

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG  
LEGISLATIVE MEETING  
March 24, 2015**

The March 24, 2015 Legislative Meeting of the Wilkinsburg School District Board of Directors was called to order by the Board President, Ed Donovan at 7:02 pm. The meeting was held in the Administration Building at 718 Wallace Avenue, starting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The following board members were in attendance: LaTonya Washington, Richard Bradford, Klara K. Brown, Michael A. Johnson, Karen E. Payne, Debra Raubenstrauch and Kevin C. Urda. Phil Martell, Director of Business Affairs and the Solicitor Matthew Hoffman, of the firm Tucker Arensberg, P.C., were also present.

An Executive Session was held prior to the Legislative Session to discuss legal matters.

**STUDENTS OF THE MONTH**

Students of the Month were recognized from both Elementary schools and from the Middle and High School. Board members will provide complimentary tickets to the families of each student of the month to attend the PSO Concert on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES**

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Richard Bradford to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2015 Legislative meeting.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Richard Bradford to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2015 Legislative meeting.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Urda received a letter from a construction company about the Elementary School project, he let them know that it was too soon to discuss details. Mr. Donovan received correspondence from a School Furniture company which he will forward to Mr. Urda and Mr. Johnson.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

none

**BOARD AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Richard Bradford, seconded by Michael Johnson to approve changes to the 2014-2015 School Calendar to accommodate snow days. For the snow day on February 20, 2015 the make-up day will be April 1, 2015, which will now be a regular school day. For the snow day on March 5, 2015, the make-up day will be April 2, 2015, turning a local holiday into a regular school day. April 6, 2015 will now be ½ inservice and ½ clerical day for staff.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Ed Donovan to ratify and confirm the February 2015 General Fund payments of \$ 2,011,597.26 for payroll, benefits, and other operational expenses.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

The following reports as of February 27, 2015 will be made a matter of record in the minutes:

Treasurer’s Report	<b>Attachment Bus. #2</b>
EIT/EMST Report	<b>Attachment Bus. #3</b>
Current R.E. Collections Report	<b>Attachment Bus. #4</b>
Delinquent R.E. Collections Report	<b>Attachment Bus. #5</b>
Deed Transfer Tax Report	<b>Attachment Bus. #6</b>
Monthly Statement of Expenditures and Revenues	<b>Attachment Bus. #7</b>
Student Activity Report – Secondary	<b>Attachment Bus. #8</b>
Student Activity Report – Elementary	<b>Attachment Bus. #9</b>
Bond Fund – Budget Vs. Actual Expense Report	<b>Attachment Bus. #10</b>

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Finance Committee met on Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at 6:00 pm.

Board members attending: Deb Raubenstrauch (Chair), Klara Brown, Kevin Urda

Staff attending: Phil Martell, Dr. Dan Matsook

Community members attending: Jean Dexheimer, Jim Richard

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**Preliminary FY 16 Budget Review**

Mr. Martell began by going through the preliminary budget for FY16 and answering questions. Salary, benefits and special education costs were reviewed. The salary budget report will be changed to add a column showing YTD information for the current year. In addition, the special education and charter school reports will be changed to show FY 14 actual expenses along with YTD expenses for FY 15. Mr. Martell also reviewed the changes from the last meeting that were made for local, state and federal revenue. At the April meeting, technology, textbooks, district operations and school buildings will be reviewed. The preliminary budget as of March 2015 shows a deficit of over \$493,000 without showing the repayment to the AIU which brings the deficit to over \$1.2M, so there’s a lot of work to do.

Mr. Martell also reviewed the highlights and answered questions regarding the governor’s budget. If it passes, the district could receive an additional \$1.2 million in basic and special education funding. As part of the proposed budget, the governor is also looking at capping the expenses paid to cyber charter schools. This alone could result in an additional \$464,778 for the district.

The regular business reports including the check register, treasurer’s report, tax and finance reports were reviewed. In addition, the cash flow statement and charter school enrollment report were distributed and reviewed.

