

CONSENT AGENDA ENCLOSURE 5.11

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2142, ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOLS, HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2009.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bjerklie
A. Larson
B. Larson
C. Larson
Bruns
Rantala

ABSENT: Beaudry

ALSO PRESENT: Johnson
Cox

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 2142, St. Louis County Schools, was held at ISD # 2142 District Office on Monday, January 26, 2009, at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Bruns and seconded by Rantala to approve the agenda.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala
Against- None
Absent-Beaudry

Tom Cundy, Director of Facilities and Grounds gave a report to the board on needed repairs in the buildings in the summer of 2009.

Superintendent Rick reported the following: 1.) We are moving forward in the 2009-10 budgeting process. Student enrollment will decrease 2% or more and with the state funding we are looking at 0% increase in funding; 2.) The master schedule will be done by March, along with the proposed budget reductions. The 2009-2010 budget will be ready by May. We will experience a 1.9 million dollar shortfall this year; we will keep the public informed by using the District Newsletter; 3.) The Superintendent will attend an ALI (Allied Learning Initiative) meeting tomorrow; 4.) Dr. Rick explained the proposed Federal stimulus package which provides funding for Title I, Special Education and capital improvements. The Governor's proposal will be available tomorrow; 5.) Met for teacher negotiations on Thursday, January 22, 2009 and Teamsters negotiations are scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, 2009; 6.) Dr. Rick thanked everyone for the cards of sympathy that were sent to him and his family for the loss of his mother.

Discussion followed.

Motion by C. Larson and seconded by Bjerklie to approve the consent agenda: January 12, 2009 Reorganizational / Regular School Board Minutes; Policy: Donations: 1.) \$500.00 from Saturday Night Country. . . Live! for the Tower-Soudan School music program; 2.) \$457.70 from Enstrom Studio, Inc. for the Tower-Soudan School; 3.) \$25.00 from Roger & Katherine Kluck of Oak Grove, MN for the Cook School; 4.) \$50.00 from Michael & Jeanette Mellesmoen for the Babbitt-Embarrass School Community Education program; 5.) \$100.00 from M & M Excavating, Michael & Jeanette Mellesmoen for the Babbitt-Embarrass School Community Education program; 6.) \$200.00 from Thermography & Ultrasound Diagnostics, Inc. of Babbitt, MN for the Babbitt-Embarrass School; 7.) \$1,000.00 from the Tower-Soudan Lion's Club for the Tower-Soudan School Youth Development Fund; and 8.) \$500.00 from Saturday Night Country . . . Live! for the Cotton School music program.

Board member Bjerklie commented that the district has a lot of businesses and organizations that support our schools and he wanted to let them know that the board really appreciates their generosity.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala
Against- None
Absent-Beaudry

Motion by Rantala and seconded by Bruns to approve Draft #1 for the 2009-2010 school calendar.

Superintendent Rick explained draft #1 and draft #2 proposed calendars. He recommended draft #1, however, submitted draft #2 for their board review in case the state legislature permits having schools start before Labor Day, which falls on September 7, 2009.

Discussion followed.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala
Against- None
Absent-Beaudry

Motion by Bjerklie and seconded by C. Larson to grant permission to receive quotes for a handicapped accessible bathroom at the Cherry School.

The Superintendent explained that last year the district was inspected by Nan McGrane, from the Division of Compliance and Assistance of the Minnesota Department of Education. Ms. McGrane recommended this project. The architect has already drawn up the plans and now the district needs to receive quotes.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala

Against- None
Absent-Beaudry

Motion by Bjerklie and seconded by G. Rantala to approve leaving all of the District's swimming pools open for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year season.

Board Chair B. Larson instructed the public as to time limitations for speaking and duplication of content. Mr. Larson indicated that the reason the board is looking at the pools, is because the district is spending more than we are bringing in. Preserving teacher positions and school buses are more important.

- 1.) Kathy Undeland, teacher, indicated that she lives in Aurora and chose to educate her children at the Tower-Soudan School. Undeland said that she is in favor of having the pools open and commented that there are a lot of positive things happening at the Tower-Soudan School. The residents should fight to keep positive instead of looking at the negative.
- 2.) Emily Undeland, daughter of Kathy Undeland, said, "Please don't close our pools."
- 3.) Wendy Johnson, owner of a manufacturer facility, encouraged the board to look at all resources and use creativity.
- 4.) Rose Spehar, introduces herself as the swimming instructor at the Babbitt-Embarrass School, but also a tax payer. Spehar commented that because the referendum didn't pass, why are the pools the first to go. She asked the board to contact other districts to see what they saved by closing their pools. Spehar stated that pools are not a luxury but a necessity in Northeastern Minnesota.
- 5.) Julie Suihkonen, Community Education Youth Development director at the Tower-Soudan School said that pools are an equalizer for all kids. Suihkonen considers pools a valuable asset to a school.
- 6.) Kris Kidd, Ely resident, and daughter on the BETAS swim team, asked the board to look at creative ways to keep the pool open. Kidd stated that we cannot afford to deter people from moving into our Northeastern Minnesota area.
- 7.) Marshall Helmberger owner and operator of the Timberjay newspaper of Tower, MN, spoke in favor of keeping the pools open. Helmberger asked the board to make sure to pass a resolution of support for the state legislators. Helmberger indicated that the board should not let anymore time go by before moving on a resolution in support of a levy for the pools.
- 8.) Mary Herring spoke in support of the pools. Herring said there is already local support from the public in the pool areas.
- 9.) Kathryn Fuson, lifeguard at the Tower-Soudan School. Fuson stated that she is also a senior citizen and sees the pool as being very useful for all students, especially the handicapped.
- 10.) Shirley Nicholas, Cook School pool coordinator emphasized that the pool is used by 99% of the elementary students. Nicholas stated that we need

