

Special Meeting of the Houghton Lake Community Schools Board of Education was held Monday, October 5, 2009 at the Atrium Plaza Hotel, 9285 W. Lake City Road, Houghton Lake, MI 48629.

Members Present: Fry, Burger, Harned, Dean, Duquette, and Scherer. Absent: Maiani

Administration/Staff: Superintendent Murphy, Pam Akin, Arlene Jury, Heidi Palatka, Stan Gardner, Matt Lewis, John Earley, Gail Harned, Sally Cotterman,

Visitors: Nancy Walters, Ruth Clemens, Marilou MacKenzie, Sara Nettle, Jeff Fossitt
Rick Hacker, Phil & Barb Freebold, Carl & Dorothy Siels, Mary Fry, Kathryn Hall
and Randy Seymour

Press: Tom & Eric Hamp, Houghton Lake Resorter

Board President Harned called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Citizen's Request to Address the Board of Education - None

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Murphy stated that a presentation from Dr. Gaddam would be given to the Board tonight as well as from our Curriculum Director, Arlene Jury regarding the 2008/2009 District Annual Report. He then invited Mrs. Jury up to give her presentation.

2008/2009 District Annual Report

Curriculum Director, Arlene Jury, addressed the Board and began to explain to everyone what information is outlined in our 2008/2009 District Annual Report. Mrs. Jury clarified what MEAP test scores represent as well as how school districts obtain academic achievement each year.

American & British Academy

Dr. Gaddam of Royal Medical and Technical Consultants, Inc., addressed the Board then introduced himself to the audience. He began a power point presentation to make clear what his plans are and what he would like to develop here in Houghton Lake. The American & British Academy (ABA) is a program where the students would live (on campus – in dorms) and study for U.S. Medical Licensing Exams. Students from all over the world could enroll; however, the majority of the students would be coming from Canada and Illinois. Dr. Gaddam has already had much success with the first academy – going from 12 students to 1200. He established Windsor University in St. Kitts, West Indies as well as Weston Medical College in Turks and Caicos Islands. His mission is to have all students obtain a score of 2200 out of a possible 2400 on their SAT test. This high SAT score is necessary and a requirement if any of the students wish to apply and attend the top best colleges/universities in the state and/or the nation.

Discussion Items

Shared Services

Discussion took place regarding Houghton Lake Community Schools and West Branch/Rose City Schools sharing services. West Branch/Rose City Schools had a posting to hire a Business Manager, and called over to Houghton Lake Community Schools to see if we would consider sharing this position. In order for this to work, it is necessary that Houghton Lake hires an accountant to do the work that Mr. Lewis would no longer be able to perform. The intended start date would be November 1st, and the potential savings would be approximately \$55,000 annually. A presentation will be given at the October 19, 2009 Board meeting.

Platform Implementation

Discussion regarding new software called Specialized Data Systems, Inc (SDS) took place. The district is currently paying a maintenance fee of \$15,000 annually on the existing financial/student record software.

The district has multiple data being input between central office and the buildings, the new software would eliminate that, therefore, save time and money. There is an upfront cost of \$30,000 for Specialized Data Systems, Inc. (SDS), and a comparable software system would cost anywhere from \$50,000 - \$100,000. West Branch Schools are currently using this system.

Board Treasurer Burger indicated that he is not too happy with shared services. Board Vice-President Dean stated that everyone needs to find ways to save money and with this, the district can move forward and be a leader with shared services as well as save money.

Superintendent Murphy indicated that the negotiating teams - Houghton Lake Community School and the Teamsters/Transportation Department have reached a tentative agreement. The Board will be asked to vote on the contract at the next meeting.

The First Reading/discussion followed on the overnight trip requests received from the Students Leading Students/SADD group and the Houghton Lake Wrestling Team. The approval of these two trips will take place at the October 19, 2009 Board meeting.

Other

The Board Finance Committee has been working on the appraisal and potential sale of the two vacant elementary buildings. The appraisal value for Merritt Elementary came to \$50,000 and \$225,000 for Prudenville Elementary for a total of \$275,000. The Finance Committee decided to begin with an asking price of \$250,000 for both buildings, and will negotiate from there. The QZAB bonds are tied to these buildings (\$175,000 and \$125,000 for a total of \$300,000 was used for improvements/repairs to the school buildings). Any offers are to be brought to the Board Finance Committee and from there to the Board for a vote.

Board Presentations ~ moved up

Citizen's Second Request to Address the Board of Education

Ruth Clemens, of ERA Realty, (1245 W. Houghton Lake Drive, HL) addressed the Board to find out which way they prefer her to handle the sale of the buildings? She will have the contract written up, deliver it to the school, and the school district's attorney will review the language.

Board Comments/Statement ~ None

Action Items:

Driver's Education Program

Motion by Duquette, supported by Fry to discontinue providing our students a Driver's Education Program through the Houghton Lake Community School District. Motion carried. Yes 6, No 0.

Closed Session ~ Negotiations

Motion by Duquette, supported by Dean that the Board of Education take a short recess and move the meeting back to the Board of Education office and then go into closed session for the purpose of discussing negotiations. Motion carried. Yes 6, No 0. (Once back at the Board office, the Board went into closed session at 8:55 p.m.) Board members present: Scherer, Duquette, Dean, Burger, and Harned.

Motion by Duquette, supported by Dean that the Board of Education come out of closed session at 9:20 p.m. Motion carried. Yes 5, No 0.

Board discussed the proposed office reconfiguration and shared position with West Branch/Rose City Schools, including the board's role and responsibilities regarding staffing. Also, the proposed terms of the sale of Merritt and Prudenville.

Motion by Duquette, supported by Dean to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried Yes 5, No 0.