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# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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**MINUTES OF APRIL 7, 2008, 6:00 PM  
BERKSHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**REGULAR MEETING  
HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY**

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\* The Board of Education recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

*In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board shall provide a period for public participation at every public meeting of the Board and publish rules to govern such participation. These rules are available at each Board meeting. Anyone desiring to speak is asked to make this request in advance. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer. Comments shall be directed to the presiding officer; not to Board members individually. Board Bylaw 0169.1*

## **REGULAR MEETING CALL TO ORDER**



## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Mr. Manfredi, Mrs. Timmons, Mr. Koster, Mr. Honkala and Mr. Miller.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Mr. Honkala, seconded by Mrs. Timmons, to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2008 Special Board Meeting, the March 3, 2008 Regular Meeting and the March 31, 2008 Special Meeting.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. Kostiha's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at Troy held a science fair and shared some of their projects with the Board. There were individual, partner and family categories and the projects were based on the scientific method. Molly and Susie's project was "H2Grow" – using different items to see how well they helped or hindered plant growth. Noel's project was "Navicular Disease" – outlining the disease contracted in horse's hooves due to stress of working too hard and pressure on the hooves. Rachel and Kaitlyn's project was "Ecosystems" – studied the ecosystems of worms and crickets; however the condensation created problems with their results. Kelly and Christin's project was "Family Tastes" – tested the Briggs family for taste choices. TJ and Chucky's project was "Soil Erosion" – experimented with soil and sand to test the erosion factors. Ian Moore had a family project "Melting Points of Metal" – he was unable to be at the meeting for the presentation but worked with his father on this project. Brandon's project was "Paintball accuracy" – experimented with a paintball gun to see what brand and color of balls had more accuracy at different lengths. Grace and Madison's project was "Electricity" – which items would produce electricity, salt water was the best conductor of electricity. Kyle and Jack's project was "Best Detergent" – found out the cheaper detergents got the muddy clothes the cleanest – Purex Powder was the best cleaner. The judges were from the community and the time and volunteers were greatly appreciated. The kids did a great job following the scientific method with their projects.

Mrs. Sherman's 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have a reading/literature project every month. In February they worked on biographies and in March they worked on story boxes. Presenting their biographies were Sadie – Charles Atlas, Zack – Lewis and Clark, and Jeffrey – Wright Brothers. Presenting their story boxes were Justin – Wizard of the Moon, Eva – Geronimo Stilton's Search for Buried Treasure, Andrea – A Masterpiece for Bess, Leah – Jack Sparrow, Max –

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Flat Stanley, Donnie – How not to Babysit your Brother, and Natalie – Cam Jansen and the Barking Treasure Mystery. In April the class will be working on mystery flip books.

Mrs. Carey Maske's high school science class was invited to Hiram College for a program on the Water Shed. They worked on a water shed project and got to present this project at ODCE March 3<sup>rd</sup> in Columbus and will be presenting this project at the OFEA conference on April 18<sup>th</sup>, sometime soon at the Great Lake Science Center and maybe at the NSTA Convention. According to Mrs. Maske this is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the burning of the Cuyahoga River and Rachel Carson started the EPA due to the problems that led to the river burning. To bring a better light to the situation field based student learning communities were developed. They are trying to bring more field study into the classroom process at the high school and middle school levels. The CP Biology class created a learning object and worked with the Geauga County Park District on the project. Dave, Ethan, Brendan, Sara and Sara presented the project to the Board and those attending the meeting. After a brief slide presentation the group was invited out to the cafeteria where the water habitat was displayed and the "field trip" through the project began. It was a terrific project and was suggested to present it at the elementary level.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **Expenditures:**

Motion made by Mrs. Timmons, seconded by Mr. Miller, to approve the expenditures in the amount of \$790,346.95 for the month of March and any necessary for April, along with month end reports, including amended certificate. Total General Fund Certified Revenues: \$10,555,706.47; Total All Other Funds Certified Revenues: \$1,609,122.26.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **Interest Earned:**

The treasurer earned \$11,940.74 in interest for March investments. The total fiscal year-to-date earnings are \$147,051.01. Current interest rates: Star 2.70%, Huntington 4.90%, Charter One 2.18%.

### **Appropriation Modifications:**

Motion made by Mr. Manfredi, seconded by Mrs. Timmons, to approve all appropriation modifications for April as needed. Total General Fund Appropriations: \$10,680,995. Total All Other Funds Appropriations: \$1,667,475.71.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **Five Year Forecast:**

Motion made by Mr. Honkala, seconded by Mr. Miller, to approve the updated Five-Year Forecast as adjusted after the certification of tax revenues for fiscal year 2009 by the Geauga County Budget Commission

*Mrs. Tramont stated that top reasons for the change in the forecast from October to now which included a slump in the housing market effecting valuations – the county auditor is only projecting a one percent increase in taxes for next fiscal year, an increase in the number of people who qualify for homestead exemption lowering the taxes revenue and increasing the intergovernmental revenue where this exemption is collected but not at an equal exchange, Ohio Schools Council warning of a 25 to 40 percent increase in utility costs as the consortium contract with the electric companies expires at the end of this year and they are requesting an increase in rates, and the nearly \$200,000 increase in special education costs for schooling and transporting the students previously serviced by Metzenbaum. As it stands, with a very conservative approach to the finances and forecasting, the*

