

GREATER JOHNSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Business Meeting
February 16, 2005
Johnstown High School – Large Café

I. Called to order by Board President at 5:00 PM.

ATTENDEES:

Joanne Freeman	Brian Miller	Christopher Swatt (arrived 6:11 PM)
Russell Martin	William Pollak	
Richard McGuire	John David Praught	

ABSENT:

Peter Cinelli	Kathleen Leo
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OTHERS:

John S. Whelan	Katherine Sullivan	Peter Hopke
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II. **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OF PARTICULAR PERSONNEL**

Motion by Mr. Praught seconded by Mr. Pollak to go to executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment history of particular personnel, at 5:00 PM.

VOTE: 6 Yes 0 No

III. **MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

Motion by Mr. Praught seconded by Mr. Pollak to return to public session at 6:10 PM.

VOTE: 6 Yes 0 No

IV. **SUPERINTENDENT’S/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORTS**

- Mrs. Sullivan introduced Anne Christiano, who gave an overview of the “Odyssey of the Mind” program which the District is participating in for the first time this year. Ms. Christiano thanked Mrs. Sullivan for being instrumental in bringing the program to Johnstown. She also thanked the Glebe Street coaches, Melissa Livingstone and MaryJo Smith, and the Warren Street coaches, Eric Betz, Tammy Martin, Sarah Randolph and Chris VanDenburgh, for their volunteer assistance. The Warren Street Team presented their “In Your Dreams” performance. The problem synopses required creating, with a budget of \$125.00, a performance that included a dream that would be cheerful, nonsensical and nightmarish. The nightmare had to include a monster, designed and built by the team, that changed in appearance and performed at least two tasks. The Glebe Street Team is working with a budget of \$140.00 to build two original stunt mobile vehicles operating on different power systems, that will travel from behind start lines over five obstacle courses, and cross a finish line and break balloons. For their presentation they participated in answering a spontaneous, timed question, which was scored by their coaches, acting as judges. Following the presentations Mrs. Sullivan thanked Ms. Christiano and the coaches and commended the students for the good job they did.
- Mr. Whelan outlined the Jansen and Glebe Street principal selection process, which will be handled by a twelve member committee. The membership of the committee will consist of two Board members, two administrators, two teachers, two parents, a secretary from the school, a custodian, the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent. The proposed schedule for the selection process is as follows: March 11th, submit committee member names to Superintendent; March 17 committee meets in library; March 21 – 30 review applicant information at the District Office; March 31 committee meets; April 1 – 15 Superintendent

conducts reference checks; April 11 –15 schedule interviews; April 28 – May 1 committee conducts interviews, makes recommendation to the Board; May 18 Board interviews final candidates.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORTS

Mr. McGuire took exception to recent public comments referring to the Board as dysfunctional. He commented that every opportunity is taken to provide a high quality education for every student, and that in the recent past the District has enjoyed a low tax rate while providing up-to-date texts, equipment and supplies, encouraging a wide spectrum of programs, supporting career education, providing a top notch website, supporting a music program that brings honor to the community, and recruiting and employing bright young teachers who keep us off the NYS schools in need of improvement list. He advised the few dissatisfied individuals who are trying to bring dishonor to the District that he is willing to listen to what they think makes the Board dysfunctional, even if he is not in agreement. He stated that his number is in the telephone book, or that he can be contacted through Mr. Whelan, but that it is not productive to hurl accusations through the newspaper.

V. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Capital Projects – Mr. Whelan advised that the architects are reviewing materials and, hopefully by the next Board meeting, they will have resolutions or suggestions as to which direction we should take with regard to vacant land.
- Restructuring – Mr. Swatt announced that he is working to obtain a meeting date that is good for all (tentatively March 8th at JHS) and that a confirmed date will be provided to the public when available.
- Finance – Mr. Miller indicated budget items had been reviewed and preparations are being made for the budget workshop scheduled for March 9th.
- Buildings & Grounds – Mr. Pollak announced the next meeting will be held March 1st at 3:30.
- Academic – Mr. Martin announced the next meeting will be held March 2nd at 5:00 at Knox.

VI. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR FOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

"In accordance with its practice, the Board of Education of the Greater Johnstown School District does not permit oral comments from the public relating to specific personnel decisions regarding individuals employed by the District during the portion of its business meeting where the Board permits the public comment on agenda and non-agenda items. The Board will accept written comments from the public on this subject matter and all other agenda and non-agenda items."

