

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2015**

ATTENDANCE

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board and Superintendent convened closed session at 4:46 p.m.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Open session reconvened at 5:01 p.m.

REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Trustee Van Alst announced that no action was taken in closed session.

PERSONNEL

Resolution 716 – Reduction in Particular Kinds of Service (PKS)

Superintendent Van Zant said that this resolution will allow the district the flexibility to arrive at a balanced budget for 2015-2016.

Denni Brusseau, director of Bridge the Gap in Marin City, said that this has been a challenging year for the students in Marin City. Our children live in a high stress environment, and without the help of the school counselor, they will not have the necessary tools for success. I am concerned that the elimination of this position creates a significant hole in the safety net for our students, she told the board.

Teacher Ellen Franz said that over the last three years, the school has developed a program with the current counselor that works well for our students. She recounted the case of a second grader who became agitated in class and was harming himself – he was in danger and the entire class was very upset. The counselor was able to talk to him and calm him enough to return to class within 20 minutes, when another student hugged and reassured him. This process, she told the board, would have taken up the entire class time before our counselor, Julie Auslander, came onboard.

Counselor Julie Auslander said that replacing the counselor position with a school psychologist will not work. The school psychologist spends many hours preparing assessments and Individual Education Plans. It is not reasonable to add the duties of a counselor to this already heavy workload. She also suggested that her duties be expanded to the charter school to save on costs.

Librarian Fran Nelson asked if the district has a long-term vision, such as a five-year plan, which could be shared with the community. It would be good to know what to expect from year to year, she told the board.

Community member Pamela Dake said she was unsure if the decision to cut the position of counselor at Bayside MLK Jr. is deliberate mean spiritedness or simply misguided thinking. Julie Auslander has provided individual and group counseling to the students, worked with families and teachers to develop a positive learning environment at the school. She is also bringing mindfulness training to the school; this is an important tool to help kids focus and be present to learn. I urge you to maintain the counselor position, she concluded.

Community member Mary Demund said the proposals before the board will widen the achievement gap that economic and racial divisions have created in our society. Given that it is your duty to provide a quality education for the children at Bayside MLK Jr. Academy, you must ask yourselves whether these cuts will help our children, she said.

Parent Dana Perez said that she has a daughter in the fifth grade at Bayside MLK Jr. Academy. She told the board of her daughter's anxiety about going on a field trip earlier in the year, and counselor Julie Auslander's successful intervention. I was a single mother coping with a very difficult situation; Julie helped me and helped my daughter overcome her fears and have a positive experience on the school trip, she told the board.

Trustee Ziegler said that the board would like to protect the services that the school provides, but at the same time solve its budget problems. I feel that all the staff are providing valuable service, but at the end of the day, we still have the issue of the budget to solve, he said.

Trustee Barrow said we look to the administration to give us guidance so that we can choose the right path for the district.

Trustee Newmeyer said he would prefer not to cut any services and would like to have further discussions with the superintendent.

Trustee Van Alst thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and allowing the board to hear their views.

Roll Call Newmeyer/Ziegler/ 4 Ayes, 0 Nos, 1 Absent, to approve Resolution 716 – Reduction in Particular Kinds of Service (PKS)

Resolution 717 – Reduction of Classified School Services

Superintendent Van Zant said now that Willow Creek Academy has taken over the management of custodial services for the school, the district can reduce its custodial workforce by .5 FTE.


Roll Call Ziegler/Barrow/ 4 Ayes, 0 Nos, 1 Absent, to approve Resolution 717 – Reduction of Classified School Services

At 5:45 p.m. the Board and Superintendent reconvened closed session.

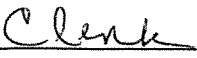
Open session reconvened at 6:10 p.m. Trustee Van Alst announced that no action was taken in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Newmeyer/Ziegler/All to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

 5/26/15

Signature/Date



Title