

**BROOKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT 167
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OCTOBER 3, 2011
BOARD ROOM - ADMINISTRATIVE & DIAGNOSTIC CENTER**

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Deborah Birmingham called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was answered by: Wheeler, Pettis, Plott, Birmingham, Brunson, and Taylor

6 Present
1 Absent

Absent: John Dixon

II. REFERENDUM

Ms. Birmingham stated that the Board needs to decide how to proceed regarding the referendum. The Board needs to market the school district, listen to the community members, and have a united front.

Mr. Taylor asked if the Board hired the company that will help with the referendum. Ms. Birmingham answered that Baum & Associates was hired and they will put out a questionnaire toward the end of the year and do the bulk of the work.

Dr. Hollich indicated that the company will do a phone survey in May but we may want them to do a survey after the holidays and then again in the spring.

Mrs. Wheeler stated that the Board needs to decide which way to go with the referendum before doing the survey. Ms. Birmingham concurred stating that the Board needs to get input before they decide. Mrs. Plott asked if the referendum will have a question to either add an addition or build a new school. Dr. Hollich stated that we need input to make an informed decision on what the question should be. Mrs. Plott indicated that one option would raise taxes and the other wouldn't.

Dr. Hollich stated that Baum & Associates knows how to share information very factually and it is well worth the money for them to do the two surveys. The Board needs to decide if there is enough support to do a referendum.

Ms. Wheeler stated that when Homewood ran their referendum,

they informed the residents exactly how it would affect their taxes. The District needs to be clear on what the cost will be and exactly what it will be for.

Mr. Taylor felt it was a good idea to have a third party that will communicate information effectively.

III. EDUCATION TOWN HALL MEETING

Ms. Birmingham hopes to schedule the education town hall meeting after the Board has their strategic planning meeting this Saturday when they will develop their vision. The Board needs to find out what the community's aspirations are for the district.

Ms. Birmingham asked the Board how they want the town hall meeting set up. The Board needs to listen to the community's concerns and let them know that the Board is making changes.

Mrs. Wheeler stated that the Board needs to listen to parent concerns. She feels that parents are concerned about the expectation level and they want their children challenged.

Mrs. Plott pointed out that people can come to the town hall meeting to complain or they can come to present ideas and the meeting should be for a particular reason. Ms. Birmingham stated that as elected officials, the Board has the responsibility to listen to complaints as well as ideas. The Board should present a positive message but also needs to know their concerns. Dr. Hollich stated that the Board should articulate that they are developing a vision for the next five years and they want community members' input on what that vision should look like.

Mrs. Plott stated she feels it is important that the community know why the district's poverty level is so high. Ms. Birmingham stated she doesn't want our district classified as low income because of a government formula. Mr. Charleston pointed out that we do have that many people filling out and qualifying for free/reduced lunch. Dr. Hollich stated that there is more to it than our free/reduced lunch rate.

Ms. Birmingham asked what month the education town hall meeting should be held, December or January. Mr. Taylor felt it should be in January. Mrs. Brunson thought that the spring would be better. Dr. Hollich felt that spring would be too close to the phone survey. Mrs. Brunson suggested the end of February which would give the Board more time to formulate ideas. Dr. Hollich suggested there could be more

than one education town hall meeting at different times of the day/evening. Mrs. Birmingham suggested February or March. Dr. Hollich pointed out that it should probably be done before soccer and baseball season begins. It was decided that the education town hall meeting will be held at the end of February. Mrs. Plott felt that this would give the Board time to communicate to the community.

Ms. Birmingham suggested setting up a voter registration booth at the concert on October 13, 2011. Ms. Birmingham also suggested that Board members could communicate what the district is doing when they attend local agency events and meetings in the community.