- Mr. Pollak asked anyone who wishes to donate items to the school museum to please contact him. He thanked all those who have made prior contributions. The museum will have Friday and Saturday hours between May and October and may be visited other times by calling 762-7646 for an appointment.
- Eva Mraz stated that her daughter is a senior at JHS and expressed her displeasure with graduation being scheduled for a Tuesday evening. She asked why our students can't graduate on a Friday evening or a Saturday, like every other school. She said a Tuesday is inconvenient for relatives who will be coming from out of town to see the students promenade down the stairs at Knox in their caps and gowns. She indicated the students are being denied what they want and that the children are upset, which makes the parents upset. She asked why the Board can't look into this and change the date.
- Barbara Skoda asked if each Board member had an opportunity to review the warrants and treasurer's reports prior to this evening's meeting. Mr. McGuire replied that they had. With regard to the interscholastic athletic mergers on tonight's agenda, she inquired where practices will be held and whether transportation is an issue. Mr. McGuire advised that practices are held here and Wheelerville transports their students here. She asked what rule allows the Board to waive the second reading of a new or revised policy before it is approved. (Refer to Policy #1410 of the GJSD Policy Manual).

- Mr. Pollak stated that Board members each receive a packet on the Friday before a meeting, which is full of background information; that they have plenty of opportunity to review these items prior to the Board meeting and can call if they need further information or have any questions. He commented that the Board is not acting in ignorance, that not all reaction has to be public and that this is not violating the Open Meetings Law.
- Barbara Skoda said she thinks people want to see the Board members individually asking questions so they can understand how conclusions are being made.
- Bob Galinsky asked how standing committee meetings are publicized as to when and where they are held. Mr. McGuire indicated they were just announced. Mr. Galinsky feels notice should be given per the Open Meetings Law.
- Dick Baker believes interscholastic mergers with Wheelerville result in Johnstown kids being cut from baseball teams at the seventh and eighth grade level so that Wheelerville kids can be kept and that this is not fair as Wheelerville students are not part of our community until ninth grade. He suggests making more teams if necessary.
- Mr. Pollak replied that we need to bring in interested kids, that cross country was lost because there weren't enough kids to fill the team. He added that these mergers lead to Wheelerville students eventually choosing to come here and pay tuition rather than going to Gloversville.
- Mr. Martin stated he agreed with Mr. Baker and there should be no cuts, although kids were cut from basketball and Wheelerville wasn't involved.
- Mr. Praught mentioned that when a modified coach has to work with thirty kids, no one learns. He pointed out that creating second teams creates scheduling issues.
- Dick Baker asked if the Board was going to respond to Mrs. Mraz about graduation or just ignore her. Mr. Pollak said this issue was addressed at the last meeting, it is not a Board decision, it is a high school administration recommendation.
- Mr. Swatt stated some of the Board members would love to see graduation moved, but were told that the last test on Wednesday afternoon is too much to get graded to be ready for Friday or Saturday. Also there is the issue of invitations which were already ordered.
- Mike Beatty said his own child previously graduated in the middle of the week and this year's graduation date is consistent with prior year's. He advised that there are awards on Friday night and no one wants to make mistakes by hurrying. He said if the Board instructs that graduation be on Saturday or Sunday, this will be done.
- Mr. Martin advised that Mr. Beatty only received one email complaint about the date and there had been no complaints to him, Ms. Freeman or Ms. Leo.
- Mr. Praught said this was broached at the November 19th meeting, that it was marked on the calendar given out the first week of school, and that parents should have called Mr. Beatty.
- Mary Mraz asked that it not be on a week night next year when her daughter graduates.
- Mr. McGuire suggested every effort be made to avoid this in the future.
- Robert Day said he has three children attending school in the District and he and several other community members have formed a group called "Johnstown Citizens for Quality Education" because they feel there is miscommunication between the Board and city residents and because they do not understand how the Board makes decisions. He presented a questionnaire about issues his group feels are important and asked that Board members respond individually so they know how each Board member feels. He thinks his group can help the Board make a positive change.
- Mrs. Freeman said she works hard to be cordial and respectful, that she was offended both personally and as a Board member by some vicious and untrue things that had been said, and that attacking people doesn't help build a bridge.
- Mr. Pollak commented that that the group shouldn't assume it represents a majority of the people of Johnstown; that just because the Board doesn't react the way this group wants doesn't mean it isn't listening; and that the Board can't cater to every single request.

