
GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Regular Meeting – March 28, 2016

MINUTES

President Wacyk called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Superintendent Brian Metcalf indicated the presence of ***Board Members***: Linda Wacyk, Jon Shiflett, Jay Bennett, Sara Clark Pierson, Kim Mulvenna, Brody Boucher and Beverly Winstanley. ***Central Office Administrators***: Brian Metcalf, Andy George, Steve Gabriel, Nancy Rasinske, Norma Schutzki and Mark Deschaine ***Others in Attendance***: Ray Davis, Melissa Mazzola, Tish Janes, Brock Janes, Emily Williamson, Dale Westrick, John Ellsworth, Deb Auge, Sheila Bell, Michelle Hamilton, Lesley Lumbert, Andrea Dionise, Kristy Merignac, Hillary Kobul, Jill Rycus, Teri Mulder, Elizabeth Price, Bill Fleener, Jessica Fuentes, Sharon Cusack, Rochelle Tallman, Darrin Gyurich, Francie Skarritt, Kevin Skarritt, Joni Wygocki, Nancy Lewis, Pat Gilbert, Jim Froehlich, Greg Almy Jamie McKennon, Nathan Burns, Rene Brown, Erin Snyder, Katie Grass, Carmen Palmer, Sara Higbee, Tim Madden, Andrew Ford, Laura Willoughby, Jill Block, Donald Miller, Susan Sowle, Teresa Dyer, Dave Klingbiel, Melody Parsons, Debi Cole, Debra Martinez, Jenny Kish, Matt Szydlowski, Heather Booher, Cathy Fox, Michelle Oppenheim, Mackenzie Faerfer, Kevin Mason, Colleen Price Jim Price, Lori Smith, Erin Ries, Lindsey Grostefon, Lisa Klingbiel, Scott Parsons, Kimberly Shoup, Angela Vereecke, Gregg Grubb, Dawn Grubb, Josh Austin, Nicole Austin, Lysander Austin, Jennifer Bouck, Tonya Rice, Beth Johnson, Tracy Smith, Sue Horak, John Horak, Gail Shafer, Sheri Tulloch, Meghan Joseph, Stacey Dohm, Deborah McMartin-Finkel, Kellie Auge, Danielle Nelson, Stacey Austin, Melissa Goodrich, Matt Bird, Stacy Hickox, Kelly Rodriguez, Joe Thomas, Rich Pochert, Derek Miller, Rebecca Cienki, Kyle Cienki, Todd Marsh, Annette Kelly, Erica Sampson, Erin Ellis, Lauren Brown, Bri Dennis, Erica Ledesma, Nancy Nowak, Jackie Jancek, Erin Zulewski, Julie Alexander, Meghan Ritchey, Laurie Kucher, Mandy Hall, Jill Ford, Debra McCrumb, Lynsee Phillips, Megan Weber, Kelly Ploehn, Mark Jones, Kelly Smith, Diane Roskoskey, Jeanine Cull, Erin Fredericks, Jamie Slear, Julie Brunk, Mary Carlson, Travis Deters, Chris Terranova, Nick Terranova, Amy Heriford, Tony Heriford, Rachel Buffenbarger, Jennifer Miller, Pat McKennon, Jacob Hill and Kim Manning.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mrs. Clark Pierson for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the March 28, 2016 Agenda Items, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Mr. Boucher for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the March 29, 2016 Consent Agenda Item, as presented.

Included on the Consent Agenda were the meeting minutes of the February 8, 2016 Regular Meeting and Closed Session and the March 14, 2016 Work Session and Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

A. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- a. **Capitol Connections Report** - Mr. Bennett reported on the school aid budget, a proposal in the House of Representatives to eliminate M-STEP and the progress of legislation impacting 3rd grade reading.

Mr. Shiflett noted that legislators are in their districts for the next two weeks to listen to their constituents. He encouraged everyone to reach out to his or her respective legislator and explain to them what we do here and what it costs to do what we do. He encouraged everyone to be advocates, as legislators do not want to hear from board members or Superintendent's, they want to hear from parents, and teachers.

