

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Chair Pagel called the regular meeting of the Dover-Eyota Board of Education, District #533, to order at 7:30 PM in the Dover-Eyota High School Media Center. Board members present: Don Andring, Judy Brandt, Dan Johnson, Ed Kaehler, Gene Loftus, Ron Pagel, Gary Pedersen, Superintendent Bruce Klaehn and Student Board Member Kim Andring. Absent: none. Also in attendance were Principal Jeanne Svobodny, Principal Todd Rowekamp, Lora Allen, Chris Berg, Gary Betcher, Jordan Boettcher, Gary Franzen, Chris Holloman, Loren Kiefer, Dave Ehlenfeldt, Jason Ehlenfeldt, Jessi Ehlenfeldt, Lori Ehlenfeldt, Hayley Erickson, Brandon Evans, Matt Guenther, Ben Hammel, Chris Holloman, Mike Holloman, Tristan Holloman, Judy Laures, Rob Laures, Helen Lauth, Holly Lauth, Bruce McAllister, John Ostrowski, Lori Pagel, Jack Quincey, Jackie Rother, Alisha Ryan, Nicole Ryan, Brandon Schmidt, Cori Slifka, Rochelle Slifka, Trevor Slifka, Matthew Stolle, Cindy Tri, Zac Williams and Tom Wick.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approve Agenda

Chair Pagel indicated a change in the agenda with the addition of Visitors' Communications and the movement of resignations right after those communications.

A motion was made by Member Andring, seconded by Member Brandt and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

Visitors to Address the Board

Chair Pagel read the following statement: *Tonight the Board of Education of Dover-Eyota Schools will act upon the resignation submitted by English teacher Sean Little as per his request. His letter was received a few days after a conversation with the administration about his future employment. Such a discussion is typically held with teachers completing their third year of teaching, as the Board of Education has a significant responsibility regarding the process of granting tenure. This process has included three years of documented observations and events regarding Mr. Little's performance, compiled by two high school principals. The Board wishes to acknowledge Mr. Little's contributions to the strong improvement of the drama program during his time here, and wishes him nothing but the best in his future endeavors.*

An approximate 1 hour communication from the community was received by the Board. Lori Ehlenfeldt, Chris Holloman, Corey Slifka, Cindy Tri, Ben Hammel, Judy Laures, Rochelle Slifka, Bruce McAllister, Lora Allen, Holly Lauth, Trevor Slifka, Helen Lauth, Jessica Ehlenfeldt, Mike Holloman, and Jordan Boettcher, addressed the Board about teacher standards and in support of Mr. Sean Little.

Elementary Principal Jeanne Svobodny and High School Principal Todd Rowekamp explained the observation and evaluation process for nontenured staff as mandated by the state and the evaluation of tenured staff.

Chair Pagel suggested that Supt. Klaehn write an article for the *Dover-Eyota Eagle* explaining the process and Member Brandt recommended that the public contact the legislature about changes that needed to be made to the tenure process.

Accept Resignations

A motion was made by Member Kaehler, seconded by Member Johnson and carried unanimously to accept the resignation of Elementary Instructor AMANDA HAUN effective the end of the 2006-2007 school year.

A motion was made by Member Johnson and seconded by Member Loftus to accept the resignation of English Instructor and Drama Coach SEAN LITTLE effective the end of the 2006-2007 school year.

Member Loftus said to the students in attendance, "Sean has had a good effect on students. Don't let that fall apart...that is not what he has been trying to teach you. You guys are the ones that make up the drama club and you owe it to him to carry on what he has given you so far." Member Andring added, "You have become a close group...he gave you something...work with it." Supt. Klaehn relayed that a lot of different feelings had been involved in the issue and added, "Everyone needs to remember that it can be dangerous in going overboard. People have been unfairly critical without knowing all of the facts. There is a lesson here."