**There are 5 action items for board approval that the committee is recommending.**

- The committee reviewed the 3 year lease to purchase an additional 340 IPADs. 300 of them are for the children and will be paid out of the additional funds received from the KTO grant. 40 of the IPADs for the teachers will be paid out of the technology budget from the general fund.
- The committee also reviewed the request to purchase 18 IPAD air carts for the new computers. The carts are to be paid out of the technology budget from the general fund.
- The committee also reviewed the request to purchase IPAD coves to be paid out of the KTO grant and the general fund.
- Board action is requested to approve the Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium rates for FY 16, a 2.75% increase from last year.
- Board action is requested to exonerate Berkheimer. Mr. Martell will add the date and the total amount to be exonerated to the action item.
- Board action is requested to approve a resolution of the district regarding the bond fund.

**Other Items**

It was noted that at the last joint tax committee meeting, a recommendation was made to look at properties in the Borough that are over-assessed like Johnston School (for sale @ \$450K but assessed at over \$2.6M) and the former Mike Logan home which is for sale for \$180K but assessed at \$525,600 and that we'd also look at developing a policy for when to challenge the assessment on new purchases in the district. The annual deadline for challenging such appeals is March 31. Mr. Martell will ask John Vogel to attend the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

The Wilkesburg Joint Committee on Administrative Process to Reclaim Vacant Properties met Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 in Council chambers.

Phil Martell, Karen Payne and Deb Raubenstrauch attended on behalf of the School District. John Vogel, solicitor for the School District also attended. Michael Lefebvre and Amanda Ford attended on behalf of Borough Council. Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson was absent. Jennifer Cerce attended on behalf of MBM.

John Vogel briefed the committee on the school district's practice of challenging tax assessments. When defending tax appeals for the District, the solicitor appears only if the assessment is \$400,000 and above AND the property is commercial. The School District also is proactive and has filed tax appeals every spring based on recent property sales. Sales 35% or more above the assessed value with a purchase price over \$100,000 are identified and challenged. The \$400,000 minimum does not apply. The committee reviewed the list of 31 properties which are comprised of commercial, single family and vacant lots. The committee needs to get back to Mr. Vogel as soon as possible to meet the March 31 deadline.

Councilman Patrick Shattuck identified 7 properties that the committee reviewed and agreed that they were grossly over-assessed which has been a hindrance to their sales, including Johnston School. We agreed to ask the solicitor to challenge the assessments.

MBM identified a list of properties that had delinquent accounts less than \$250. The committee agreed to have MBM send reminder letters to those owners. Most of the amounts owed are for Borough and Municipal fees (\$17,887 and \$32,187). The total for the school district is \$6,883. They will not send letters to those owing \$10 or less.

There were no applications for tax abatement to review.

A question was asked whether we would recommend another amnesty program and the answer was no.

Karen Payne suggested that the WCDC be asked to come back to the committee to discuss in more detail their plans for the tax abatement. The committee wants to ensure that there is a process for tracking in place. Amanda Ford will contact Tracey Evans.

Karen Payne also suggested that we review Section 8 properties that may be tax delinquent at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

**FINANCE AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Richard Bradford, seconded by Ed Donovan to approve a three (3) year lease purchase with Apple Financial Services for \$ 154,013.55 for iPads.

300 iPads paid for by KTO Funds	\$136,800.00
40 iPads paid for by the General Fund	<u>\$ 17,213.55</u>
	\$154,013.55

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Richard Bradford to approve the purchase of 18 iPad Air Carts from School Specialty Services in the amount of \$26,583.48. These are to be paid for by the Technology Budget.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Richard Bradford to approve the purchase of iPad covers through CDW Government for \$7,000. Paid for by Keys to Opportunity funds.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Richard Bradford, seconded by Michael Johnson to approve the Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium (ACSHIC) rates for the 2015/2016 fiscal year which presents a 2.75% increase for Keystone HMO and Select Blue, as per the attached.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Ed Donovan to exonerate Berkheimer Tax Administrator, Inc from further collection of the 2014 real estate taxes, and to authorize the Director of Finance and Operations to further proceed to provide the information on unpaid real estate taxes to Maiello, Brungo and Maiello Associates, Ltd., so that the collection of delinquent real estate taxes may proceed. The total amount is \$2,888,467.22 and these will be exonerated as of March 24, 2015.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Richard Bradford, seconded by Klara Brown to approve a Resolution of the Board of School Directors of the Wilkinsburg Borough School District 2015-001 Requiring Formal Action Constituting a Debt Ordinance under the Local Government Unit Debt Act.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Richard Bradford, seconded by Michael Johnson to approve the agreement with DAC Bond for SEC Disclosure Compliance Services. The amount not to exceed \$4,000.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