- b. **Eaton RESA Report** – Mrs. Clark Pierson reviewed the past year since she was appointed to serve on the Eaton RESA Board noting that all the time and commitment of, not only her, but that of Superintendent Metcalf, the members of the entire Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education and Administrators has brought great change to the RESA and all for the benefit of the students of Grand Ledge Public Schools.
- c. **Grand Ledge Education Foundation** – Mr. Bennett advised this past fall the Board of the Foundation opted to revamp their process in awarding teacher grants. As such, the Board also decided it was not prudent to hold a Breakfast of Champions this year. The Josh Spalsbury Memorial 5K Run is still scheduled for June 18th in conjunction with Yankee Doodle Days.
- d. **Grand Ledge Parks & Recreation Committee** – Mr. Boucher reported demolition has started on the property adjacent to the boat launch. He advised there will be resident survey shared in the near future to assist in the development of a strategic plan for the parks and recreation department. In addition, the committee is seeking additional funding from the DNR for improvements to our parks.
- e. **Board Governance Committee** – Mrs. Mulvenna noted the committee continues to review the Superintendent's evaluation and its process along with how to collect relevant and useful data for the Board on student achievement. She also advised the committee continues to discuss the terms of office for board of education members and a conversation of the full board will take place in the near future.

D. Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Metcalf reminded everyone Grand Ledge High School will be performing the musical, Little Shop of Horrors May 5 – 8. Tickets can be purchased online at www.glmusicals.net. He recognized Rachel Hogan, MHSAA's 2016 All-Around Gymnastics State Champion noting in her final event, Rachel set a new state record on the vault. In closing, he noted this is a short week due to Spring Break and he hoped everyone would come back well rested.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Parent Bri Dennis addressed the board to express her concerns regarding the teacher contract.

Parent Jessica Fuentes addressed the board to express her concerns on teacher pay and the teacher workday.

Parent Erica Ledesma addressed the board regarding the great teachers her student has had and the impact they have made.

Parent Erin Reese expressed her frustration regarding the lack of a teacher contract and encouraged all parties to stop focusing on the past and start moving forward.

Parent Megan Richey commended the district's highly qualified staff and encouraged the board to find a way to provide teachers time to plan and provide teachers with a fair and appropriate contract.

Parent Lynsee Phillips addressed the board advising she is fortunate to be able to spend time in her student's classroom and consistently witnesses the amazing teachers putting children first and expressed she wants the Grand Ledge teachers to be treated fairly.

Parent Megan Webber addressed the board expressing how it is hurtful to her, as a parent, to think that teachers don't feel valued.

Parent Erin Fredericks read a prepared letter from Mary Vorland expressing the increased demands placed on teachers and the static pay they receive and encouraging the board to weigh options carefully. On her own behalf she noted teachers have done a phenomenal job with her student and asked the board to consider helping the teachers.

Community member Dave Klingbiel addressed the board advising it might be more prudent to reward the people who are going to be with the district for 20-30-40 years instead of the "transient" position of a Superintendent. He advised his family has been graduating students from GLPS for 98 years and he cares deeply about the community.

Community Member Pat Gilbert addressed the board to express the need for providing the necessary time and resources to the teachers to foster a well-rounded education.

Parent Erin Zulewski addressed the board advising Grand Ledge teachers go above and beyond and expressing her understanding of the difficult decisions the board has to make but she does not agree with giving administrators raises and taking away planning times and not giving teachers increases.

Parent Dawn Grubb addressed the board stating she feels teachers are being taken for granted and that they cannot continue to be pushed to the limit.

Parent Gregg Grubb addressed the board asking them to truly consider what teachers have taken on noting that teachers are educated and skilled individuals whom have been entrusted to do for our children what we cannot do for them ourselves and encouraged the board to reprioritize funds.

Parent Debra Martinez addressed the board advising in her line of work the most underrated person in student's she interacts with are teachers and encouraging the board to provide teachers with the time they deserve to be rested and physically present to ensure they have the perception to see a child who needs them. She noted the board does not serve in this capacity because they don't like teachers, and understands they wanted to do something good for this community. She encouraged them to invest in kids.

Deb Auge addressed the board to address what the requirements are to serve as a teacher in public education.

Parent Kevin Skarritt addressed the board regarding the reputation of the community due to a perception the school district is so bad.

Parent Todd Marsh addressed the board thanking Dr. Metcalf for meeting with him and board members for responding to him. He noted this meeting is an open forum for the community to express their concerns. He noted he understands school budgets are challenging and understands the work of the board is difficult trying to balance the budget.

District employee John Ellsworth addressed the board reviewing the High School Comet Globe Awards that took place last week noting he won for most optimistic and was also nominated for most pessimistic. He noted her is hopeful the board heard what was said tonight and that they will change the direction they have been going and start to build a positive legacy.

Parent Bill Fleener addressed the board to remind them that their actions affect more than just this generation of teachers and students.