A vote on the motion to accept the resignation of Sean Little resulted in a split vote. Those voting for acceptance were: Loftus, Pedersen, Kaehler, Johnson, Pagel and Andring. Those voting against the same: Brandt. The motion carried 6 to 1.

A motion was made by Andring and seconded by Member Johnson to accept the resignation of Elementary Instructor JIM HAhLER.

Member Andring relayed that he admired an individual such as Mr. Hahler for his 31 years of service to the district. Member Johnson added that all of his children had Mr. Hahler as a teacher and it had been a great experience for them.

A vote on the motion to accept the resignation of Jim Hahler resulted in a unanimous vote.

Consent – Business Items

With Member Andring abstaining, a motion was made by Member Pedersen, seconded by Member Loftus and carried unanimously to approve the following: 1) March 12, 2007 Regular Board Meeting Minutes; 2) Regular District Bills totaling \$104,465.16; 3) Special District Bills totaling \$140,531.79; and 4) the Treasurer's Report with liquid assets totaling \$1,017,133.87 as well as the March electronic transfers.

CABINET COMMUNICATIONS

Elementary Principal – Jeanne Svobodny reported the following: 1) Fourth graders had participated in Ag Day and Ron Pagel had been missed as one of the organizers; 2) The Kindergarten Open House was scheduled for 4:00 to 5:30 PM on Wed., April 18; 3) The testing season would begin the next day with the MCAII reading tests; 4) The spring music concert with the fifth and sixth grade bands and the Music Explorers would begin at 2:00 PM on Thu., April 26; 5) DARE graduation would be held on Fri., May 11 at 1:00 PM; 6) Summer school Session I would be offered for two weeks in June and Session II would be held for two weeks in July plus one week in August. Funding would come from the ita grant, Title I and Targeted Services. Transportation would not be offered this summer due to lack of funding; 7) She was filled with “mixed emotions” in regard to Mr. Hahler’s retirement as he was always someone she could turn to for a good perspective of the teachers, administration and school board and for a history of the district. She added, “He is a real leader of the staff and is so good with kids.”

High School Principal – Todd Rowekamp shared the following: 1) The Knowledge Bowl, consisting of Coach Tom Theye, Anna Barone, Kelsie Fisch, Nate Miller Brandon Schmidt and Travis Schreier, had received a send off that day as they headed for state competition at Cragun’s in Brainerd; 2) The FCCLA students would leave later in the week for their state convention with Advisor Kelli Krause; 3) The junior class officers and advisors were preparing for the May 5th Prom; 4) He had met with the seniors prior to open campus to relay the expectations with that privilege and he advised that things were going well; 5) The plan for the sixth grade move to the high school was going well and another meeting would be held the following week between the sixth grade teachers and high school representatives to discuss issues that still needed to be resolved; 6) MCAII testing had begun the previous week and would continue on April 19th and April 24th. Since they would not be involved in testing on the 24th, the ninth grade students would go on a field trip and the seniors would have a college day; 7) On the April 5th in-service day, Mr. Jim Dusso and he had developed an exercise to discuss changes that needed to be made to student conduct policies and how to communicate that to the students. He relayed that the layout and content of the student handbook needed revision and so it would not be brought to the Board for approval until later in the summer; 8) In regard to the way students handled the recent teacher controversy, Mr. Rowekamp relayed his pride in the students and the way they conducted the petition and addressed the Board at meetings. He indicated his continued commitment in support of the fine arts, including drama, so that they remained strong and an outlet for students.

Customer Compliment, Concern, Complaints

Superintendent Klaehn advised that no Customer Compliment, Concern, Complaint forms had been received that month; however, he had taken several calls and emails regarding Mr. Little’s teaching position.

OLD BUSINESS

Further Reading of Two New Policies

Supt. Klaehn relayed that the school district’s lawyer had not yet relayed his recommendations regarding Policy 499 - Hiring Policy Relating to Criminal Background Checks. The Board discussion about background checks included how much of the cost should be borne by the employee.