- Lori Stearns said she had two kids at Glebe asked if she could discuss a problem involving Mr. Burnham. She was advised to call Mr. Whelan. She expressed concerns with the procedure for addressing peanut allergies in the school and objected to the nutritional value of some items on the approved snack list. She feels parents of children with food allergies should educate them to take care of themselves, it should not be a burden on everyone else, because this caters to one or a few, not the majority. Mr. Whelan advised that the District is responsible for children while they are in school, there are regulations that we are responsible to follow, and that this is a very difficult issue which is constantly under review. Mr. Praught acknowledged it is inconvenient and not a perfect system, but that he would hate for someone to be ill. Mr. McGuire suggested expert advice is needed.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to approve the minutes of the Board of Education meetings held on January 19, 2005, February 1, 2005, and February 2, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

VIII. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. PERSONNEL

1. Separations

a. Resignation of Linda Mitchell, Secretary to the Superintendent

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept the resignation of Linda Mitchell, with regret, as Secretary to the Superintendent, effective March 18, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

2. Leave of Absences

3. Abolishments

4. Creations/Appointments/Adjustments

a. Permanent Appointment of Ernest J. Maye, Director of School Facilities & Operations

Motion by Mr. Pollak seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the permanent appointment of Ernest J. Maye as the Director of School Facilities & Operations, effective January 13, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

b. Emergency Conditional Substitute Appointment of Joseph LoDestro, Custodian

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Greater Johnstown School District hereby conditionally appoints Joseph LoDestro, to the position of Substitute Custodian, \$9.00 per hour, effective February 7, 2005 through June 30, 2005, subject to the rules of the Fulton County Personnel Department. In accordance with the Civil Service Rules, such appointment is a substitute appointment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this appointment is made on a conditional basis and subject to the receipt of a statement from Joseph LoDestro regarding criminal conviction(s) or pending criminal charges and the receipt of criminal background clearance from the Commissioner of Education. Mr. LoDestro's continued employment is specifically contingent upon the District's receipt of notice, from the Commission of Education that he is fully cleared for employment:

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

B. WARRANTS

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the District Auditor, to accept warrants #9 and #10 dated December 1-31, 2004, as seen in addendum # 1.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

C. TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the District Treasurer, to accept the Treasurer's Report for December 1-31, 2004, as seen in addendum # 2.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

D. VENDOR LIST

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the Vendor List for December 1-31, 2004, as seen in addendum # 3.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

E. TRANSFERS

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the Budget Transfer Schedule #3 December 1-31, 2004, as seen in addendum # 4.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

F. TAX SHELTERED ANNUITY

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to add State Farm Life & Accident Assurance Company and State Farm Mutual Funds to the list of prospective companies for tax sheltered annuities, as seen in addendum # 5.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

IX. EDUCATION ITEMS

A. PERSONNEL

1. Separations

a. Resignation of Damian Croucher, Extended Leave Art Substitute

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept the resignation of Damian Croucher, with regret, as extended leave art substitute, effective January 24, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

2. Leave of Absences

a. Child Care Leave of Absence for Lauren Orlando

Motion by Mr. Praught seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to allow a child care leave of absence for Lauren Orlando as Spanish teacher, effective May through June 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

b. Child Care Leave of Absence for Michelle Abel

Motion by Mr. Praught seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to allow a child care leave of absence for Michelle Abel as art teacher, effective May through June, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

c. Child Care Leave of Absence for Meredith Fagan

Motion by Mr. Praught seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to allow a child care leave of absence for Meredith Fagan as English teacher, effective May through June, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

3. Abolishments

4. Creations/Appointments/Adjustments

a. Term Appointment of Heather Vazal, Extended Leave Art Substitute

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the term appointment (pending fingerprinting and certification) of Heather Vazal as extended leave art substitute at Step A1 (\$34,257 prorated) of the collective bargaining agreement with the Johnstown Teachers' Association effective January 31, 2005 through June 30, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

b. Appointment of Robert Kraemer, Head Football Coach

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the appointment of Robert Kraemer as head football coach at a stipend of \$3,819 (pending negotiations) of the collective bargaining agreement with the Johnstown Teachers' Association for the 2005-2006 school year.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

c. Appointment of Andrew Roth, Boys Lacrosse Coach

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the appointment of Andrew Roth as boys lacrosse coach (Asst #1) at a stipend of \$2,228 (pending negotiations) of the collective bargaining agreement with the Johnstown Teachers' Association for the 2005-2006 school year.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

d. Payment of Music Festival Stipend

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the payment of music festival stipends for attendance at the All-State Music Festival on December 4, 2004 for the following individual:

Daniel Jones \$104.00

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

e. Payment of Music Festival Stipends

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the payment of music festival stipends for attendance at the FCMEA Music Festival on February 5, 2005 for the following individuals:

Sara Corrigan \$104.00

Daniel Jones \$104.00

Tamara Healy \$104.00

Cindy Fiorenza \$104.00

Kim Tyler \$104.00

Patricia Zullo \$104.00

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

f. Extra-Curricular Appointments

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the appointment of the following individuals as Extra-curricular advisors for the 2004-2005 school year:

Nancy L. VanDenburgh, JHS Musical Accompanist \$1,326.00

Aaron Flynn, KJH Dramatics \$1,326.00

Cynthia Fiorenza, KJH Dramatics Unpaid

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – CSE, CPSE

1. Committee for Special Education

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Praught to approve the minutes of the Committee for Special Education meetings held on January 6, 2005; January 7, 2005; January 13, 2005; January 19, 2005; January 20, 2005; January 21, 2005; January 26, 2005; and January 27, 2005.

