

NORTH MAC COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #34
Special Board of Education Meeting
South Campus Media Center
March 13, 2013
5:30 p.m.

1. The Special Board of Education meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by President Steve Furman.

1.1 Roll call: Cole, Etter, Handy, Hays, Matuska, Sloman, Furman

Also present: Marica Cullen, Dennis McMillin, John Downs, Nancy Bitner, Deb Bommarito, Patti Fetter, Cindy Edwards, Kim Eldridge, Kara Coffey, Angie Fatheree, Ashley Creasey, Anna Watson, Sarah Ewin, Jodi Alexander, Shelly Wagner, Natalie Blankenship, Kris Eldridge, Millie Burgess, Leslie Naugle, Tammy McCready, Brooke Earley, Carrie Buchanan, Alyssa Baines, Lisa McWard, Janie Bomkamp, Mike Marsaglia, Colleen Brown, Sherry Gerdanc, Johnie West, Vicki Conway, Pat Gobel, Vicky Wonaroski, Chris Nerone, Tara Rednour, Craig Fess, Mellissa Henke, Fred Mulacek, David Spann, Eugenia Austin, Rich McElfresh, Dawn Sanson, Cinthia Gillespie, Tacy Greff, Machelles Martin, Mary Jane Fuchs, Chris Raynor, Sarah Raynor, Meredith Jones, Sarah Etter, Rebecca June, Kris Trojcek, Carla Seifert, Shielda Lewis, Shelley Watts, Sherry Hesterberg, Lesli Wilson, Kati Hemann, Mike Hemann, Jay Rogers, Jessica Rogers, Stacey Hughes, Rachel Fetter, Deb Gripp, Kay Cameron, Beth Countryman, Brian Wood, Diane Moore, Carla Anderson, Lauri Wade, Denise Nichols, Philip Garner, Connie Schroeder, Jennifer Graham, Michele Wernsing, Jon Langellier, Sydney Weber, Sally Anderson, Bridgette Rezba, Kathy Jenkins, Roseanne Hasara, Lou Ann Ibberson, Anna Allen, Gail Turner, Betsy Cassen, Courtney Klaus, Hallie Campbell, William McCready, Stephanie Barham, Kristi Smith, Vince Jorn, Susan Jorn, Matthew Buchanan, Phil Allen, Ron Ochu, Debbie Ochu, Scott Starks, Ernest Cameron, Barbara Newhouse

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance led by Steve Furman

1.3 Gail Turner told the board that the union had voted to ratify the tentative agreement from Monday's meeting

1.4 Opening remarks by Farley Cole – Tonight's Board of Education Special Meeting has been called to provide an opportunity for discussion on several topics in one session rather than through separate committee meetings as has been done over the past few months. Topics on the agenda include transportation, athletics, fees, and attendance centers. Some of these topics have been raised by community and staff members in public meetings held in November 2012 and February 2013. Other of these topics have been discussed since prior to the consolidation. Tonight's meeting will provide a forum to learn, discuss and listen to public comment by each topic. We do not anticipate any formal Board action/motions tonight. Some decisions will be made at the March 27 meeting and others will happen over the next few

months as the amount of state funding the North Mac District will receive becomes more firm. Our District is in financial distress because of no payment or late payment of state funding. We learned in late August 2012 that state funding for the year would be cut by \$800,000. We will probably face another \$1.3 million reduction in state money for next year. We will have no savings left sometime this spring; the state owes the District close to \$1,000,000. with no guaranteed payment date, and our ability to borrow money is limited by court action over the Working Cash Bonds and bank caution over lending to any Illinois school district. We seek public input for the process of making decisions and choices; however, it must be clear that changes will have to be made in reaction to the financial shortfall of the state of Illinois obligation to our communities' schools. Please be open minded and look for the benefits of some of these potential changes, as they will have an educational outcome benefit and are not totally finance driven. Change is hard, and we are cognizant of these facts. It is hard to maintain focus on being visionary when we have had to become reactionary to the financial shortfalls placed on us by our state legislature.

