
GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Regular Meeting – April 25, 2016

MINUTES

Vice President Shiflett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Superintendent Brian Metcalf indicated the presence of ***Board Members***: 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, Cathy Fox, Kristen Tweddle, Michelle Knauff, Teri Mulder, Stephene Benkert, Kevin Mason, Jennifer Schafer, Joshua Lyman, Morgan Lord, Beth Johnston, Kelley Clevenger, Amy Ellsworth, Jake Ellsworth, Zack Ellsworth, Kari Oberdank, Ami Richardson, Colleen Price, Jim Price, Diane Roskosky, Rochelle Tallman, Rob McBride, Ruth Hancock, Annette Kelly, Kevin Skarritt, Rachel parish, Matthew Dake, Melody Parsons, Dana Schueller, Mary Ann Schmedlen, Elizabeth Kramer, Lindsey Grostefon, Jennifer Pippin, Araminta Pippin, Gail Schafer, Adam Orange, Tamara Collins, Mandy Hall, Jan Rozich, Debi Ousley-Cole, Rachelle McKinney, Mary Holmes, Karl Wood, Courtney Lutz, Susan Sowle, Megan Weber, Joni Henretty, Jenny Kish, Kim Spalsbury, Jeff Burke, Laura Willoughby, Karlene Ketola, Erin Snyder, Kristen Clark, Steve Krumm, Staci Nye, Shelby Logel, Taylor McCrackin, Tammy Rosales, Brooke Stehle, Cornelia Floeter, Roger Marshall, Jamie McKennon, Jeff Sewick, Fred Hutchinson, Bobbi Fleming, Erin Ellis, Erica Ledesma, Hillary Kohn, Lauren Brown, Lesley Lumbert, Kris VandeGuchte, Joe Walczak, Andrew Walczak, Christin Sandell, Mary Jo Barrons, Gla' Spayde, Amie Gibbs, Cinda Wilmore, Jessica Fuentes, Bri Dennis, Lynsee Phillips, Katie Westen, Don Symonds, Tonya Rice, Tomi Simmons, Gloria Farr, Patty Waterman, Andrew Marsh, Tish Janes, Francie Skarritt, Suzy Khoury, Olivia Pahl, Ken Hoskins, Karen Densmore, Andrea Dionise, Denise DuFort, Nancy Nowak, Jeanine Cull, Susen Batz, Ellen Smith, Jim Brandt, Marlene Promer, Teresa Dyer, Mary Thompson, Angie Stefanick, Mark Jones, Greg Stevens, Jackie Jancek, Landon Myers, Erin Ries, Melissa Mazzola, Bethany Thelen, Bill Fleener, Mark Buckland, Angela Buckland, Leslie Bagneschi, Erica Sampson, Kristy Merignac, Sheila Bell, Carrie Caylor, Michelle Oppenheim, Julie Schieding, Sandy Reynolds, Trudy Strouse, Michelle Soulleve, Lisa Klingbiel, Daniel Landry, Chelsea Wells, Alexis Lopez, Kelly Smith, Sheri Tulloch, Katherine Gregory, April Welton, Michelle Hamilton, Greg Almy, Doreen Earle, Angela Vereecke, Amy Firtl, Sue Horack, John Horack, Diane Brandt, Deborah McMartin-Finkel, Danielle Nelson, Michalene Elder, John Elder, Stanley Elder, Candy Guild, David Batz, Kimberly Shoup, Amy Heriford, Tony Heriford, Jennifer Miller, Kellee Auge, Angela Lutz, Julie Brunk, C. Carrer, Tom Barrett, Josh Austin, Jen Bouck, John Ellsworth, Tracy Smith, Jen Deja, Lori VanHoesen, Meghan Joseph, Kelli Bohnet, Matt Bird, Amy McNamara, Sheila Dunnigan, Linda Snyder and Kim Manning.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Boucher for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the April 25, 2016 Agenda Items, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mrs. Winstanley, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the April 25, 2016 Consent Agenda Item, as presented.

Included on the Consent Agenda were the meeting minutes of the March 28, 2016 Regular Meeting and Closed Session and the April 11, 2016 Work Session and Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

A. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- a. **Capitol Connections Report** - Mr. Bennett reported Senate Bill 826 looks for remove common core standards and replace them with Massachusetts core standards, the current State Superintendent is looking at revamping the M-STEP testing schedule, provided an update on the seclusion and restraint legislation, advised legislation is out there to remove state funding of the SAT test and in closing reminded board members that May 3 if the MASA/MASB legislative conference.
- b. **Eaton RESA Report** – Mrs. Clark Pierson noted the RESA is now being led by a person who is better suited with the background knowledge to fully understand the responsibilities of a RESA to their constituent districts. She advised Grand Ledge Public Schools has long been dissatisfied with the support it was receiving from the RESA and with the support and commitment of this board and the administration she is happy to advise that Grand Ledge Public Schools will be now be receiving the appropriate funding and support from the RESA which will, in turn, allow us to provide better supports to our students. She noted that Eaton RESA's new Superintendent and Director of Business & Finance will join the board meeting on May 23rd to present their 2016-2017 budget which is something this board has been requesting for several years, but had not been receiving. In closing she remarked that had she, this board and this administration not put a foot down to say what is going on at the RESA is not acceptable, the RESA would have been insolvent.
- c. **Grand Ledge Education Foundation** – Mr. Bennett advised the Josh Spalsbury Memorial 5K Run is still scheduled for June 18th in conjunction with Yankee Doodle Days and you can obtain more information on the Grand Ledge Education Foundation Facebook page.
- d. **Grand Ledge Parks & Recreation Committee** – Mr. Boucher advised the Committee has not met this month.

B. 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. In closing, Dr. Metcalf advised the board had questions regarding the financial history for the district and Chief Financial Officer Nancy Rasinske was going to provide them with an overview.

- a. **Finance Report** – Chief Financial Officer Nancy Rasinske provided the board with a detailed Financial Report with a focus on financial history including fund balance since 2011 in both dollar figures and percentage reminding everyone with newly enacted Early Warning Legislation which technically identified a 5% fund balance as the “new zero” in the State’s eyes. She also noted the average GLPS payroll is almost \$1.5M. With the 7% projected fund balance this year will leave just over \$3M in the district’s fund balance – enough to make payroll for one month only and that does not include paying for electrical or energy use in our building. She further reviewed the per pupil foundation allowance since 2010 noting the district is receiving \$35 less per pupil in 2016 than were receiving in 2010. She addressed a projected \$1.4M deficit that was anticipated in 2014-15 and the action taken to avoid this deficit including postponing the purchases of textbooks, technology, custodial/maintenance supplies, vehicles & busses and general ledger software along with implementing energy efficient measures, reducing the hours of district custodial/maintenance staff and placing a freeze on all hiring. She also noted the district was fortunate to receive approximately \$372,000 in unexpected revenue in June 2015 that also help offset the anticipated deficit. However, even with the action taken by the district and the unanticipated revenue, the district still had a more than \$6,000 deficit in this year. She reviewed student enrollment trends since 2008 noting a decline in enrollment and advising how the district must “predict” student enrollment to establish its budget. She presented an overview of the costs associated with district administration noting administrative costs have been reduced by almost \$370,000 since 2008. She also advised that according to the Michigan Department of Education’s 1014 report, 97% of Michigan School District spend more on administrative costs than GLPS. Inclosing she reviewed teacher compensation since 2010 noting if the Grand Ledge Education Association would have accepted the Board’s offer in September 2015, compensation for this group would have exceeded \$25M this year - - an increase of more than \$2M over the 2010-2011 school year.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

District employee Kevin Mason addressed the board to express his concern about not having planning time.

GLPS graduate Chelsea Wells spoke to the board about how GLPS has affected her in the past, present and future noting she want to return to the district as a teacher.

District employee Jennifer Pippin read a letter on behalf of former employee Sara Badalamente about how hard she had worked as a teacher for GLPS and her decision to leave was the result of her salary and not having a planning period.

Former employee Sheila Dunnigan provided the board with an overview of her salary over the years and noting having their planning time is an important factor for the teachers.

State Representative Tom Barrett noted the legislature passed the state budget and more money

(approximately \$½B) from the school aid fund will be diverted to other entities. He noted this is not a partisan issue. He further advised that he supports equalized per pupil funding as he believes every student should be worth the same no matter where they live.

Former employee Deb Traxinger addressed the board to discuss when she was on the negotiation team that agreed to the current contract.

District employee Adam Orange addressed the board to express his concerns with regard to the current state of the district and to thank everyone for coming to speak including his colleagues and to thank the board for their service noting he understands that the district has a budget.

District employee Erin Snyder provided the board with a handout noting her research of surrounding districts and addressed her concerns regarding class size.

Community member Danielle Nelson expressed her thanks for the budget presentation and that she feels the superintendent should have forgone any wage increase until the contract was settled. She noted she feels the failure of the last two bond proposals is the responsibility of the board and administration and not the teachers. She also questioned if Sawdon needed to stay open or if administration could be housed at Greenwood.

Parent Erin Reese expressed her concern for what she deems is a lack of respect the board has shown the teachers noting that new teachers cannot replicate what families have come to know.

Parent Erica Ledesma addressed the board about planning time for the teachers.

Parent Bri Dennis spoke to the board about board members coming to the buildings to see what teachers do noting the district has a large number of highly educated teachers.

Parent Christy Merignac addressed the board about the lack of planning time, class size and the need for teacher assistants.

District employee Kim Shoup read a letter from community member Hillary Cone describing the support she and her family received from our staff during a very difficult health crisis she recently endured noting they are true examples of how caring this staff is.

