

Scioto County Board of DD – Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2010

Held at The Carousel Center, 1112 Gallia St., Portsmouth, Ohio

6:10 p.m.

1. **Roll Call:** Present were President Rodney H. Barnett, Vice President J. Michael Thoroughman, Recording Secretary Stephanie Childers, Jeffrey Kleha, and C. William Rockwell. Klaire Purtee joined the meeting at 6:22 p.m. Absent and excused was William C. Collins.
2. **Agenda:** Superintendent Brenda Benson requested that the fiscal report and salary proposal be moved forward in the agenda to allow the Board's consultant, Ken Albert, to leave as soon as possible. The Board offered no objections.
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the July meeting had been prepared for the Board. Mr. Thoroughman made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Rockwell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. All votes by the Board are recorded using the roll call method.
4. **Expenses:** Mr. Kleha made the motion to approve the docket of expenses with the addition of 10 moral obligations. Mrs. Childers seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
5. **Ken Albert's Report:**

- A. **Fiscal Report:** Mr. Albert gave the fiscal report as Business Manager Matt Purcell was unable to attend this meeting. The General Fund was reviewed. Mr. Albert noted that the month began with a fund balance of \$3,505,713.12 and ended with fun balance of \$4,462,254.13. He noted that this increased revenue is due to tax collections being deposited and the receipt of the third quarter state subsidies.

Regarding state subsidies, Mr. Albert stated that he anticipates these funds are at great risk for being cut or eliminated as the state legislature looks to cut costs in the next biennium budget.

Expenditures for the same period amounted to \$768,598.50. Overall spending should be at 58 percent of projections, but is a 67 percent. This he attributed largely to the once yearly payments made earlier such as workers' compensation contributions. He also noted that salaries, health insurance and retirement costs were slightly higher than projected and that he and Mr. Purcell would be monitoring this situation to make adjustments between line items as need to complete the year.

- B. **Salary Proposal (Recruitment and Retention Plan):** Mr. Albert offered to recap the process so far, noting that not all of the board members had been able to attend the June inservice on the recruitment and retention plan. After a brief exchange, the Board declined and decided to proceed to the presentation of the issue to be decided. Mr. Albert then reviewed the four decision points before the Board this evening with the aid of handout listing each proposal.

The first bullet point of the handout was a recommendation that the Board approve a three percent raise for all employee salaries with the exception of those paid exclusively through grant funds and certain administrators in accordance with their contracts. Mr. Albert assured the Board that this amount had been figured into the budget.

The second decision point of the proposal (#3 on the written proposal summary) was that the Board adopt the salary schedule as presented in a packet of information that Mr. Albert distributed. This document represented the salary survey that he has prepared to show the average salary for like positions in comparable county boards (and school districts where applicable). The program directors would be authorized to use five levels within the 90-110 percent range to credit years of experience as they negotiate starting salaries with new hires. Any proposed starting salary that would exceed 110 percent of the range would require Board approval. This will mark the third year that the Board has approved a salary schedule of this type.

Mr. Albert next addressed bullet point #4 on the proposal summary handout. This item was the recommendation that the Board approve an increase in salary to the bottom of the range for all employees whose salaries would still fall below the range after the 3 percent raise is applied. The ranges to be used are the ones specific to each position listed in the salary survey document.

Giving eligible employees this increase will add just over \$90,000 to the budget annually. Mr. Albert noted that this change to the budget would not impact when the Board would have to go for a new tax levy. Mr. Albert went on to say that (providing the taxpayers approve a renewal in 2011 of the six year levy), it was his opinion that the Board would not have to seek additional local taxes until 2013-2014 with or without the salary increase for these 20 or so employees. He stressed that the purpose of raising these salaries to the bottom of the range was the retention part of the plan and is intended to keep the Board's salaries competitive.

The final item (#2 on the handout) was a recommendation that the Board adopt the alternate compensation plan, outlined in earlier meetings, making it compulsory for staff whose salaries are more than 125% above the average. The program would also be made available to all other staff members voluntarily. Mr. Albert reminded the Board that staff had been polled for ideas and that a number of alternate compensation options had been chosen. Those currently available include continuing education costs, a deferred compensation plan contributions and a child/elder care option. This means the equivalent of the three percent raise (or some portion of it, depending on how much the salary was above the range) will be dispersed in the manner specified by the employee, but not added on to the person's base salary. Therefore the cost would not be cumulative, keeping higher salaries down.

In this salary survey there are only two employees who would be required to choose alternate compensation. One is near retirement and the other is quite satisfied to have the extra funds deposited in a Health Savings Account. A third person falls in the first index above the 125 percent, and is not impacted.

Mr. Barnett asked about the employees funded through grants. There is only one remaining employee in this category. When the Board was the involved in the state's 'Help Me Grow' program there were many more employees paid that way.

