



WEBSTER GROVES SCHOOL DISTRICT
Open Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
February 8, 2016
400 East Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, Missouri 63119

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Monday, February 8, 2016, by its president, David Addison. The following members were present:

David Addison	President
Jean Dugan	
Steven Loher	
Joel Oliver	
Michael Shipley	
Emerson Smith	

Amy Clendennen was absent

Also present:

Sarah Riss	Superintendent
Diane Moore	Chief Operations Officer
John Simpson	Asst Supt Curriculum & Instruction
Linda Holliday	HR Consultant
John M. Thomas	Director of Student Services
Tim Brown	Director of Instructional Technology
Cathy Vespereny	Chief Communications Officer
Lori Medlin	Board Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Addison called for and led the Pledge of Allegiance prior to beginning the meeting.

AGENDA

Mrs. Dugan moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Smith. The motion carried 6-0.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Riss congratulated and commended Todd Schaefer, Sarah Romanowski and Thespian Troupe 191 for their outstanding efforts and talent during their performances of "Hamlet" at the 2016 State Thespian Conference in Kansas City.

Mr. Addison provided an announcement:

“Since Dr. Riss announced her retirement, the Board of Directors of the Webster Groves School District has, as one of its major focuses, engaged in a nationwide search for a new superintendent. We were fortunate to receive strong expressions of interest from more than 40 people and applications from 29 individuals representing 9 states. This level of interest compared very favorably with the diversity of applications from other searches being conducted in this time frame.

The board sought input from all areas of our community including parents and students, teachers, administrators and ancillary staff, community leaders and members of the public. This input included outlining our criteria for a new superintendent as well as active participation in the interview process. In all more than 400 people gave input. In all of this, the board was assisted by Dr. James Christman and Dr. Judy Sclair-Stein of the executive search firm McPherson & Jacobson. I would like to thank every one of them for their hard work.

The board narrowed the list of finalists down to three individuals, whose names were released a couple of weeks ago. The board subsequently invited two of those individuals back for second interviews last Saturday. After exhaustive discussions, the board finally voted, by a 6-1 margin to negotiate a contract and subsequently on a 7-0 vote on the terms of that contract.

I am pleased to announce that Dr. John Simpson has signed the contract and is hereby appointed superintendent of the Webster Groves School District beginning July 1st, 2016. The entire board stands ready to work with Dr. Simpson to continue the great leadership of Dr. Riss.”

All the other board members offered statements of congratulations, Mrs. Clendennen’s being read by Mr. Oliver.

Dr. Simpson offered his acceptance:

“First of all, I want to thank the WGSD Board of Education, representing the interests of the entire district community, for placing its faith and trust in me to serve our school district community as its next superintendent. While tonight I will not replicate the exuberant behaviors I demonstrated on a local sidewalk upon receiving Mr. Addison’s and Mrs. Clendennen’s call, I do want the entire district community to know how very excited I am for this opportunity!

Also, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the time and energy you, the Board of Education, and the participating representatives from our district community, dedicated to the selection process. From application to final interviews, no stone was left unturned with the very arduous task that was before you, and I thank you.

As I transition to my new role later this summer, I look forward to working with the Board of Education, staff, district families, and all the other members of our district community to move toward our district vision with unwavering

purpose and intentions clear to all. Sarah leaves quite a legacy. In her role as superintendent, Dr. Riss has placed and continues to place, a priority on innovation and passion-driven learning. While demonstrating a very deep and respectful appreciation for the rich tradition of the Webster Groves School District, and not just in the choice of color for her car, umbrella, and office chair, Sarah has also consistently demonstrated a sense of urgency to grow, learn, and do differently in support of the best interest of our community's children and their futures. I believe these characteristics of hers' are essential for each of us to emulate if we are to reach our district vision. Sarah, I can assure you that your positive influence will reverberate for years to come.

Finally, given funding uncertainty, pressure from state and federal legislation, and our quickly changing world, it's critical for school districts to be as flexible, fluid, and adaptable as possible. These necessities will be the cornerstones of how we face the many issues and pressures facing our school district. We will, by example, support the entire district community in being determined, persistent, and resilient, approaching our challenges and opportunities with imagination and creativity, and always with children at the center. By being open, honest, respectful, and attentive, our direction and inspiration will come from the many voices throughout our district community. Together, we can do anything!

Again, thank you for this amazing opportunity.”

COMMUNICATIONS, RECOGNITIONS & INFORMATION

There were no comments or questions pertaining to the correspondence log.