Community Member and former employee Ruth Hancock addressed the board expressing the important connect of school to family noting she believes the teachers of the most important part.

Parent Lynsee Phillips spoke to the board about ensuring planning time was given back to teachers.

Kellee Auge – Connie Suwalla

Community Member Andrew Marsh shared with the board that he is a 2010 graduate of GLHS noting this was quite an achievement and commended the district teachers for his success.

GLHS Senior Taylor McCrackin addressed the board supporting the teachers.

District employee Courtney Lutz spoke to the board about settling a fair contract with the teachers and teaching on planning time.

Former district employee Denise Dufort addressed the board thanking them for serving noting this shows their dedication to making education a priority in our community, noted she understands the budget shortage due to lack of state funding and that difficult cuts and decisions have been made in the past. She also noted that teacher planning time is very important and asked that everyone work together to come to a resolve.

District employee Melissa Mazzola addressed the board to express a need for adequate planning time and the necessity of teacher aides.

District employee Rachel Buffenbarger read letters to the board from students.

Community member Jeff Burke addressed the board in support of the teachers and remarking he believes teachers are over worked.

Former district employee Jim Brandt addressed the board expressing he hopes the board can understand where the teachers are coming from.

Community Member Jennifer Miller addressed the board noting people move here to raise families because of the reputation of the school district and asked the board to be wise about their choices.

The Chair called a recess at 7:52 pm.

The meeting reconvened at 8:01 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

**A. Approval of 2016-2017 Participation in Section 105 and 105(c) Schools of Choice
Motion by Mr. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Bennett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve participation in Section 105 and 105(c) Schools of Choice for the 2016-2017 school year, as presented.**

Superintendent Metcalf advised this is a recommendation to participate in Schools of Choice at the same level as last year; unlimited openings Kindergarten through 9th grade. He noted this option provides the district much more flexibility in placing students into buildings thereby allowing better control of balancing class size across the district.

President Shiflett advised he had asked for information regarding costs and needs to reduce class sizes across the district. To reduce class sizes to 27 across the district, the district would need eight (8) additional classrooms and 12 teachers at a cost of approximately \$837,000 per year. To get the district down to class sizes of 25 across the district, the district would need 11 new classrooms and 13 additional teachers at a cost of more than \$1.25M. He noted that while this is the goal of the board, the district just does not have the money or the space to accommodate a move of this nature.

Trustee Winstanley asked if these costs included aides or just classroom teachers.

Superintendent Metcalf advised the figured presented were just general education grade level teachers.

The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT FROM THE AUDIENCE ON AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD AND STAFF

Trustee Winstanley thanked everyone for the messages they brought to the board noting she understands this is very difficult. She believes the teachers want to resolve this issue, as does the board and administration but unfortunately there has not been a way to come to an agreement. In closing she remarked she believes everyone still wants the same thing.

Trustee Mulvenna noted it is no secret that public education has been struggling for a long time and tonight State Representative Barrett confirmed they are going to take more money out of the school aide fund. She reiterated it has been over 10 years since Proposal A was implemented that was supposed to “equalize” per pupil funding. But that has not happened. She referenced the unsuccessful bond proposals and noted that our buildings are in need of repair. She asked people to think about their homes and how many things they may have changed, updated, repaired or replaced over the past 20 years. School buildings are no different. In closing she expressed her appreciation to everyone coming tonight noting the negotiation process is in “fact-finding” at the request of the teachers.

Trustee Clark Pierson expressed her appreciation to everyone for coming and clarified that when a board member or the superintendent appears to be “surfing the net” that is not is going on. She pointed out in this day of technology, it is nice to be able to pull up a point of reference made by someone speaking to the board in real time or we can look on the district’s Transparency page for specific information. She noted she cares deeply about what happens here. She encouraged people to reach out to the board to share ideas on what we can do differently, keeping in mind the district does budget conservatively because there have been mid-year cuts in the past.

Trustee Bennett thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

Vice President Shiflett thanked everyone for coming out. He reiterated that Senator Jones and Representative Barrett have separate Joint Resolutions to equalize per pupil funding. This would provide life-changing dollars for GLPS students. But, as Representative Barrett said, there is no support for these resolutions. In closing he noted while recent meetings have not been as pleasant as others, he honestly wants people to know, “the board hears you”.

CLOSED SESSION – Negotiations

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Mr. Boucher 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. Mulvenna	<u>YES</u>	Vice President Shiflett	<u>YES</u>
Mr. Boucher	<u>YES</u>	Mrs. Winstanley	<u>YES</u>
Mr. Bennett	<u>YES</u>	Mrs. Clark Pierson	<u>YES</u>

The motion carried unanimously at 8:18 p.m.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 8:56 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:

Jay Bennett, Secretary

Jon Shiflett, Vice President