Mr. Klaehn indicated that the revised Policy 298 – School Board Use of Electronic Mail being presented was recommended by the school district’s lawyer. Board discussion about the policy included the ramifications of

misuse of the technology. Technology Director Loren Kiefer relayed that federal law required tracking and archiving the emails and voice mails of all employees.

Second Reading and Approval of the Technology Plan

A motion was made by Member Pedersen and seconded by Member Brandt to approve the Technology Plan.

The discussion included the budget portion of the plan (\$60,000 of the budget would require final Board approval before being spent) and technology inservices for staff. Technology Director Loren Kiefer relayed that this was a plan for the district to follow and adjustments could be made.

Superintendent Klaehn indicated that the final reading of the preliminary budget at the May Board meeting would include the technology budget.

A vote on the motion to approve the Technology Plan as presented carried unanimously.

Second Reading and Approval of 2007-2008 Programming and Staffing

Principal Jeanne Svobodny gave an update of a meeting with Eric Aeschlimann and Deb Vosler regarding Ms. Vosler being an elementary physical education teacher next year.

Member Brandt made a motion to table the portion of the programming and staffing assigning Deb Vosler to elementary physical education in order to review other options and to vote on all of the other portions of the plan. The motion was dropped for lack of a second.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to immediately post the Science position. Activities Director John Ostrowski and Principal Jeanne Svobodny came forward to answer questions about moving the administration of Early Childhood staff from Mr. Ostrowski to Mrs. Svobodny.

A motion was made by Member Pedersen and seconded by Member Johnson to approve 2007-2008 Programming and Staffing as originally proposed. A vote on the motion resulted in the following voting in favor: Loftus, Pedersen, Kaehler, Johnson, Pagel and Brandt. Voting against the same: Andring. The motion carried 6 to 1.

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading of Revised Policy 509 – Enrollment of Nonresident Students

The Board held their first reading of revised Policy 509 – Enrollment of Nonresident Students. Discussion included limiting high school open enrollment. The policy would be brought back to the May meeting for second reading and possible approval.

Approve 2006-07 Auditing Contract with Larson, Allen, Weishair & Co.

A motion was made by Member Andring and seconded by Member Brandt to approve the 2006-07 auditing contract with Larson, Allen, Weishair & Company.

Member Pedersen felt that the cost listed in the contract should be actual, not estimated. Business Manager Gary Betcher indicated that new auditing standards were implemented each year and could make a difference in the amount of work required by the auditors. Discussion included the reasons for changing auditors and the reasons to remain with LAWCO. Mr. Klaehn would visit with his peers to determine if other districts were seeking auditing bids or staying with their current vendor.

A vote on the motion resulted in the following voting in favor of approving the 2006-07 auditing contract with LAWCO: Loftus, Pedersen, Johnson, Pagel, Andring and Brandt. Voting against the same: Kaehler. The motion carried 6 to 1.

Approve Fundraiser Requests

A motion was made by Member Pedersen and seconded by Member Loftus to approve the following fundraiser requests: 1) Class of 2012 (7th grade) to sell pizzas, pies, etc. April 18-25 for their end-of-the-year trip to Valley Fair and future class activities; 2) High school Student Council to sell pastry April 30 to May 11 for state convention costs.

Member Brandt recommended that, since the high school Student Council was a student governing body and no longer received funding from the vending machines, they should be given a certain amount of “start up” funds each year. Member Andring recommended that the Board donate 10% of the Student Council’s state convention costs, as it does with other groups.

A vote on the motion to approve the fundraisers carried unanimously.

Consent – New Hires

A motion was made by Kaehler, seconded by Member Loftus and carried unanimously to approve hiring JORDAN JENSEN as “C” Baseball Coach and RICH OLSON as “B” Volleyball Coach.

A motion was made by Member Brandt, seconded by Member Kaehler and carried unanimously to approve hiring CARRIE FRANK as Food & Nutrition Director.

