

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
March 10, 2015**

**ATTENDANCE**

Board Members Present: Caroline Van Alst, William Ziegler, Thomas Newmeyer,  
Ida Times  
Absent: Joshua Barrow  
Superintendent: Steve Van Zant

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Board and Superintendent convened closed session at 5:01 p.m.

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**

Open session reconvened at 6:10 p.m.

**REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION**

Trustee Van Alst announced that by a vote of 4 to 0, one trustee absent, the board voted to non-re-elect a probationary certificated employee.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Trustee Times led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA ORDER**

Item 9.05, Memorandum of Understanding with Willow Creek Academy, was removed from the agenda. The remainder of the agenda order was approved.

**BOARD COMMUNICATIONS**

Trustee Newmeyer said that the Willow Creek Academy fundraiser will take place on March 14.

Trustee Times said that she enjoyed participating in the bike giveaway last month. Saturday University was also a great event - some parents attended and that bodes well for its success, she said. She will attend the California Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators conference in San Diego and report back to the school administration and the board next month.

**SMCTA REPORT**

Fifth grade teacher Susan Cassidy said that each year teachers have to beg not to have their programs dismantled. She continued: I came here 16 years ago, everything was in flux. For one six-year period, we did not change principals and during that time, every year our school got better. But since then, the school has been steadily dismantled - we have not had any stability. The administration has said that many of our core programs were dependent on funding from outside sources, so we are finding that again, some of our basic programs are on the chopping block. Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders have been through so much change in this school; we don't know how they function. Many of our children have been through trauma and are emotional; even little things that we do have a great impact on them. We need stability that leads to efficiency. Our students are the future citizens of the world. We are asking that you not dismantle our programs again. Counseling has made a big difference for us. We had counseling in the past, but it was inconsistent and without continuity, it did not work. We also need our contracts to be funded. There are certain functions in a school that must be there whether you have 150 or 2000 students. You have committees for all kinds of things. I invite you to have a committee that brings together board members, teachers and other stakeholders to create a vision for the school. I feel that you want the best for us; but unfortunately we are not connecting.

Teacher Ellen Franz also emphasized the need for continuity, especially in the case of the counselor who has made an enormous impact in the school. She also praised the work of the math coach. She is a gifted teacher and her services should not be taken away, she said.

Kindergarten teacher Jennifer Banks said that cutting art instruction is not a good idea. Students need to express themselves through the arts. She told the board: The art instruction period also covers our prep time. The grant did train us to teach art, but for kids to go into a studio and learn that vocabulary is different. To cut that would be very sad for our students.

Third grade teacher Jim Scullion said that the PE period covers prep for teachers, creates school culture and raises students' confidence. The PE teacher is a vital part of the school; he conducts ongoing visits with the community, leads morning assemblies, works with after-school programs and partners with parents for the well-being of our students. We want all our programs to stay in place, he concluded.

Trustee Van Alst thanked all the teachers for their input and said that their comments would be taken into consideration.

#### **MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Alan Rothkop, the director of maintenance and operations, said that he is trying out various lighting configurations at Willow Creek Academy. The new system should be up in the next two weeks.

There is water seeping on the road to upper parking lot. Someone from the water department will inspect the road and check for leaks.

The fence project at Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy will begin in the next two weeks. We will keep the community informed of its progress. We had fencing materials on the property from past projects, which will save us some money, he said.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Van Zant complimented site leadership on the bike giveaway event. Earlier this week, we had a visit from Marin County Office of Education Superintendent Mary Jane Burke and Deputy Superintendent Terena Mares. They are not happy with the direction we are going in financially and suggested that we consider further cuts to arrive at a more balanced budget.

Business Manager Paula Rigney gave more details on the number of special education students in the district and their placement in special day classes, non-public schools and County Office of Education schools.

#### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Principal Jonnette Newton gave a report on reading and math assessments at the Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy. Since students were tested at the beginning of school and at end of February, scores indicate that there has been a better than 10 percent improvement in basic reading and math skills. Students went from average to a little higher than average compared to their peers nationwide.

Principal Newton then addressed the problem of suspensions. From September through the end of February, we had eight students suspended for the year. There were also a total of 400 cases of in-house suspensions. The problems are disruption, defiance, and unruly behavior. She said: We have been having stakeholder meetings

about student behavior. We want to create a community covenant that establishes a code of behavior for the adults. We want to get it out to everyone and have them pledge to be a role model for their children and the children of the community.

Ms. Newton thanked the Rotary Club of Sausalito for donating dictionaries to the school's third graders. We are working on improving students' spelling with Dr. Thornton and Susan Cassidy and getting ready for the spelling bee in the fall, she told the board. Our most recent book fair raised \$2000.

#### **WCA REPORT**

Head of School Royce Conner said that the school's theme this year is "The Kid in You." He reported a visit from the Sausalito Rotary Club, during which all third graders received dictionaries. He thanked Alan Rothkop for overseeing the change in the lighting system at the school.

#### **PERSONNEL**

**Resolution 714 – Reduction in Particular Kinds of Service**

Superintendent Van Zant said that this is a preliminary notice which is given to meet the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

**Roll Call/Newmeyer/Ziegler/4 Ayes, 0 Nos, 1 Absent to approve Resolution 714 – Reduction in Particular Kinds of Service**

#### **FINANCIAL & BUSINESS**

##### **District 2014-2015 Second Interim Budget**

Chief Business Official Paula Rigney gave a report on the district's budget. She said that after special education expenses of \$1.196 million, \$4.8 million remains for district expenses. Of approximately \$800K in local funding, \$400K is in grants from the Marin Community Foundation.

Salaries comprise only 56% of our budget, as opposed to the customary 80%. This is because we have several positions that are contracted out, she told the board. Our deficit budgeting this year stands at \$417K. This includes a \$60k cafeteria encroachment which we hope our new chef will be able to reduce.

**Newmeyer/Ziegler/All to approve the District 2014-2015 Second Interim Budget**

##### **Willow Creek Academy Second Interim Budget**

Head of School Royce Conner said the budget the board received in the packet is slightly different from the one sent to the county. In light of this information, the board decided to defer action on this item until the next meeting.

##### **2014-2015 District Audit Contract**

Superintendent Van Zant explained that this is a continuation of a three-year agreement with Stephen Roatch Accountancy.

**Ziegler/ Newmeyer/ All to approve the 2014-2015 District Audit Contract**

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Roll Call Ziegler /Newmeyer/4 Ayes, 0 Nos, 1 Absent to approve the following consent agenda items:**

Minutes of the January 13 and February 10, 2015 Board Meetings

Personnel Action Report

Payment of Warrants – Batches 30-33

Field Trips

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Finance Committee

This item was tabled until Trustee Joshua Barrow returns next month.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Times/Newmeyer/All to adjourn the meeting at 7:55p.m.

dd Jones 05-21-15

Signature/Date

Clerk

Title