IV. PRE-K BUILDING GRANT

Dr. Hollich explained there is a Request for Proposals for a Pre-K building grant which is due November 30th. She is proposing to write the grant for two Pre-K classrooms and a new cafeteria for Hickory Bend School. This would allow the district to offer four half-day Pre-K sessions at Longwood and four half-day sessions at Hickory Bend and all students would attend their home school. The "old" cafeteria at Hickory Bend would be used for a multipurpose room. The cost of this project would be approximately 2 million dollars and the district would have to put up only ten percent or \$200,000. Dr. Hollich explained that there are 50-60 students to be screened for Pre-K at the next screening for only eight open slots. Dr. Hollich stated she is willing to write the grant and is looking for the Board's thoughts.

Ms. Birmingham asked if the district has the population and is it possible to offer Pre-K to students who are currently in a private day care now or must it be only for at-risk children.

Dr. Hollich responded that it must be for at-risk children. If the District opened it up to general Pre-K students, there would be no funding from the state and there would be an expense to the District.

Mr. Taylor asked when the District would know if we received the grant. Dr. Hollich responded early spring. If the District did receive the grant, Mr. Planera would draw up the plans, we could hopefully break ground in early 2013 and be ready for the 2013-2014 school year.

Mrs. Wheeler asked why we are automatically going to Mr. Planera and not going to bid. Dr. Hollich explained that Mr. Planera is the architect who will draw up the plans. Then the District

will go to bid for a general contractor who will bid for subcontractors.

Ms. Birmingham asked how many Pre-K students are enrolled now. Dr. Hollich responded about 68 students. Ms. Birmingham stated that two years ago, the state was considering not funding Pre-K. If the District gets this grant, will the state continue to fund Pre-K? Dr. Hollich responded that this year the District re-wrote the Pre-K grant and it was an all or nothing grant. We received the full amount possible, \$240,000 for 80 children. Dr. Hollich felt the state wouldn't release funds for a Pre-K building grant if they weren't going to fund Pre-K. Mrs. Plott asked where the Pre-K students are coming from (i.e., Manor, Forest, etc.). Dr. Hollich responded that if we add two classrooms at Hickory Bend, it will never be a perfect division but every effort will be made to have students attend Pre-K at their home school. However, students will be assigned as needed.

Mrs. Plott stated that the number of students being screened for Pre-K may indicate there is a growth spurt in possible student enrollment. Ms. Birmingham stated that several years ago, the building development at Glenwoodie was halted and asked Dr. Hollich what indication there is that the student population will increase. Dr. Hollich stated there is no data that indicates a spike in student population.

Ms. Birmingham asked if the District had a general Pre-K classroom (not at-risk), what would the cost be to the District. Dr. Hollich stated that the at-risk factors that we consider are very lengthy and it would be unlikely that we would not be able to fill the two classrooms at Hickory Bend. The District receives \$3,000 per child from the state. Dr. Hollich also mentioned that the Pre-K grant is written in collaboration with District 172.

Dr. Hollich stated that it can't hurt to write the grant. If the District receives the grant, it has the option of not taking the money. Mrs. Wheeler asked how long the grant would be for. Dr. Hollich stated that if we got the grant, we would get a timeline. It would most likely be for 18-24 months.

Mr. Charleston stated this is a one-time shot to build new classrooms but there are on-going costs for the program. Dr. Hollich stated that if we build the classrooms, she would write the Pre-K grant for 160 students instead of 80. Mrs. Wheeler's concern is the cost of the program. Dr. Hollich stated that the District must re-apply each year for the Pre-K grant and this year it was a competitive grant and we received the full amount.

Ms. Birmingham asked how many Pre-K students have special needs this year. Dr. Hollich stated there are 24 students.

Mrs. Plott stated that if we are turning students away, we should try for the grant. Ms. Birmingham asked if we receive the grant and don't accept it, do we still have to pay the ten percent. Dr. Hollich responded that if we get the grant and don't accept it, we don't have to pay anything. If we get the grant and accept it, we are committed to paying the 10 percent or \$200,000. Mr. Charleston stated that getting the grant and accepting the grant are two different things.