Stacy Hickox provided the board with two handouts providing information on the Student Advocacy Center and the services available to students facing suspension or expulsion.

Community Member Dale Westrick addressed the board regarding a letter he sent to the Board and that some of the issues go back to 2008.

Board President Wacyk acknowledged and thanked everyone for coming out. She thanked everyone for the passion they brought tonight noting the board appreciates hearing all the wonderful things our teachers are doing for students. She noted everyone on the board agrees teachers are a priority, deserve a raise, and yes, there is a lack of respect for public education and for teachers in particular. However, the tide that needs to be changed is the public disinvestment in public education and the board alone cannot bring about this change. She also indicated agreement with an earlier comment that decisions made today will affect more than this generation but noted frustration because the board heard a very clear message from its' strategic

planning processes and the bond proposals: “Live within your means”. And, this is just what the board of education is tasked to do, “live within its means”. But, in addition, the board was advised to provide leadership that lasts and again, the board is doing its best to do that. She advised the Board has a Negotiating Team and the teachers have a Negotiating Team. She suggested the messages brought tonight should also be shared with the teacher’s negotiating team as well noting it is important that both negotiating teams work to resolve the issues.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Food Service Management Contract Renewal with Chartwells

Motion by Mr. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Food Service Management Contract Renewal with Chartwells, as presented.

Chief Financial Officer Nancy Rasinske advised the board this is a self-supporting programs noting Supervisor Darrin Gyurich does a wonderful job of providing a nutritional meals at a low cost.

Mrs. Mulvenna noted that when she first joined the board this program was running a negative balance.

Mrs. Rasinske confirmed that in the early part of the program it did run in “the red” but since Darrin has taken the helm the program has turned itself around and is completely self-sustaining. She commended Mr. Gyurich and recommended the Board of Education approve the renewal of the contract.

The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT FROM THE AUDIENCE ON AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD AND STAFF

District Attorney Ray Davis from Thrun Law Firm provided the board with a detailed overview of the negotiations process to date noting he believes what was seen tonight is straight out of the MEA’s Crisis Management Tactics for negotiating. He advised the Negotiating Teams have been meeting since last June with the most recent sessions taking place on March 10 and 21. He noted the Board’s Negotiations Team provided the GLEA Negotiations Team with a proposal on March 10 that gave the membership three options to consider. One of those options provided the teachers with raises and would have made the top of the pay scale higher than that of Okemos. He noted even the mediator thought it was fair. Another option addresses planning times noting only some teachers are teaching on their planning time and while this proposal would still require mandatory teaching on the planning time, it would make it fiscally aligned with that requirement and if teaching on planning times is removed, the district will be required to hire several new staff members and each of those new staff members is a significant and material investment on behalf of he district. He continued by noting the MEA, on behalf of GLEA has made several requests for financial information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the district has met those requests well within the time limit allotted under FOIA. He further advised following the proposals that were given to GLEA on March 10, the Negotiating Team thought when they met on

March 21 there would be some resolution. In the week leading up to the March 21 session, an error was found in the information the district provided to GLEA and Superintendent Metcalf personally met with GLEA's lead negotiator to clear things up. During the meeting on March 21, there were more questions on finances but still, much to the disappointment of the board's negotiating team, there was no proposal received from the GLEA. The next scheduled session is May 2. He advised from the beginning of negotiations, the district has been in problem-solving mode and will remain in problem-solving mode. He further advised the Association has filed for fact-finding, which is when the state appoints a third party who comes in and looks at all the district's financials and renders a non-binding decision. Mr. Davis noted he feels this may be helpful because it requires both parties to dig deep into the money; however, it is not a quick process and will take a few months to complete.

Mrs. Mulvenna noted this means there will not be a resolve to the teacher contract before the end of the year.

Mr. Davis advised fact-finding can take anywhere between 3-8 months to complete, from start to finish, noting the arbitrator has 30 days following the fact finding to write their opinion. He further advised House Bill 5194 that would make calendar and schedule a prohibited subject of bargaining may see action in the near future. In closing he also noted that the Association did file for arbitration and the arbitrator has found they do not have jurisdiction. So, if the Association want to pursue this, they will have to file a lawsuit.

Superintendent Metcalf noted he has made offers to both the association's leaders to meet with them, with no attorney, no mediators, and get things resolved. The association's leaders have not accepted that offer.