Mrs. Carrie Frank was called forward and relayed that she had been in the food industry for 25 years. This included being trained as a chef at a culinary arts school, holding the position of Food Service Director in health care, and working in school food service for 15 years at the Rochester Public Schools and Holy Spirit School in Rochester. She indicated that she found school food service her “passion” and truly enjoyed serving kids.

Chair Pagel welcomed Mrs. Frank to the school district.

Consent – Accept Donations

A motion was made by Member Brandt, seconded by Member Kaehler and carried unanimously to accept the following donations: 1) High School -- \$100 from Mr. & Mrs. JOHN SCHMIDT to Band; \$1,000 from an ANONYMOUS DONOR to the Drama Club; \$1,000 from the DOVER FIRE DEPARTMENT for the wrestling and dance transportation to state; \$410.27 in KWIK TRIP rebates; \$230.72 in TARGET Take Charge of Education donations; \$100 from the EYOTA AMERICAN LEGION to Close Up; 2) Elementary -- \$500 from the HIAWATHA VALLEY SNO-SEEKERS, \$25 from CHATFIELD LUMBER, \$25 from DOUG PETERSON CONSTRUCTION, INC. \$150 from the EYOTA AMERICAN LEGION, \$100 from KWIK TRIP and \$100 from the HAIR SHACK in Dover to the DARE program; 3) Elementary -- \$672.63 from TARGET Take Charge of Education donations; 4) District -- \$180 from the CITY OF DOVER to repair the tennis court light switch.

HEARING OF REPORTS

Superintendent’s Report & Communication

Superintendent Klaehn shared the following items: 1) Provided a legislative update indicating that the Omnibus education bills were completed but that the big question was whether or not they would be able to push through the tax increase; 2) Custodial Directors Gary Franzen and Wayne Ellringer had joined him in a meeting with ESG, an energy and heating/ventilation/air conditioning consulting firm. It was determined that another meeting with ESG would be set to include Member Loftus and Member Andring. A presentation by ESG would also be set for an upcoming Board meeting; 3) Commended the administration and everyone they worked with for their input on the 2007-08 programming and staffing. While districts around the state were making financial cuts, Dover-Eyota was advancing; 4) In regard to the Visitors’ Communication, he felt that the Board had handled it exceptionally well. He did feel bad that, in the interest of making a point, some teaching staff had been referred to in a negative light and Principal Rowekamp’s administrative experience had been questioned. He commended Mr. Rowekamp for his skills and professionalism and added that he was doing an exceptional job. Mr. Klaehn added, “He is proud of the students and I am proud of him.”

Student Board Member Report & Communication

Student Board Member Kim Andring relayed the following: 1) Spring sports had begun, the baseball team had lost their game that afternoon, and track and softball had held a few meets/games; 2) Wished the Knowledge Bowl success as they headed to state competition; 3) FCCLA would be leaving for state competition; 4) FFA would hold its banquet on Monday, May 21 and the members would be attending state April 22-24; 5) The spring musical entitled “Anything Goes” would be presented Friday and Saturday, April 27 and April 28; 6) The Student Council had started their Rainbow for Hope fundraiser and would soon start their butter braid sales. Kelli Pedersen, Laurie Swanson, Danielle Storm and Brittany Raddatz had attended the state meeting. Principal Rowekamp had attended the last Council meeting to work with the group on coronation changes; 7) Everyone, especially the girls, were excited about Prom; 8) Open campus was going well and she hadn’t hear any complaints from the students or teachers; 9) April 24 was set as a college day for the seniors; 10) The Teens as Leaders would be making a presentation to the fourth grade students on tobacco use; 11) Because they had extra funds in their account, the seniors would be able to hire a disc jockey for their May 25th boat cruise; 12) The Horticulture class or FFA would hold a plant sale and Kim thanked Ms. Bronk for the expertise she was sharing with the class; 13) She indicated that Mr. Little would be missed and that his classes were difficult because he “pushed” the kids.