Ms. Birmingham asked if we could offer Pre-K to the public for a fee. Dr. Hollich stated it may be possible to have one Pre-K classroom on a tuition basis. Mr. Taylor asked how much additional money will it take to run two Pre-K classrooms at Hickory Bend. Mr. Charleston stated it would be \$240,000. Mr. Taylor asked how much of that is from grant funds. Mr. Charleston stated \$240,000. It's close to breakeven.

V. VILLAGE OF GLENWOOD AND DISTRICT 167 INTERGOVERNMENTAL BUS AGREEMENT

Donna Gayden, Village Administrator from the Village of Glenwood, spoke about the intergovernmental bus agreement. She indicated the Village is sponsoring after-school programs in conjunction with the park program, but the problem is getting the students to the necessary locations. They are also trying to build a senior program but have the same transportation problem. Ms. Gayden mentioned that currently there is a chess club meeting after school. Ms. Gayden indicated the Village of Glenwood will buy a 21 passenger bus and pay for the driver and insurance. The intergovernmental agreement would allow District 167 to use the bus. She suggested the District could pay a portion of the driver's cost, gas, or maintenance.

Dr. Hollich asked if this will be a new bus and will it be up to code. Ms. Gayden responded yes. The Village will not bid a new bus but rather use government contracts to purchase the bus. Ms. Birmingham asked why the Village couldn't purchase a 42 passenger bus. Ms. Gayden responded they are looking for a bus that is handicapped accessible.

Ms. Birmingham asked if the Village's attorney will meet with the District's attorney and come back to the Board to discuss specifics. Ms. Gayden responded yes, they are going to jointly work out the intergovernmental agreement.

Mrs. Plott asked where the chess club is meeting. Ms. Gayden said the chess club is meeting at the senior center.

Dr. Hollich stated that Mayor Durkin also mentioned the intergovernmental agreement on impact fees.

Ms. Birmingham stated that the Village is being very helpful in having after-school programs. Mrs. Plott stated that this is a very exciting proposition to be able to pick up students and get them to these activities.

Ms. Gayden asked the District to send announcements regarding school activities to the Village to be included on the Village's website and in their newsletter.

Ms. Gayden thanked Dr. Hollich for her help with the First Tee Program. The Village initially wanted 8 schools but they now have 15. They have had an overwhelming response.

Dr. Hollich asked Ms. Gayden if she could have the schedule of deadlines for the Village newsletter. Ms. Gayden indicated the next newsletter will go out in December with a November 18th deadline for articles.

Mr. Taylor asked if the bus purchased by the Village will replace the District's after-school bus. Dr. Hollich said it will not.

VI. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Linden asked if the overlap with District 172 has an impact on District 167's poverty level. Dr. Hollich responded that it does not. We wrote the Pre-K grant in conjunction with District 172 and their poverty level compares to ours.

Mrs. Wheeler pointed out that District 167's boundaries exceed the Village of Glenwood limits. She stated from the District's view, it is good to have a large poverty level. She indicated that the District's poverty level is 80% yet Glenwood's median income is \$72,000 a year which doesn't compare. Dr. Hollich stated that only 25% of the houses in Glenwood have children. Mrs. Plott mentioned that 60% of the residents in Glenwood are senior citizens.

Ms. Birmingham indicated that the Village of Glenwood is trying to showcase their community but the District has an 80% poverty level. Mr. Charleston indicated that 75% of families in the District qualify for free lunch. Dr. Hollich also mentioned that the District receives lists of families who receive food stamps or are direct certified from the state.

Ms. Gayden stated that when the Village does economic development, they look at the entire demographics from the surrounding communities. They don't just use Glenwood's statistics.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.
Taylor/Plott

Meeting
Adjourned
All AYE

Deborah M. Young
Recording Clerk

Secretary

President

Present: J. Charleston, M. Myers, C. Marcinski, W.Linden, and
D. Gayden.