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*district could see deficit cash balance in fiscal year 2012.* Mr. Koster asked how much was the increase to the schools for the special education students from Metzenbaum and what was the reimbursement amount from Metzenbaum. He also wanted to know how these costs will change with Metzenbaum seeking an increase in the levy that is up for renewal. *Mrs. Tramont said our costs were increased nearly \$200,000 and nearly \$250,000 at Cardinal. Both districts had to add bus and/or van routes to accommodate the students. At this time she did not have a reimbursement amount that would be received by the district but would get those figures for the next meeting. She also did not know if the costs or the reimbursement would change if Metzenbaum got an increase in the tax levy. She has not heard of any changes.* Mr. Knapp stated that Metzenbaum is required to educate preschool and adult special needs people. Increasing number of adults are needing care and housing and increasing their costs to meet these needs.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## **CAFR Compilation Contract:**

Motion made by Mr. Manfredi, seconded by Mrs. Timmons, to approve a contract with Local Government Services Division of the Auditor of State's Office to compile the FY'08 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, with a cost not to exceed \$11,000.00.

*Mrs. Tramont stated that last year we have just a supervisory contract with LGS, since she did a large part of the workpapers. With someone new coming in and not knowing what their experience would be with GAAP reporting she requested a full compilation contract to cover our needs for the next financial report.* Mr. Miller asked if we needed to do a full financial report. *Mrs. Tramont responded no, but the work for a general purpose report is about 85 percent of the work for a CAFR as we do now.*

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## **VOCATIONAL REPORT**

Mr. Miller reported that Ohio School Council made a presentation at their meeting and shared details on the electrical program and the costs associated with it. The pact entered into 10 years ago is running out and the companies are seeking an increase in rates. We currently are billed at a lower rate since we do not use large amounts of electricity during the peak season (June – August). The schools would be losing the current 13 percent discount and on top of that there are increased costs associated with generation and distribution of electricity. They need to update the lines which will increase the distribution costs but will entice businesses with clean electricity in the area.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS (PRINCIPALS' UPDATES)**

Mr. Knapp referred to his "Redirecting our Efforts" newsletter for April. It included new program proposal at the State level to re-organize K-12 education. It also include a brief synopsis of the current five-year forecast.

Don't forget the High School Musical "Grease" on April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and Prom is on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He reminded parents that if they "host- they could lose the most". Help us to keep our students safe during the prom and graduation season.

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## PERSONNEL:

*Certified:*

*(These motions were approved as one.)*

Motion made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to accept maternity leave for Gina Kriz, teacher at Burton Elementary, beginning April 14, 2008 through June 9, 2008.

To approve Laurie Lamb, teacher at Burton Elementary, as coordinator for Berkshire School booth at Geauga County Fair with a stipend of \$275.00.

To approve a continuing contract status for Mindy Cannella who has met all the necessary criteria as required by the current negotiated agreement.

To approve one-year limited teaching contracts for the 2008-2009 school year to the following teachers:

- |                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Rachel Beardsley-Holbert    | k. Eric Higgs      |
| b. Tamara Beitzel              | l. Megan Hull      |
| c. Michael Chuppa              | m. Lynn Hunter     |
| d. Patricia Donaldson          | n. Ted Janssen     |
| e. Michelle Ferraton           | o. Karen Kirby     |
| f. Karen Fortier               | p. Matt Marks      |
| g. Brent Gardner-Retire/Rehire | q. Kelly Mathews   |
| h. Cheri Goggin                | r. Mary Jo Maxwell |
| i. Richard Guthrie             | s. Brent Nenadal   |
| j. Nancy Harris                | t. Donald Nikolai  |

Amended to include: Joan Prots, Marie Ritter and Monica Reedy. (See Public Participation.)

To approve substitute teachers on the County E.S.C. certified substitute list.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## Classified

*(These motions were approved as one.)*

Motion made by Mr. Koster, seconded by Mr. Manfredi, to accept the resignation of Dorothy Malkus, Library Assistant at Troy Elementary, for reason of retirement after 25 years of service to Berkshire Local Schools, effective June 30, 2008.

*Mr. Knapp stated it is with regret that we are accepting this resignation as Dorothy has been an excellent employee of the District.*

To approve Supplemental coaching contracts for spring, 2008 for Bryan Wadsworth, Volunteer Track Assistant and David Fellenstein, Volunteer Baseball Assistant, contingent upon sufficient numbers of students signing up and paying participation fees. All County and District requirements have been met.

To approve removing Barb Byler from the RIF list as Transportation Aide and re-instated her contract for 3.25 hours per day, effective April 8, 2008.

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*Mr. Knapp stated that she is needed from now to the end of the year due to changing needs of the students.*

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## **OTHER BUSINESS ITEMS:**

Motion made by Mr. Manfredi, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to approve a revision to the 2007-08 school year calendar to add June 9<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup> as replacement calamity make-up days for April 26<sup>th</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The balance of the calendar remains in place.