## **BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT**

**March 10, 2015, 7:30-8:15pm**

**Building and Grounds Committee Meeting**

**Attendees: Kevin Urda, Deb Raubenstrauch, Karen Payne, Klara Brown, Dan Matsook, Ryan Pierce, Jean Dexheimer**

- Construction Plans for Turner and Kelly Elementary will now be concurrent instead of staggered. The bulk of the renovations and additions will take place during Summer 2016, which will start as soon as school lets out in June 2016.
- The change in the timeline will allow mechanical, electrical, and plumbing upgrades to be done without the need to run concurrent systems during the upgrades. Disruptions to the classrooms will be reduced. The only scheduled school overlap is the addition on Turner, scheduled to start in March 2016.
- The timeline change makes construction bids due in December 2015, allowing us to take advantage of the prime bid season when construction companies are lining up their summer work. January 2016 will be targeted to award bids.
- New design schematics will be available in April 2015.

### **Construction Open Houses**

**GOAL:** Discuss goals of the renovations: *enhance the look of each school, upgrade IT, and improve safety.*

**Tuesday, May 5, 6:00-7:00pm** – Turner Elementary School (Tanya Smith)

**Wednesday, May 6, 6:00-7:00pm** – Kelly Elementary School (Rosalind Fisher)

1. The elementary school principal will welcome attendees.
2. Dr. Matsook will speak to the economics of renovating the schools.
3. Ryan Pierce will then walk through the design schematics.

Families of each school will be invited. Each Open House is open to the public as well and will be advertised in the Wilkinsburg Sun and on the school website. Outreach invitations will be sent to Wilkinsburg community organizations as well.

Light refreshments will be served. Board members are encouraged to attend one or both sessions.

### **SITE VISITS**

The architect has scheduled a visit to the Quaker Valley School District – Osborne Elementary School (Edgeworth/Sewickly area) for **Thursday, March 26, at 6:30pm**. Two more site visits are

being arranged by the architect to other elementary schools: Twin Rivers Elementary School (McKeesport) and Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy (Oakland).

**BUILDING AND GROUNDS AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Klara Brown, seconded by Richard Bradford to approve the following (2) two invoices with J.C. Pierce and Associates for the capital project at Kelly and Turner Elementary.

- |                          |             |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Invoice 2900-13-03-03 | \$21,883.25 | <b>Attachment BG #2</b> |
| 2. Invoice 2900-14-04-03 | \$11,711.50 | <b>Attachment BG #3</b> |

(Capital Fund balance: **\$6,203,416.19** after invoices paid.)

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT REPORT**

No meeting in March

**ATHLETICS AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES REPORT**

Discussions are underway to have Field Days at each Elementary School, in lieu of Fun Fair.

**PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT**

Plans are underway for the renovation of Whitney Park. The vacant space at the corner of Wood Street and South Avenue has been designated as a green space.

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Karen Payne, seconded by Debra Raubenstrauch to approve all of the following permits for use of school property:

- A. For Michelle Agatston/Lois Clark for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra committee, for a meeting on March 9, 2015, 3:30pm to 5:00pm in the Board Room at the Administration Building.
- B. For Senator Jay Costa for a public town hall meeting on March 12, 2015, 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the High School Auditorium.
- C. For Michelle Agatston for Pre-Kindergarten registration on March 16 and 17, 2015, 10:00am to 12:00pm in the Board Room of the Administration Building.