2. Athletics and Clubs Comments from Visitors

2.1 Reductions – Deb Gripp asked the board whether the reductions could be held off for one more year with the large number of retirees at the end of the 2014 school year. Mrs. Cullen stated \$800,000 had been cut from state funding in August, and we had cut our budget by \$600,000, but we would still run out of money before the year was over. Since the Working Cash Issuance has been stopped, we have to make deeper cuts than were anticipated. At the time the district was formed, the retirement incentive for teachers was based on the idea that when the consolidation money ran out the higher paid teachers would be retired. But it was unknown that State Aide would drastically be cut making it impossible to meet all our payments. Furman stated that all school districts in the State of Illinois are a risk for loans. If we do not receive tax payments on time from Macoupin County that will add to the problem. The issue of safety was also addressed if coaches were cut and there would not be enough adult supervision for the number of students participating. Connie Schroeder wondered about the \$1,000,000 line of credit at the bank. Mrs. Cullen stated that line of credit was to hold us over until the Working Cash Issuance could be completed and would end March 31 with payment due April 1.

Connie stated that she felt if a class has over 50 students an aide is needed for safety reasons. She also wanted to know if other districts were starting next year with deficit spending why North Mac could not do the same thing. Marica explained a school can only do deficit spending if they have a savings account to cover the deficit; North Mac does not have reserves.

Millie Burgess wondered if Tax Anticipation Warrants had been considered. Cullen stated that tax anticipation warrants are borrowing against future income and they have to be paid when taxes are received with interest and fees. Furman said this is why we wanted to do the Working Cash Bonds.

Rich McElfresh asked if we felt the legislature was trying to force smaller districts to consolidate and make county districts. Nancy Bitner stated when she worked for Pat Quinn he wanted to cut the number of Illinois school districts in half.

Katie Hemann said the community has a passion for sports, and asked can volunteers be used for coaching rather than having paid coaches?

Kim Eldridge wanted to know what stuff has been cut and what is our goal/plan. She stated now we want to cut sports that maybe we never should have offered. Also, she asked what budget cuts have been made in the Superintendent's office and also in Administration.

Carla Seifert said we need to make the district work, and the bulk of debt is salaries and benefits. Hillsboro administrators gave up part of their salaries to help the district.

Jay Rogers thanked the board for its time and efforts and stated when a household is facing financial issues, we cut back; we don't go to the bank. He further stated other ideas to consider were using volunteers as teacher's aides, cutting sports for a couple of years, and fundraising for sports. Finally, the building referendum did not pass on the ballot so would an education referendum pass to raise taxes?

Jackie Meyers said her department has worked for 8 years, with layoffs and cut backs. We need to work together. We need to call the people that have petitions against the Working Cash Bonds and ask them to stop the process so the school can move forward.

A five minute break was taken before comments were taken on the Sports Transportation Policy.

2.2 Sports Transportation Policy

John Downs reported that he had contacted Mt. Olive, Carrolton, Nokomis and Carlinville regarding transporting to and from sporting events. Mt. Olive does not transport students to participate in sports, Nokomis and Carrollton do not transport middle school students, and Carlinville does not transport to all day Saturday events.

Points addressed during public comments were coaches driving buses, increasing fees to cover transportation cost, and doubling up on sports (ex.

scheduling baseball and softball games at the same time then only using one bus). Sports fees should be charged for each sport played, and distance to contests could be limited.

Katie Hemann wanted a guarantee that if sports are cut it would help pay teachers.

Alyssa Baines also stated that during registration we might want to address paying the fees a little differently than asking the parents do you want to pay?

Jackie Meyer reiterated the high poverty level at the North Mac district be considered when raising fees and stated she had not paid her school fees either last year or this year.

2.3 Athletic and Class Fees

Dave Harmon said education was most important.

John Downs shared the recommended new rates for 2013/2014 \$25.00 per sport middle school; \$40.00 per sport high school; \$65.00 for football. John also feels that sports teach things that are not learned in the classroom.

Robyn Hays said community based sports fees are higher than school sports fees and parents have to transport. Nancy Bitner said that in the southern school district where her children attended, the sports fee was \$100.00 per sport per child five years ago.