As the discussion continued, Mr. Albert explained that he projected worst-case scenarios when planning the Board's budget and that the raises proposed were sustainable. He also stated that the impact on an employee's retirement income was dependent upon his/her choice of alternative compensation options, but most of the options would not have any bearing as they would be counted as wages.

Mrs. Benson noted that the bump up would impact ten teachers. She remarked that this is the first year in the past five that the school program did not experience significant employee turnover. Non-competitive wages had previously been an important contributing factor.

Mr. Thoroughman made the motion to approve the salary proposal as presented. Mr. Kleha seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Superintendent's Report: Brenda Benson reporting

- A. Mrs. Benson spoke with gratitude about having the complete recruitment and retention plan approved. She explained that she knew the old step system was not sustainable and it was one of her goals to set the program on a new path. She credited Mr. Albert and many others for working hard along side her toward this end.
- B. The Accreditation Team from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities left earlier today. They arrived yesterday to begin their review of the programs, files, and policies. They also met with a number of servicerecipients and interviewed staff. Mrs. Benson summarized the areas of primary interest to the reviewers, including behavior support, management of consumer funds, service delivery, personnel and major unusual incidents. The team was very complimentary during the exit meeting and Mrs. Benson is confident of receiving a good report.
- C. The plague of air conditioning woes continues. After careful review, Mrs. Benson has decided that the entire HVAC system in the STAR, Inc. building needs to be gutted. Over the long term, the replacement project will cost in the neighborhood of \$250,000. The next step is to search for an engineer to assess the structural capacity of the building for roof top units.
- D. The elevator in Vern Riffe School has stopped working. It was installed in 1990. Mark Cornwell, building authority, and Matt Purcell, business manager, have been working toward getting repairs approved as an emergency by the County Commissioners. This process, though quicker than going out to bid, still requires three estimates. It is expected that there will be no elevator service in the school for five weeks after classes begin.

As school opens Monday, August 23, and a plan has been developed to teach children who use wheelchairs in the basement classrooms so that services will continue uninterrupted. The parents are being contacted by phone.

E. The bus garage is going up and the exterior construction is on schedule to be completed at the end of September.

7. Program Reports: Written reports were submitted to the Board members in advance of the meeting. Mr. Barnett thanked the directors for their interesting information. The adult services staff was commended for their fortitude in the dealing with the heat by Mr. Barnett, program director Karren Griffith and Mrs. Benson.

8. Old Business: Carpet for Carousel: Mrs. Benson stated that in light of other more pressing concerns, this topic needed to be tabled indefinitely.

9. Committee Reports

A. Staff Advisory Council: No report

B. Personnel Committee: No report

C. Ethics Council: No report

D. Public Information Committee: Margaret Compton reported that the fair booth was successful. The week was extremely hot and she thought that attendance must have been down overall, but many favorable remarks had been received about the booth. The staff stepped up and kept it manned from 10 AM to 10 PM daily as required. She expressed gratitude to all who helped with the project and with the Vern Riffe School exhibit that was given a place in another building with all the other schools for the first time.

E. Trust Fund Committee: A report on the fund was distributed with the financial report earlier in the meeting.

F. Superintendent Search: Mr. Barnett reporting

Mr. Barnett had a letter to share from Ohio Association of County Boards Director Dan Ohler stating that there were five applicants, four of whom have current superintendent certification and the fifth will have it before Mrs. Benson's retirement date. He also noted that none of them live in the county. A sixth one was anticipated and will be accepted if it is postmarked by the date the posting closed. Mr. Ohler's letter also contained some suggested interview dates and Mr. Barnett stated that he expected that times would need to be arranged so that the candidates would have a chance to visit our facilities.

He noted that some of the discussion on this topic tonight would have to be held in executive session. Two of the candidates have requested their names be kept from the public to protect their current employment.

10. New Business:

Bus Routes: Even though they are subject to change, the Board is required to approve the bus routes for the school's students. This information had been prepared by Karin Campbell of Petermann, Ltd., who was on hand to answer questions. Mr. Thoroughman made the motion to approve the routes. Mr. Rockwell seconded. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

11. Executive Session: Mr. Barnett made the motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing the compensation of a public employee (the investigative agent) and to discuss the individuals who had applied for the superintendent's position. Mr. Thoroughman seconded the motion, which was approved at 7:08 PM. The Board resumed open session at 8:08 PM and Mr. Thoroughman made a motion to that effect. Mr. Rockwell seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Actions as a result of Executive Session:

- A. Mr. Barnett announced that the Board has decided to interview four candidates. Dates and times were narrowed down, but needed to be confirmed.
- B. Mr. Kleha made the motion to approve a three-year contract for the investigative agent with a five percent pay increase each year. Mrs. Childers seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

12. Comments from the Floor: None

13. Adjournment: Mr. Thoroughman made the motion to adjourn at 8:12 PM. This was seconded by Mr. Rockwell.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stephanie Childers, Recording Secretary