

Poultney Town School District
Board of School Directors Meeting
Official Minutes
March 24, 2009

Attending: Mary Jo Teetor, Board Chair, and Board Members Pat Davenport, Tracee Oakman Rupe, Mike Nagar, and Al Jackson, Superintendent Tom Gallagher, PHS Principal JeanMarie Oakman, Louis Milazzo, Business Manager, Anne Colpitts, Recording Clerk, Mark Fedolfi, Beverly Fedolfi, Linda MW Smith, Tammy Petty, Colleen Nagar, Bonnie Lenihan, Alicia Marcy, and Joe DeBonis.

Mary Jo Teetor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Consent Agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes: Mike Nagar moved to approve Unofficial Minutes of February 12, 2009 (Special); February 17, 2009 (Regular and Continuation); March 10 (Special); March 12 (Special) and March 18 (Special), with amendments. Pat Davenport seconded. Motion carried.

b. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Gallagher reported that both PES and PYS made AYP this year. After not meeting AYP, schools must meet AYP in all categories two years in a row before they are no longer monitored. PES had a review of the nutrition program and passed with flying colors.

c. Principals' Reports:

PHS:

- 1) Behavior Contracts: Principal Oakman reported that she talked with faculty and staff about how student behavior contracts should be structured and who they should apply to. Faculty felt that behavior contracts should be year-round and that they should apply to all students, not just athletes. PHS staff are in the process of drafting a new contract for next fall.
- 2) Advisor Stipends: Principal Oakman and the PHS faculty also discussed ensuring that advisor stipends are paid equitably, not half in December and half in the spring, as has been done in the past (since the fall semester actually ends in January). The business office will begin paying 40% in December and 60% at the end of May.
- 3) NECAP Scores: NECAP scores were disappointing, although they went up slightly in some areas. More information will be available once the administration has time to look at the scores in more detail.
- 4) Training for Coaches: Spring coaches have already attended a mandatory meeting and Principal Oakman has implemented a better system of record keeping to make sure that coaches keep up with required training and other safeguards.
- 5) Donation: Take Charge of Education, a program through Target, has made a donation of \$26.33 to PHS. **Action:** *Al Jackson moved to accept the donation from Take Charge of Education. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.
- 6) Recruitment: PHS will hold an open house to recruit 6th graders from Poultney and surrounding towns on Wednesday, April 29th. The open house

will feature the DVD about PHS that students are currently making, tours of the building, refreshments, a chance to talk to PHS teachers, and presentations by students. Superintendent Gallagher and Principal Oakman will discuss giving teachers comp time in exchange for asking them to work during the open house.

7) Wellness Center open to public: Principal Oakman wants the community to know that the Wellness Center is open to the public, including students under 18 if accompanied by a adult, whenever the building is open. PHS will be holding open houses this spring to make sure that users know how to safely operate the equipment, and will issue a special invitation to the senior center.

PES: Principal Caliguiri submitted a written report. PES has upcoming professional development with Dr. Rajia, tutoring and enrichment programs offered through the 21st Century Grant Program, and new Personal Performance Projects for students in grades K-6, to be presented in a fair on May 7th.

d. Business Manager's Report:

1) Repairs at PES: Louis Milazzo reported that PES has pipes in the furnace room in need of repair. The estimated cost is \$6000, which can come out of the repair and maintenance line item in this year's budget.

2) Funds due to Town of Poultney: Due to overpayment of taxes, the district owes the Town of Poultney \$17,795, which is a balance built up over the past 4 years. The amount for FYO8, \$6,328, is budgeted, but the rest is not. There should be sufficient funds in the surplus to cover the entire amount. The estimated end-of-year surplus is around \$55K. **Action:** *Al Jackson moved to pay the Town of Poultney \$17,795 using the amount budgeted this year and the current year's budget surplus. Pat Davenport seconded. Motion carried.

3) Food Service Upgrades: Fitz Vogt is using 10-year-old hardware and software for food service, which they say needs to be upgraded. They will pay for hardware updates, but they are asking the district to pay for software upgrades, a total of around \$5,500. Fitz Vogt has applied for a \$3,000 grant to subsidize the software upgrades. They are asking Poultney to pay the remaining \$1,200, spread over next year or the length of their contract. They would take the hardware with them if they left. Louis Milazzo will talk with Kim Babcock and consult the Fitz Vogt contract to find out who owns the hardware and software that is currently being used so that a decision can be made at the next board meeting.

4) Lawn Care Contract: The district's lawn care contract ends this year. Lakes Region Lawn Care is the current provider and came in with the lowest bid 3 years ago. They are willing to keep the price the same for the next contract.

Action: *Al Jackson moved to extend a contract, not to exceed 3 years, to Lakes Region Lawn Care. Tracee Oakman Rupe seconded. Motion carried.

5) Findings from audit (also included in written report): According to the audit, the current practice of placing money for dental and eye care for teachers in a separate fund not under the oversight of the school treasurer is out of compliance with the Internal Revenue Code and State Statutes. Mary Jo Teetor recommended that Louis write a letter to the teacher's union explaining that the current process is out of compliance and recommending that the bank account be turned over to the school treasurer and the accounting be done by the school district.