Mrs. Cullen presented the 2013/2014 fee schedule with just a few increases in areas.

Sarah Raynor asked if registration could be held in May so that parents have all summer to pay fees before school starts in August.

President Furman advised fundraiser money would need to be given to the school, so the school could use money to fund sports,

Several people asked for more information saying the school website and local paper were not enough. One suggestion was to use Skylert for board meeting notifications, State Journal Register articles, and articles in the local paper like a Superintendent's Corner. Nancy Bitner offered to have a web based service to the community much like the one Mr. Downs currently has for sporting events each day.

3 Attendance Centers Visitors Comments

Sarah Raynor spoke of the district motto and the amount of time spent to select school colors and band uniforms. She also stated there are many difficult and unpopular decisions to be made and the community is not behind Board, because

involvement from the public is met with condescension and there is lack of communication to public. She wanted more time to research attendance centers.

Katie Hemann how much time has been spent on researching the benefit of attendance centers. Robyn Hays since the beginning talks of consolidation. Katie Hemann questioned what actual research has been done and the opinion of teachers, the cost to move, transportation cost, another district to model and class size issues. Cullen stated the cost of transportation would be approximately \$115,000 and reported the process of researching attendance centers was just getting started. Potential savings would be in administration cost, and staff costs with more even class sizes.

Deb Gripp said there's not enough time to implement by next year but there may be time to study and recommend for 2014/15.

Several concerns were raised regarding short notice of meeting, Furman addressed it by saying it was decided last Thursday evening at a committee meeting to have a board meeting this week if possible. Board knew on Friday, and meeting was posted on until Monday when staff returned to work.

Dave Harmon wanted to know if attendance centers were based on finances or curriculum. Robyn Hays stated that at first it was solely curriculum but now budget accelerated the conversation. We have a lot more questions before a decision can be made.

Johnie West requested the board to take action to postpone implementing attendance centers until 2014/2015. Marica Cullen asked what is too large for a class if attendance centers are put off one more year. Kim Eldridge said large class sizes for one year would be fine if it meant more planning would be done on the subject.

2. Athletics and Clubs

2.1 Reductions - A general discussion was held by the board regarding athletics and clubs. It was requested that Etter have recommendations at the March 27th board meeting.

2.2 Sports Transportation Policy - Two different policies for high school and middle school one with and one without transportation were requested for consideration. Action will be taken at the March 27th meeting on transportation and fees.

2.3 Athletic and Class Fees - Furman requested that the revised fees be put on the website, so parents can review them before the meeting on March 27th.

3. Attendance Centers: Motion was made by Hays, seconded by Cole to form an

Exploratory Committee made up of parents, community members, administrators, and board members to develop a comprehensive plan regarding moving to Attendance Centers.

Motion was made by Hays, seconded by Cole to change wording of motion from plan to comprehensive recommendation. Yea votes: Etter, Handy, Hays, Matuska, Sloman, Cole, Furman.

Revised motion was made by Hays, seconded by Cole form an Exploratory Committee made up of four parents, two community members, two administrators, two Board members, and the Superintendent to develop a comprehensive recommendation regarding moving to Attendance Centers. Yea votes: Handy, Hays, Matuska, Sloman, Cole, Etter, Furman.

Motion was made by Robyn, seconded by Handy that Exploratory Committee report to board at the May 22, 2013 Board meeting. Yea votes: Matuska, Sloman, Cole, Etter, Handy, Hays; No vote: Furman

4. Motion was made by Etter, seconded by Handy to enter into closed session for appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of employees; collective bargaining; student discipline at 10:25 p.m. Yea votes: Cole, Etter, Handy, Hays, Matuska, Sloman, Furman
5. Meeting reopened at 11:00 p.m.
 - a. Motion was made by Furman, seconded by Hays to ratify the contract with the NMEA that was agreed upon Monday March 11, 2013. Yea votes: Cole, Handy, Hays, Matuska, Sloman, Furman; Present vote: Etter
6. Meeting adjourned 11:05 p.m.

President

Secretary