to work with our legislators, who need the backing of the board. We can look at ways of working together.

- 11.) Christine Hujanen, realtor in Tower, indicated that we need to be more positive. Hujanen stated that if we are going to close the pools, why did the school board give themselves a raise. We need to work on keeping kids.
- 12.) Dena Suihkonen, parent of a student swimmer at the Tower-Soudan School, spoke in support of keeping the pools open.

Board Member Bruns agreed with Helmberger that the board should have had a motion of support for the legislators. Bruns stated that she can't call the pools a necessity when other buildings don't have them. Bruns said that there are hard choices that will have to be made.

Board Member Rantala said that this is a difficult issue for him. If we close pools we will eliminate a Physical Education person and we will also have one less item to par and share with Ely residents.

Board Member A. Larson stated that pools are an asset to the schools. Larson said that he was glad to see everyone in attendance. We have seven (7) different schools in the district, each one being unique.

Discussion followed.

Board Member Bjerklie indicated that he doesn't want to start comparing school to school. Bjerklie encouraged the communities and parents to come up with a plan. Bjerklie indicated that he would like to amend the motion to include a resolution of support for the legislators to pursue authority to levy for the cost of the pools in order to keep them open.

Board Member Rantala was in agreement to amend the resolution.

Board Member Bruns asked Tom Cundy for information on the pools.

Mr. Cundy gave an explanation that in Babbitt-Embarrass the furnace is started in August to heat the pool at a cost of approximately \$100. per day. The furnaces in Tower-Soudan and Cook are started only 2 to 3 weeks prior to pool start up.

Discussion followed.

Motion by Bjerklie and seconded by Rantala to leave all District swimming pools open for the remainder of the 2008-09 school year season and to include support for the legislature to pursue authority to levy pool costs.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala
Against- None

Absent-Beaudry

A point person for each community will be appointed by community members to come up with a plan, with a timeline being the 2nd board meeting in March.

Discussion followed.

Discussion was started on public relations for the District.

Superintendent Rick informed the board that the JPG group handout was correspondence from over a year; discussion should include different ideas.

Board Chair B. Larson asked what would be the way to more formally tell the world what the district is doing.

The Superintendent asked the board to not look at the dollar amounts, just come up with ideas. We will need a lot more information and we will bring someone in to speak at a board study session.

Board Member Bjerklie said that we need to promote the good things our schools are doing.

Board Member Rantala stated that we are the best kept secret in the County. We have so many outstanding students in our district; we need to have this done before the upcoming school year.

Board Member Bjerklie indicated that the Cherry School students are working on a presentation to promote the district.

Discussion followed.

Motion by C. Larson and seconded by Bjerklie to terminate Todd Fackenthall as van driver, effective January 23, 2009.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala

Against- None

Absent-Beaudry

Motion by Bruns and seconded by Rantala to hire Barbara Dantes as a van driver, bargaining unit, not to exceed 4 hours per day for this position, 5 days per week, effective January 5, 2009, with terms and conditions of employment in accord with master agreement between ISD # 2142 and Operating Engineers Local #70.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala

Against- None

Absent-Beaudry

Motion by Bruns and seconded by C. Larson to approve medical leave of absence for JoAnn Knutson under the medical leave act, effective January 16, 2009 for the remainder of the school year, pursuant to Article XI, Section 7, Sub. 3, in accord with Master Agreement between ISD # 2142 and EDMNSLCT.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala
Against- None
Absent-Beaudry

Comments from the board:

Board Member Rantala said that he was proud of the people that showed up for the meeting. Rantala indicated that he has already put in 60 hours since he was elected.

Board Member C. Larson stated that he hoped that the board could quit spinning their wheels.

Board Member Bruns thanked everyone for coming and expressed that she hoped that the pools would not have to be closed.

Board Member A. Larson said that he appreciated everyone coming out for the meeting.

Board Member Bjerklie thanked everyone for coming out.

Motion by C. Larson and seconded by Rantala to schedule a Board Study Session for Tuesday, February 3, 2009 at 5:30 for negotiations strategy at the ISD # 2142 District Office.

Yes- A. Larson, Bjerklie, B. Larson, Bruns, C. Larson, Rantala
Against- None
Absent-Beaudry

Board Member B. Larson stated that the public should feel free to keep coming to the board meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.