1. Approve Warrants:
 - a. Warrant #50, in the amount of \$33,748.16, dated 2/13/09.
 - b. Warrant #51, in the amount of \$116,888.08, dated 2/27/09.

Old Business:

- a. Bill back for home study students' co-curricular participation: Superintendent Gallagher said that Poultney will receive up to 33% of the ADM if home-schooled students participating in extracurricular activities are counted at the beginning of the year. Students should enroll at PHS in the fall so that they can be counted in the ADM, no matter what time of year they plan to participate in activities. If Poultney does not claim ADM for the student, the student's home district could be billed for the cost of his or her participation.
- b. Pawlet tuition students busing: A parent from Pawlet is advocating reinstating the bus from Pawlet, in part because it would be an effective recruiting device. Some parents struggle to make tuition payments, and providing their own transportation is an additional expense. Tuition rates need to be the same for all students, so the difference cannot be made up with scholarships. One possible option would be to offer parents a stipend to transport their own children, possibly in an amount that would make up the difference between the tuition Poultney charges and the amount Pawlet covers (Poultney charges \$8,544 and Pawlet covers \$7,250). If the district decides to provide transportation, Bonnie Lenihan mentioned a transportation company she has been working with that has been very reliable, called A to B Transportation. Superintendent Gallagher suggested a late bus, so that Pawlet students could participate in activities. Principal Oakman and Superintendent Gallagher will do additional research before the next meeting. Louis Milazzo pointed out that the board should keep in mind that offering stipends would set a precedent and would have to be done for any child coming from a town where Poultney did not offer transportation.

New Business:

- a. Approve textbooks: None
- b. Approve Substitute List: **Action:** *Mike Nagar moved to approve substitute list. Al Jackson seconded. Motion carried.
- c. Approve FY10 School Calendar: The school calendar is usually coordinated with the technical school calendar. The only difference between the PES and the PHS calendar is the grading periods, but a consolidated calendar can be issued. **Action:** *Al Jackson moved to approve the proposed calendar. Tracee Oakman Rupe seconded. Motion carried.
- d. Increase rate of pay for substitute school nurse/school nurse assistant: Superintendent Gallagher suggested raising the pay rate for substitute nurses to at least \$85/day to compensate for the increased risks they incur. **Action:** *Tracee Oakman Rupe moved to approve raising the pay rate to \$85/day for substitute nurses and substitute assistant nurses. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.

Policies for 2nd/3rd Reading:

- a. Residency: Move to adopt.
 - b. Firearms: "Weapons" are defined more broadly under School Conduct and Discipline policy. Move to adopt.
 - c. Pupil Privacy Rights: Replaces survey policy. Move to adopt.
 - d. Student Conduct and Discipline: Policy clarifies appeal process. Superintendent or Board will become involved only in cases where the suspension lasts more than 10 days. Principal Oakman will also clarify appeals policy in the student handbook. Move to adopt with amendments.
 - e. Selection of Instructional Materials: Cross-reference with policies dealing with complaints about instructional materials and library selection. Move to adopt.
- Action:** *Al Jackson moved to adopt policies with amendments. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.

Action on Personnel:

- a. New Hires
 - i. Timothy Durrum, Substitute Custodian
 - b. Resignations - None
 - c. Terminations - None
- Action:** *Al Jackson moved to approve action on personnel. Pat Davenport seconded. Motion carried.

General Public Comment:

- a. Recruitment: Alicia Marcy suggested adding a collage of pictures to the items handed out during the open house. Principal Oakman said that they plan to hand out copies of the DVD the students are making. Alicia Marcy also reported that Granville schools are working on getting single gender classes next year, although they are still deciding which grade levels would be involved. She asked if there was any interest in single gender classes in Vermont. Pat Davenport and Superintendent Gallagher said they had not heard of any Vermont districts considering single gender classes.
- b. Test scores: Alicia Marcy offered her congratulations on meeting AYP, and asked what is being done to match the curriculum to the NECAP. Superintendent Gallagher answered that the principals are receiving training on how to conduct an audit to better coordinate the curriculum with Vermont state standards and the NECAP. Alicia also asked what Poultney is doing to make connections with schools in Vermont that are already doing well at meeting state standards to use as curriculum models. Superintendent Gallagher said that he will be getting a curriculum guide as a model from Burr and Burton, but that it is important to remember that test scores are closely correlated to socio-economic indicators, so information from other schools is most helpful if they have a similar population. Regarding whether there are any quicker fixes to the problem, Superintendent Gallagher said there are some, but a long-term solution

with staff buy-in is what is really needed. Principal Oakman explained what they are doing in the short term to raise test scores. She said that departments are meeting monthly to analyze NECAP results and look at ways to close the achievement gap. They have also purchased a computerized K-12 reading program called Fast Forward to work on improving reading skills, and have had on-going professional development with David Liben to model, observe or coach teachers in their classrooms.

c. Special Education Substitutes: As a special education teacher, Linda Smith advocated raising the pay of substitutes for special ed and special ed IA's so that there might be more availability. Superintendent Gallagher suggested that she talk with him about this issue next week.

Next Regular Meeting: April 21, 2009, 6:30 pm, PHS.

Mary Jo Teetor adjourned the meeting to move to executive session at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Colpitts, Recording Clerk