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VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

C. STUDENT MATTERS

1. Field Trip for Senior Winter Guard to Syracuse, New York

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the senior winter guard field trip to Syracuse, New York effective 2/25/05 (3:00 PM) through 2/27/05 (9:30 PM) for the purpose of competition.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

2. Field Trip for Senior Winter Guard to Salem, Massachusetts

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the senior winter guard field trip to Salem, Massachusetts effective 3/18/05 (12:00 PM) through 3/20/05 (10:00 PM) for the purpose of competition.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

3. Interscholastic Athletic Merger for Modified Baseball

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the interscholastic athletic merger between the Greater Johnstown School District and Wheelerville Union Free School District for modified baseball effective for the 2004-2005 school year.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

4. **Interscholastic Athletic Merger for Modified Track**

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the interscholastic athletic merger between the Greater Johnstown School District and Wheelerville Union Free School District for modified track effective for the 2004-2005 school year.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

5. **Graduation Date Change**

Motion by Mr. Pollak seconded by Mr. Swatt to move the day and time of the Johnstown High School graduation ceremony to Sunday June 26, 2005 at 1:00 PM in the afternoon.

VOTE: 5 YES 2 NO (Mr. Martin, Mr. Miller)

X. **BOARD OF EDUCATION ITEMS**

1. **First Reading of Policy 6170, Supervision of Conditionally Appointed and Emergency Conditionally Appointed Personnel**

2. **Waiver of Second Reading and Adoption of Policy 6170**

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to waive the second reading of Policy 6170, Supervision of Conditionally Appointed and Emergency Conditionally Appointed Personnel, and adopt the same effective February 16, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

3. **First Reading of Revised Policy 1230, Reporting of Expenditures and Contributions**

4. **Waiver of Second Reading and Adoption of Revised Policy 1230**

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to waive the second reading of the following revised policy 1230, Reporting of Expenditures and Contributions, and adopt the same effective February 16, 2005.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

5. **Adoption of 2005-2006 District Calendar**

Motion by Mr. Martin seconded by Mrs. Freeman to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, to adopt the District Calendar for the 2005-2006 school year effective February 16, 2005, as seen in addendum # 6.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

XI. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

- Barbara Skoda thanked the Board for the interaction this evening. She commented that the article about the citizens meeting was accurate but only printed the negative and that there were supportive comments made.
- Mr. Swatt replied that the same thing happens here, that people only know what they hear on the radio and don't hear the nice things.
- Mr. Hillier commended the appointment of Mr. Kraemer as football coach, which he sees as a move in the right direction. He asked that the Board look for an AD who will interact with youth. He wondered if we could move out of the Foothills Council and into the Colonial Council, as we might be more competitive in another league. Mr. Whelan advised this is being reviewed and the Board will be informed of any options.

- Dick Baker wanted to discuss a situation involving the employees at Snyder Ave and whether the Board can intervene. Mr. Whelan indicated the Board does not have this information yet; the Finance Committee may be asked to look into it.
- Mr. Pollak asked Mrs. Sullivan to discuss the “Ready, Set, Go” program. She advised that this had been her own title for a prior pre-k and kindergarten summer program. There are new standards in place and, while it probably won’t be called by the same name, there will still be a similar, and possibly expanded, program this summer. She is willing to listen to any suggestions regarding this matter.

XII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

March 2, 2005	Discussion/Business Meeting	6:00 PM Public Session Knox Junior High Library
March 9, 2005	Budget Workshop	6:00 PM Johnstown High School
March 16, 2005	Business Meeting	6:00 PM Public Session Johnstown High School Library

XIII. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS NEGOTIATIONS

Motion Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to go to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations, at 8:18 PM.

VOTE: 7 YES 0 NO

XIV. MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to return to public session at 9:25 PM.

VOTE: 7 Yes 0 No

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Freeman seconded by Mr. Swatt to adjourn at 9:25 PM.

VOTE: 7 Yes 0 No

Respectfully submitted,

Larraina Carpenter
District Clerk