*Mr. Knapp stated that there is a community-wide event scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup> and the Prom is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the two current make-up days. Since school attendance is way down on Saturdays, this is the most cost effective solution.*

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

Motion made by Mr. Honkala, seconded by Mr. Miller, to authorize the Treasurer to take the necessary steps to place before the voters in November, 2008 a replacement Permanent Improvement Levy. The current Permanent Improvement Levy, which has been in place since 1989, will expire at the end of 2008.

*Mrs. Tramont will have to contact the District's legal counsel for the wording of the first resolution requesting the County Auditor to certify the amount needed, which should be passed at the May meeting and the second resolution requesting to put the ballot before the voters, which should be passed at the June meeting. After that the resolutions will be submitted to the County Board of Elections to be included in the November ballot.*

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

None.

## **New Business**

Mr. Knapp introduced Ann E Porter, the Parent Mentor for the Geauga County ESC who is working with Berkshire Schools. Ann stated that this program started 17 years ago through grants. The Mentor must have a child with disability; support the parents, teachers and students within the District. She stated that it is very exciting that this is happening now. The grant period runs through April 30<sup>th</sup>, but hopes to get another grant next year with the help of the ESC. *Mrs. Ducca stated that Mrs. Porter has already been invaluable to the district already with the things she has helped with thus far.* Mr. Manfredi relayed that if there is anything the Board can do to help to let them know.

Due to the items not being received prior to the meeting the first reading of the Board policy revisions and additions as prepared by the NEOLA policy service has been postponed until the May meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Manfredi, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to approve the creation of an elementary building project advisory committee to review the building designs and options for a Grades K-8 facility. The committee will be made up of two board members, superintendent, treasurer, elementary principals, an elementary teacher, and a community member who will be appointed by the Board President.

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*Mr. Manfredi stated that so far the committee will be made up of himself, Roger Miller, Jim Knapp, Merry Lou Tramont, Cindy Ducca, Gina Symsek, and an elementary teacher and community member to be announced hopefully by Friday.*

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## **Open Public Participation**

Jim Lester – Believe there are names missing from the list for approval of one-year limited contracts since the lists ends with N. *Mr. Knapp said they would adjust it and the board agreed to include those names in the already approved resolution.*

Scott Weber – Asked when negotiations are starting. *Mr. Knapp stated in the next few weeks.* Addressed the new committee formed tonight and stated that the community does not want to see a 30 year mortgage with the current forecast, the slump in the housing market, etc. He cannot see how the Board could build a new building and tell people there will be no increase to the taxpayers. There is declining enrollment, declining money, need to sell the property and add on to Burton Elementary.

John Blair – Stated we have a good board and administration here that have done a lot for the district. Need to quit putting the school district down. The land across from the board is part of Project 2000 and was gifted to the board and cannot be sold. It was given to them to build on if needed. Currently we have old, declining buildings that need major work. We need to look to the future and support our District in a positive manner.

Jim Finchan – The housing market is stagnant, as a soil scientist he has been out of work and looking for a new direction. It is predicted to take 2-3 years to get the active housing market back on track. Title companies are slowing down and laying people off, real estate offices are seeing slow work month after month. We are in a declining financial environment. It seems to him that if we need a new school building now is not the time to build.

Ann Porter – She is in the real estate market and works with the title agencies in Chardon. They have seen an increase in sales since December. The housing market has bottomed out but is picking up.

John Blair – Stated that he has faith in this Board that they are making appropriate decision for the District. He could get 100's of people to support the Board. We need to get the negativity out of the District and focus on the positives. We need to support our schools, not tear them down.

Kim Brown – Can I say something for the kids we educate? There are many complaints about the pizza that is served and the quality of that pizza at the elementary level. There was a change from Pizza Hut to Tony's Pizza since the cafeteria manager said it was a more nutritional pizza. But the kids deserve better than ketchup on cardboard for lunch. If we can serve chili fries, why can't we serve good tasting pizza? *A comment was made that we need to make sure we are fair between all buildings in what we offer for lunch and need to look into wraps and other ways to improve the taste and choices available.*

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## **Executive Session**

Motion made by Mr. Honkala to enter into executive session to discuss the discipline of a district employee.

Motion made at: 7:50 P.M.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

Time Entered into Executive Session: 7:58 P.M.

Time Exited Executive Session: 8:35 P.M.

Motion made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to enter into executive session to prepare for bargaining with district employees.

Motion made at: 8:35 P.M.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

Time Entered into Executive Session: 8:36 P.M.

Time Exited Executive Session: 9:05 P.M.

Motion made by Mrs. Timmons, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to uphold the Superintendent's decision to non-renew the technology position for the reasons stated in the initial documentation with the modifications to the notice as discussed.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

## **Adjournment**

Motion made by Mr. Manfredi, seconded by Mr. Honkala, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call: All Ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at: 9:07 P.M.

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Mr. John Manfredi, President

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Mrs. Merry Lou Tramont, Treasurer