Mr. Loher encouraged everyone to come and watch Principal Jon Clark coach the Statesmen Boys Basketball game on Thursday night at 7:00 p.m. in Roberts Gym. When Dr. Clark left his seven-year coaching career in 1996 to become assistant principal at Webster Groves High School, his win total ended at 99. The game on Thursday will give him the opportunity to get his 100th career victory. The game will "honor Dr. Clark for giving 100 percent every day to everyone at the high school."

Mrs. Dugan reported that all of the PTO committees and parent groups in the district are very busy this time of year hosting and sponsoring various fundraising events. Mrs. Dugan encouraged people to come out and be part of the fun.

Mr. Shipley commended a local citizen for his efforts to clear ice and snow from the corner of Marshall and Brentwood Blvd. during our last snow event. When Mr. Shipley conversed with the man, he simply stated he “knew that there were a lot of kids that walk to and from school at this location and he wanted to help keep them safe.”

Mr. Oliver attended the Foundation Mardi Gras Event on January 31 at Cyrano's. He said the event was well attended and the evening was a great success.

Mrs. Vespereny highlighted the All Write Festival 2016 coming up February 22-26. New this year is an invitation to the community to take part in the celebration with the “All Write At Night” event held on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, in the WGHS Little Theater from 7-8:30 p.m. It features some of last year’s All Write speakers and parents, and will showcase the All Write student writers, artists, musicians, and filmmakers.

Dr. Riss presented the Board with a certificate the district received from EdPlus recognizing our state APR rating at over 95%.

Dr. Riss thanked the Board for the guidance, care, and service that each member gives to our school district each day.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident and parent Dave Buck encouraged the Board to consider the idea of a community-owned and sponsored Moss Field. He sees this as an option to get the necessary upgrades and renovations that the stadium needs, gives the community pride of ownership and alleviates the financial burden this would put on the district.

Resident and parent Elyssa Sullivan thanked the Board for their decision to appoint John Simpson as the new superintendent of schools.

BOARD LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Mr. Addison briefly reviewed the Board candidates running for office in April, and encouraged everyone to attend the candidate open forum. The date, time and location will be coming soon.

Dr. Riss highlighted two upcoming important dates:

The upcoming MSBA-sponsored event for school board members and administrators to learn more about legislation likely to impact schools. The event begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

The Legislative Committee of EducationPlus-sponsored annual breakfast meeting for area legislators, school board members, and superintendents is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 27, 2016, at the Marriott St. Louis West. Board members should let Lori know if they can attend.

On behalf of the Foundation, Mrs. Dugan reported that the Mardi Gras evening at Cyrano’s was a huge success and thanked everyone that contributed and attended the event. Upcoming events for the Foundation will be the Spring for Schools in April, as well as the awarding of major grants.

Mr. Addison thanked Cyrano’s and all of the community businesses that contributed their time and donations for the Foundation Mardi Gras.

Mr. Addison provided a review of the Board Self Evaluation Process. Dr. John Urkevich will be the facilitator. Dr. Riss sent a link to each board member to complete a survey as the first task of this process. The opportunity

for discussion will be held at the Board meeting on March 28, 2016.

REPORTS FROM
SUPERINTENDENT &
STAFF

BUDGET & TAX
COLLECTION UPDATE

Dr. Diane Moore provided a budget update with few modifications needed at this time. The district administration will request necessary budget adjustments during March.

Dr. Moore reported current property tax collections are on target for this year, with the district collecting approximately \$2 million more than collected during the same time frame in the 2014-15 school year.

Dr. Moore also reported the district has collected approximately \$465,000 less in delinquent property taxes in 2015-16 compared to the same time frame in 2014-15. The lag in collections is tied to St. Louis County appeal settlements. Any appeal amounts settled in favor of taxpayers living within the Webster Groves School District boundaries are deducted from delinquent taxes paid to the district. The Business Office will continue to track appeal refunds closely and adjust the current budget to reflect decreases in delinquent property taxes as more information is received.

APPROVAL OF
ARCHITECT RFQ

Dr. Moore and Project Manager Rob Steuber presented their recommendation for contracting Dickenson Hussman Architects to submit architectural plans for the Steger ADA work to be completed and the Moss Field assessment. Their recommendation follows the Board's direction in November for the district administration to move forward with obtaining bids for final 2010 bond issue work.

Mrs. Dugan asked if the ADA work at Steger could be completed with the amount of funds that are set aside. Mr. Steuber indicated that this will be considered phase one of the ADA work that Steger requires with the installation of two lifts in the building.