Mrs. Mulvenna noted people seem to be upset that a contract with settled with the Superintendent, but noted that every other employee group has settled their contracts too (i.e., administrators, secretaries, bus drivers, etc.) because they understood that pay can not be made retroactive.

Mr. Davis confirmed that PA 54 took away a district's right to pay employees retroactively.

Mr. Bennett thanked everyone for sticking around for the rest of the meeting and requested that in the future if someone would like to quote him that they quote him accurately.

Mrs. Clark Pierson also thanked everyone for coming and those that spoke. She advised she cares deeply about the numbers because numbers represent people. She remarked Proposal A handcuffed districts from being able to add to their revenue through bond proposals and if SB571 remains enacted, it further ties the hands of locals in getting information out to their communities regarding capital improvement needs. She noted former treasurer Robert Kleine made the comment that Michigan has been steadily dis-investing in itself. Whenever they need to balance the budget, they do so by reducing payments to public education and municipalities. She noted since she joined the board in 2002, this board has found ways to cut expenditures, including closing schools. But, in the end, she feels the district will "hit a wall that we have been bouncing up against for years". Michigan has school systems on the brink of disaster. We have a

legislature that when the people of the state say they don't want emergency managers, they find a way to implement emergency managers and now we have problems like we see in Flint.

Mrs. Mulvenna commented about Mr. Klingbeil having had family members graduate from GLPS for nearly 100 years and noting she wants the district to be here for another 100. She mentioned the two failed bond proposals noting that people said the proposals included the "moon and stars", but the fact is, GLPS has an old infrastructure. The pool, the most widely used community resource, is in need of a dehumidifier to the tune of almost \$500,000. Without this, we don't have a pool. She remarked, "I do value teachers and we are doing the best we can with what we have." She referenced the discrepancy in per pupil funding throughout Michigan noting some communities get more than \$10,000 per student while GLPS barely gets over \$7,000. She advised teachers have not been "beaten up" by the board over the years; they have been "beaten up" by Lansing. She reminded everyone of Mr. Shiflett's comments regarding legislators being in their districts to hear from their constituents and encouraged everyone to reach out to their respective legislators.

Mr. Boucher advised he was extremely moved by the community involvement tonight noting the board doesn't usually have more than one or two community members attending meetings. He challenged everyone that was in attendance tonight to reach out, noting he is the spouse of a teacher and the son of a teacher. He disagrees that problems at the State level are not our problems. He stated he does not fear the state coming in and taking this district over, because this board won't let that happen. **But**, the elected officials in Lansing do not want to hear from board members and superintendents, they want to hear from the parents and the teachers. He noted he is confident an agreement can be reached that both sides can live with and we can remain a fiscally solvent district. He expressed his support of Dr. Metcalf and job he has done for this district. He noted this district wants stability and the board is doing its best to provide that stability. He further noted there are districts throughout the state that receive almost double what Grand Ledge Public Schools receives for per pupil funding. In closing he expressed his appreciation for everyone coming, noting he welcomes comments and eMail and the board can be eMailed through the website, but he also believes the board must be allotted the opportunity to explain our position.

Mrs. Winstanley remarked that everyone on this board is committed to this district. She believes we can all work together to preserve it, but we don't have the luxury of ignoring our buildings. She expressed the board doesn't want staff to feel unvalued because the board **does** value them. She remarked the board is working within our budget to manage the needs of the district and trying to create balance. In closing she thanked everyone and again noted this board is committed to our district.

Mrs. Wacyk noted class size has been a topic of discussion and wants people to know that district class size has increased by approximately 1.1 students between 2009 and 2016. Of course this increase is not evenly distributed throughout the district due to movement in and out of communities within the district. However, the board knows there is concern about this topic and wanted to share the specific data with the community.

CLOSED SESSION – Negotiations

Motion by Mr. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Bennett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to move into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Negotiations Strategies, as per Section 8(c) of the Open Meetings Act, PA 267 of 1976.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Mrs. Winstanley	<u>YES</u>	Mr. Boucher	<u>YES</u>
Mrs. Mulvenna	<u>YES</u>	Mrs. Clark Pierson	<u>YES</u>
Mr. Bennett	<u>YES</u>	Mr. Shiflett	<u>YES</u>
President Wacyk	<u>Yes</u>		

The motion carried unanimously at 7:58 p.m.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 8:31 p.m.

FILING FOR FACT-FINDING ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT

Motion by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to direct district attorney, Ray Davis of Thrun Law Firm to file for Fact-Finding on behalf of the district. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:

Jay Bennett, Secretary

Linda Wacyk, President