- D. For Michelle Agatston for Pre-Kindergarten registration on April 8 and 9, 2015, 3:00pm to 5:00pm in the Board Room of the Administration Building.
- E. For Ray Strobel for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Concert on April 23, 2015, 12:00pm to 9:00pm in the High School auditorium, and Rooms 117, 118, 119.
- F. For Karla Lewis for Union Meetings on March 23 and 24, 2015 from 3:00pm to 4:30pm in the Library at Turner Elementary School.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

### **Athletics**

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Karen Payne to approve the recommendation of the Athletic Director to cancel the varsity Baseball schedule for the 2014-2015 Spring sports season. Coaches salaries will be pro-rated, effective immediately.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

## **CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

The Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment committee did not meet this month.

### **Eastern Area Special Schools Report**

no report

### **Forbes Road Career and Technology Center**

#### **Forbes Road Career and Technology Center Report, March 26, 2015**

Forbes Road Combined Planning/Board meeting was held on Thursday, March 26th at 6:30pm.

Congratulations! Wilkinsburg had 22 students attend the "Hands on Tours" at Forbes Road CTC on March 19, 2015. Thank you to the administration and staff persons who made this possible.

An added thank you to Ms. Michelle Collins, our guidance counselor, for attending the Forbes Road Principals/Counselors meeting on 03/26/2015. The final Principals/Counselors meeting of the school year will be held on 05/07/2015.

Let's keep up the momentum and finish strong! We hope to receive a similar report next month.

As an fyi...

The Franklin Regional School District would like to become a member district of Forbes. PDE makes the final decision. However, it was a consensus that this would be a great addition, inclusive of annual decrease in costs per district based on the added school district.

Current Director of Forbes Road CTC is retiring as of June 30, 2015. The Assistant-Director will substitute while the current director uses final vacation days. This position will be posted. In the interim, the Assistant-Director will be the acting director.

The next meeting will be held on April 23, 2015 at 6:30pm.

### **CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Klara Brown, seconded by Michael Johnson to approve all of the following professional development opportunities:

- A. Judy Baudoux, Kristen Depofi, Michelle Agatston and Walter Wilson to attend the **KTO Literacy Conference** on June 22-26, 2015 in Harrisburg. The costs will be covered by the KTO grant.
- B. Carrie Brueckner to attend the **Home Visitor Conference** on March 27, 2015 at the University of Pittsburgh. The only cost to the district is for travel expenses.
- C. Carrie Brueckner to attend the **STAR-Center Conference** on May 1, 2015 at the University of Pittsburgh. The cost to the district is \$60 for registration.
- D. Phil Martell to participate in the **Charter School Operations: How They Differ from Other Public Schools** webcast, offered by PASBO on April 17, 2015. The cost to the district is \$80 for registration.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

### **PERSONNEL REPORT**

no report

### **PERSONNEL AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Karen Payne to approve the retirement of Michelle Agatston, Pre-K Director, effective June 30, 2015.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

A motion was made by Karen Payne, seconded by Richard Bradford to ratify and confirm paid and unpaid leave for Velma Parker, PIMS Administrator, from March 13, 2015 to June 7, 2015.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

### **POLICY AND PLANNING REPORT**

no report

**POLICY AND PLANNING AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Karen Payne to approve the first of two readings of the following policies:

1. Policy No. 317, Section: Administrative Employees, Title: Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures
2. Policy No. 317.1, Section: Employees, Title: Educator Misconduct
3. Policy No. 818, Section: Operations, Title: Contracted Services

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. James Richard, of 925 Rebecca Avenue, urged the Board to consider renovating the telephone system in the district.

LaTonya Washington reported that the Board is currently ahead of Borough Council in their contest to sell the most tickets for the PSO Concert on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

A motion was made by Michael Johnson, seconded by Richard Bradford to excuse Tiffany Lumpkin from attendance at the Legislative Session.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Matsook shared the district and charter enrollment numbers. He also announced that a meeting will be held this week between the company completing the wireless upgrade and the architect.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Any questions about the Solicitor's Report should be directed to Dr. Matsook.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Karen Payne, seconded by Michael Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm.

*The motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:

*Jeanne E. Taylor*  
School Board Secretary