Mr. Shipley wanted to know why there were only three companies on the bid sheet for the project. Mr. Steuber explained the process of choosing firms that comply with board policy and criteria.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Mrs. Holliday presented the Board with the proposed school calendar for 2017-18, reviewing the starting and ending dates, days of instruction and various other points of interest. No vote was taken.

SAFETY, HEALTH &
WELLNESS

Director of Student Services John M. Thomas, Hixson nurse Linda Neumann and Director of Instructional Technology Tim Brown presented the annual Coordinated Health & Wellness Report. Mr. Thomas reviewed and highlighted some of the programs for students and staff to pursue healthy lifestyles meeting the district's strategic plan defining objective.

Mrs. Neumann shared how she received a grant from Missouri Baptist Hospital enabling the district to purchase and install new and updated AED

devices in all buildings. Mrs. Neumann also reported that she has researched districts statewide and is pleased to report that WGSD has a model program for wellness.

Mr. Brown presented “The Umbrella of Digital Citizenship” program that teaches about internet safety, cyberbullying and digital footprints.

On February 17, 2016, Hixson is hosting a districtwide parent forum focusing on “Adolescent Drug Use, New Trends, Prevention and How to Test your Teen.”

Mr. Loher suggested the district share these presentations at the MSBA fall conferences enabling other school districts in the state to utilize these great tools.

Mr. Shipley suggested an article written in the semi-annual “Our Schools” publication sent to the entire WGSD community would be an additional avenue to share this information with all residents.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Board Candidate Dr. Arnold Stricker, Jr. congratulated Dr. Simpson on his appointment to be superintendent and commented how we live in a wonderful community with great schools. He stated he was a candidate for the Board of Education and there was still room to improve in the district. He gave three points he would work toward as a board member: examine school district expenditures in relation to academic outcomes, reduce the achievement gap among students by holding academic standards paramount, and rebuild trust between the school district and its’ taxpayers through clear and candid dialogue. He mentioned the passion he had as an educator and that all involved in working in the Webster Groves School District have a desire to see students learn to their fullest extent. He wished Dr. Riss a happy retirement.

Resident Dave Buck asked the Board to consider the purchase of the YMCA building for multiple uses in the district.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resident Kim Mumm would like to see more of the attitude of making things better. Mrs. Mumm congratulated Linda Neumann for her creativity in obtaining the AEDs for the district and encouraged the district to continue to find creative ways of obtaining funding. Mrs. Mumm also encouraged the Board to ensure the delinquent taxes be recouped.

Prior to the motion to approve the consent agenda, Mr. Shipley asked for clarification and a breakdown of the donation received, and how the funds were going to be utilized. The thirty thousand dollars will be shared equally to support the Chelsea Center, improve the girl’s locker room and improve dugouts.

Mr. Addison called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mrs. Dugan moved to approve:

Minutes of the following Board of Education Meetings:

- 009a Minutes for January 9, 2016, Special Business Meeting
- 009b Minutes for January 19, 2016, Special Business Meeting
- 009c Minutes for January 25, 2016, @ 7:30 a.m., Special Business Meeting
- 009d Minutes for January 25, 2016, @ 5:30 p.m., Special Business Meeting
- 009e Minutes for January 26, 2016 @ 7:30 a.m., Special Business Meeting
- 009f Minutes for January 26, 2016, @ 5:30 p.m., Special Business Meeting
- 009g Minutes for January 27, 2016, @ 7:30 a.m., Special Business Meeting
- 009h Minutes for January 27, 2016, @ 5:30 p.m., Special Business Meeting

Payment of Bills

- 009i Monthly Expenditure Report, Jan 22-Feb 3, 2016: \$3,599,798.69
- 009j Monthly Activity Account, Jan 22 - Feb 3, 2016: \$ 55,653.81
- 009k Cash Flow Summary Report
- 009l Approve Personnel Report
- 009m Approve Architect Recommendation
- 009n Approve Donation to WGHS

Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Mr. Smith, yes; Mrs. Dugan, yes; Mr. Addison, yes; Mr. Shipley, yes; Mr. Loher, abstain; Mr. Oliver, abstain. The motion passed 4-0.

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

At 8:15 p.m. Mrs. Dugan moved to recess into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing meet and confer [Sec.610.021(3)RSMO.], personnel [Sec.610.021(3)RSMO.], and property [Sec.610.021(2)RSMO.] Mr. Loher seconded the motion. Mr. Loher, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; Mrs. Dugan, yes; Mr. Addison, yes; Mr. Oliver, yes; Mr. Shipley, yes. The motion passed 6-0.

The open meeting reconvened at 8:59 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business brought before the Board, Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. The motion passed 6-0.

Board President

Board Secretary