Board of Education Committee Reports & Communication

Brandt – Member Brandt congratulated Mr. Hahler on his retirement and said, “He will be truly missed. The kids would say he was one of the great ones. He has given a lot to the district.” She added that meetings such as the one that night were “tough” and thanked Member Loftus for his comments to the visitors.

Andring – Member Andring called Mr. Hahler a “class act,” said that he would be very much missed and congratulated him on his retirement. Mr. Andring also thanked Member Loftus for his comments. To the Board he said, “As a group we have held together and done well...I thank my cohorts.” Mr. Andring ended by welcoming Carrie Frank as the new Food & Nutrition Director.

Johnson – Member Johnson congratulated Mr. Hahler and said, “He has touched a lot of lives. I remember the 6th grade campouts and appreciate everything he has done for the district.” In regard to the resignations accepted that evening, he said that it was good to see the students trying to stand up for a teacher. He added that sometimes the Board had to do a “clumsy balancing act” and that it wasn’t fun being the bad guy. “When the die is cast, you can beat that dead horse all you want to and it won’t come alive again. It is time to move on,” he said.

Loftus – Member Loftus congratulated Mr. Hahler on his retirement. He also congratulated the groups who were proving that Dover-Eyota was a class act to follow, not just in sports but in academics as well. In regard to the comments made by the visitors that evening, Mr. Loftus said, “It shouldn’t be lost that we have many talented teachers who do a good job in this district. I challenge all of the teachers to imitate Mr. Little in how he had the ability to draw some of these kids out of their shell.”

Pedersen – Mr. Pedersen thanked Member Loftus for his comments and said that he had done a nice job of “wrapping up” the issue. He indicated that emotions could run wild when a controversial subject was discussed and recognized that Principal Rowekamp had “taken a beating” that evening that he did not deserve. He said to Mr. Rowekamp, “Keep your head up and keep doing your job....we are here for the kids and that is the bottom line. You are doing a good job.” Mr. Pedersen also informed the Board that the Dover-Eyota Education Association had notified the district their wish to start contract negotiations. In regard to legislation, he relayed his appreciation of the combined meeting with cities, counties and school boards as it helped the three entities to work together. Member Pedersen had attended a Gifted & Talented Committee meeting and relayed that there were some “very ambitious parents” in the group that would make some good things happen.

Pagel – He was unable to attend the Hiawatha Valley Education District meeting. Mr. Pagel congratulated Mr. Hahler on 31 years as a Dover-Eyota staff member and wished him well in his future endeavors. He apologized to Principal Rowekamp and Principal Svobodny for putting them on the spot that evening but felt that the visitors were taking the discussion in the wrong direction and needed to know more about the tenure process. Chair Pagel also thanked Mr. Rowekamp, Supt. Klaehn and the Board members for taking time to listen to the public. He added, “Good teachers will affect students beyond the classrooms and teachers will identify with different personalities. Good teachers change students’ lives both short and long-term.” He concluded by wishing Mr. Little the best of luck.

Andring – Mr. Andring relayed his hope that the district was committed to replacing Mr. Little with someone that could interest kids and added, “Let’s not allow what they said to be wasted.”

Kaehler – Member Kaehler would be attending a Facilities Assessment Committee meeting. In regard to legislators he said, “It is too easy for legislators to pit the cities and counties against each other so it is good when they join forces.” Mr. Kahler said that, not only was Mr. Hahler a great elementary teacher, but he had also led and united the Systems Accountability Committee for many years.

Chair Pagel relayed that the superintendent and Board evaluations would be tabled until the May meeting.

Supt. Klaehn noted that Elementary Instructor Amanda Haun had gone through the same process as Mr. Little with little fanfare. He expressed his appreciation to Ms. Haun for her service to the school district. Mr. Klaehn said that he was glad to see Ron Pagel attending the meeting and congratulated him for not missing a meeting, especially considering his recent ordeal.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Member Andring, seconded by Member Kaehler and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 PM.

Daniel A. Johnson, Clerk
Cb