnel were discussed in Executive Session.

**Construction**

There were no additional items discussed.

**Miscellaneous**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the DRAFT version of the 2016-2017 school calendar.

**Expenditures**

Expenditures were submitted for Board review and will be placed on the agenda for approval at the Regular Board Meeting.

**SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS**

Nicholas Rodi, Willowbrook Drive, there is a situation with our daughter and my family. It started off ok with cheerleading, now it is spiraling down. The cheerleading coach demands her education come second to cheerleading and now her grades are declining. The coach talks about stabbings and beaten with chains, a person being killed. My wife couldn’t be here but she is fuming. We recommend the immediate removal of both coaches. There was a text put out of confidential information. I first thought the coach was a disciplinarian, but it has gone downhill, it’s bad. I’m not being ignorant, but I think she is sick and I’m worried for my child. My daughter is putting cheerleading over and above her education and now attends tutoring. Mr. Perrott and the district do an outstanding job, but the coaches are nuts and one is a teacher. I talked to her last week and made it clear as a parent I supersede the coaches; they don’t tell my daughter what to do. Again I recommend immediate removal of both coaches and immediate replacements. My daughter will not attend any more cheerleading until this is fixed. I am seeking other professional advice. Thank you.

Jodi Velazquez, Oakridge Road, my daughter was thoroughly embarrassed today as a group text went out stating she was having trouble with her grades and needed to attend tutoring and cheer practice was cancelled because of all the girls who had to attend tutoring. I know football players have to attend tutoring, but I don’t think they cancel practice. They just placed seventh at a competition out of 9 schools. They could have had practice without the five girls, taught them how smile, which was one of the comments the judges made, they didn’t smile. The reason they didn’t smile is they are all having such a hard time with the coach. It has been horrible for the girls. She is not setting a good example, some of
the things Mr. Rodi said she said is true. She makes outlandish comments to the girls and pits them against each other. The other cheerleaders are mad at the girls who have to attend tutoring. I have gone through the chain of command by meeting twice with Mr. Keener to express my concerns with the coach and it has gotten me nowhere. I don’t think she is a good example for the girls and agree with Mr. Rodi. For all of the parents who sat through this long meeting shows a little concern. These five parents’ daughters who were in the group message about needing tutoring, everyone didn’t have to see that. I am the person who received the document from the school that listed about forty kid’s grades, including football players and cheerleaders and then was told to delete it, because it was sent to me by mistake.

Stephanie Garland, Kingswood Lane, my daughter was on the list and she texted me at work even though she knows she isn’t supposed to, but when she texts me I know it is important. She showed me the text that was sent saying that cheerleading practice was cancelled because girls had to take mandatory tutoring. First she is not failing in any class and she doesn’t have a D in any class. For the coach to put out for all the other cheerleaders and whoever else to see this, is degrading to them. She has made my daughter cry which is unfair. The other coach fussed at her for something somebody asked her to do which she did to the best of her ability, but was not her position. I don’t need anyone to make my children cry and if you have a problem with them you address me. They don’t need to fuss at her in front of the whole cheer squad and make her cry, that is unacceptable to me. Do I want anyone to lose their job, no I don’t, but I don’t want anyone fussing at my child. My child comes first, she doesn’t come to school to be degraded or made to cry.

Scott Garland, Kingswood Lane, I’m here with my wife.

Kelli Springer, Millers Run Road, my daughter was also in the group message, seniors and other cheerleaders looking at her giving her dirty looks looking because the cheer practice was cancelled. She suffered a concussion so the competition was cancelled and again the dirty looks because she got a concussion. They keep swapping the set groups which they are not used and kids are getting hurt.

Bruce Ramsey, Millers Run Road, I am Jena Brill’s step-father, Mr. Keener called her in last week which I have no problem, Jena’s does struggle with her grades, but she worked really hard last week to get her grades up, 3 to 4 hours of homework a night. Then the group text that went out today to all the parents, she was crying all night. I thought that was degrading because her mental state is more important than cheerleading and everyone finding out about her grades.

Nicholas Rodi, Willowbrook Drive, will my daughter get in trouble with these two coaches if she doesn’t attend practice tomorrow or Thursday, whatever in the future, because I’m letting you know now I’m not letting her near those two. I’m letting you know publicly, my concern is talk about knives and getting beat with chains. She said it is more important to go to practice than to do your homework or do what your parents say. This is unstable, I’m very serious, don’t remove her, it’s up to you. I’m seeking a lawyer. The way I see it she is very unstable, I’ve watched her, this is madness. Marissa is out of sorts, she can’t get her up in the morning, at night. Somebody will pay for this, one way or the other. I’m just telling you as a parent to see my daughter like this, it is enough. We need to hire people; we have the best of the best. Check these kids, like baggage, scan these people.

Newcomer seconded Iriti to suspend the meeting at 8:57 PM and enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel and/or legal issues.

President Vezzi announced votes will be taken after Executive Session.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Vice President Burroughs commented to the parents the Board is sorry for what the girls have had to experience. Dr. Rondinelli added she talked to parents today and this is something the District does not condone and this has been discussed with the Solicitor. She added the Board did receive an email tonight regarding this concern and their concerns have been heard.
Executive Session convened at 9:05 PM.

Hannah seconded Iriti to exit Executive Session at 10:23 PM and return to the committee meeting.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Newcomer seconded Iriti on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to hire Ryan Puz as a Grade 6 Permanent Substitute Language Arts teacher in the Middle School at the Bachelor’s Step 1 rate of $46,550, prorated, effective November 19, 2015.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to hire Melissa DeGeorge as the Aquatics Director at the rate of $15.50 per hour effective retroactive to November 16, 2015.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to hire the following as after school tutors effective for the 2015-2016 school year:

- Brittany Hambelton, Intermediate School Substitute PSSA English Language Arts and Math
- Tracey Brandtner, Intermediate School Substitute PSSA English Language Arts and Math

Voice Vote – All Yes

Burroughs seconded Newcomer on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the resignation of Brittany Miller as the Head Team Cheerleading Coach and the Head Competition Cheerleading Coach effective November 17, 2015.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Brinsky seconded Hannah to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 PM.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Cynthia Geisler, Board Secretary