READING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes – Special Meeting
June 13, 2012

The special committee meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administration Building, 800 Washington Street, Reading, Pennsylvania. Ms. Stroman, Board President, presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Stroman asked for a moment of silence in honor of any member of the Reading School District family who departed since we last met.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mrs. Acosta (arrived at 6:40 p.m.), Mr. Cooper (arrived at 6:50 p.m.), Mr. Denbowski, Mr. Heebner, Mrs. McCree, Mr. Storch, Mrs. Torres-Figueroa, Mr. Washington, Ms. Stroman

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Purcell, Mrs. Gokay, Mrs. Greth, Mr. Peters, the Budget Committee

PUBLIC SPEAKING

None.

FINANCE AND LEGAL RESOLUTION

Upon a motion by Mrs. McCree, seconded by Mrs. Torres-Figueroa, the Board approved the following Finance Resolution:

Rescind Resolution – Agreement for Consulting Services

60. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors of the Reading School District hereby rescinds Board Resolution FIN-40, approved on March 28, 2012, which tentatively approved an agreement with Linda Henning to provide consulting services.

The vote was 7 yeas, 0 nays. NOTE: Mrs. Acosta and Mr. Cooper were not in attendance at the time the vote was taken.

Yeas: Mr. Denbowski, Mr. Heebner, Mrs. McCree, Mr. Storch, Mrs. Torres-Figueroa, Mr. Washington, Ms. Stroman

Nays: None. The motion carried.
STUDENT SERVICES

Upon a motion by Mr. Storch, seconded by Mrs. Torres-Figueroa, the Board approved the following Student Services Resolutions:

56. Approves the 2011-2012 Contract between New Story (Kenhorst), 1300 New Holland Road, Reading, PA 19707 and the Reading School District, to provide Extended School Year (ESY) educational services to students, listed below, based on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), commencing June 18, 2012 thru July 20, 2012, at the daily tuition rate of $160.00/day and services as stated below. Cost not to exceed $51,490.63. (General Fund/Special Education Account #’s 10-1241-000-0-00-19-0-0/563; 10-1231-000-1-00-19-0-0/563; 10-1233-000-1-00-19-0-0/563 and 10-1233-000-3-00-19-0-0/563)

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Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr/wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks.  $ 3,750.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 20 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks  $ 2,000.00
Group Counseling – 2 hr./month @ $55./hr x 5 weeks  $ 137.50
TOTAL:  $ 9,887.50

ID #302431  Tuition – $160.00/day x 25 days  $ 4,000.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr/wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks.  $ 3,750.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 12 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks  $ 1,200.00
Group Counseling – 2 hr./month @ $55./hr x 5 weeks  $ 137.50
TOTAL:  $ 9,087.50

57. Approves the 2011-2012 Contract between New Story, 345 N. Wyomissing Blvd., Wyomissing, PA, 19610 and the Reading School District, to provide Extended School Year (ESY) educational services to students listed below, based on students’ Individual Education Plan (IEP), commencing June 18, 2012 thru July 20, 2012, at the daily tuition rate of $175.00/day plus services as stated below. Cost not to exceed $114,045.01. (General Fund/Special Education Account #'s 10-1233-000-1-00-19-0-0/563; and 10-1233-000-3-00-19-0-0/563)

ID #309571  Tuition – $175.00/day x 25 days  $ 4,375.00
OT – 30 min. /wk @ $75/hr. x 5 wks.  $ 187.50
OT – 30 min. /month @ $75/hr. x 5 weeks  $ 46.88
Behavior Consult/ABA – 12 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks  $ 1,200.00
TOTAL:  $ 5,809.38

ID #116855  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days  $ 4,375.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 15 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks  $ 1,500.00
TOTAL:  $ 5,875.00

ID #303892  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days  $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr. /wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks.  $ 3,750.00
Speech – 1 hr. /wk @ $75/hr. x 5 wks.  $ 375.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 25 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks  $ 2,500.00
OT – 1 hr./wk. @ $75./hr x 5 wks.  $ 375.00
TOTAL:  $11,375.00

ID #301018  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days  $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr. /wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks.  $ 3,750.00
Speech – 15 min. /wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks.  $ 93.75
Behavior Consult/ABA – 20 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks  $ 2,000.00
OT - 30 min./wk. @ $75/hr x 5 wks. $ 187.50
TOTAL: $10,406.25

ID #309976  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant - 30 hr./wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks. $ 3,750.00
Speech - 40 min./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $  251.25
Behavior Consult/ABA - 20 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $ 2,000.00
OT - 1 hr./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $ 375.00
TOTAL: $10,751.25

ID #302831  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant - 30 hr./wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks. $ 3,750.00
Speech - 1 hr./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $ 375.00
Speech - 1 hr./month @ $75/hr. x 5 weeks $ 93.75
Behavior Consult/ABA - 20 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $ 2,000.00
OT - 1 hr./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $ 375.00
TOTAL: $10,968.75

ID #121906  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant - 30 hr./wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks. $ 3,750.00
Speech - 30 min./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $ 187.50
Behavior Consult/ABA - 20 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $ 2,000.00
TOTAL: $10,312.50

ID #301295  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant - 30 hr./wk @ $20/hr x 5 wks. $ 3,000.00
Behavior Consult/ABA - 15 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $ 1,500.00
TOTAL: $ 8,875.00

ID #111536  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant - 30 hr./wk @ $20/hr x 5 wks. $ 3,000.00
Speech - 30 min./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $ 187.50
Behavior Consult/ABA - 10 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $ 1,000.00
Individual Career Counseling - 3 hrs./wk @ $80/hr. x 5 wks. $ 1,200.00
TOTAL: $ 9,762.50

ID #303726  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $ 4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant - 30 hr./wk @ $25/hr x 5 wks. $ 3,750.00
Speech - 1 hr./wk. @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $ 375.00
Behavior Consult/ABA - 15 hr./month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $ 1,500.00
OT - 30 min./wk. @ $75/hr x 5 wks. $ 187.50
TOTAL: $10,187.50

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ID #112840  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr/wk @ $20/hr x 5 wks. $3,000.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 15 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $1,500.00
Individual Career Counseling – 3 hrs. /wk @ $80/hr x 5 ks.$1,200.00
TOTAL: $10,075.00

ID #127582  Tuition - $175.00/day x 25 days $4,375.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr/wk @ $20/hr x 5 wks. $3,000.00
Speech – 30 min. /wk @ $75/hr. x 5 wks. $187.50
OT – 30 min. / 2 wks. @ $75/hr. x 2 wks. $37.50
OT – 30 min. /month @ $75/hr. x 5 weeks $46.88
Behavior Consult/ABA – 20 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 5 weeks $2,000.00
TOTAL: $9,646.88

SS-58
Approves the 2011-2012 Contract between New Story, 345 N. Wyomissing Blvd., Wyomissing, PA, 19610 and the Reading School District, to provide Extended School Year (ESY) educational services to students listed below, based on students’ Individual Education Plan (IEP), commencing June 18, 2012 thru August 10, 2012, at the daily tuition rate of $175.00/day plus services as stated below. Cost not to exceed $33,300.00. (General Fund/Special Education Account #’s 10-1233-000-1-00-19-0-0/563; and 10-1233-000-3-00-19-0-0/563)

ID #126757  Tuition - $175.00/day x 40 days $7,000.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr/wk @ $25/hr x 8 wks. $6,000.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 20 hr./month @ $80/hr x 2 months$3,200.00
TOTAL: $15,000.00

ID #119417  Tuition - $175.00/day x 40 days $7,000.00
Personal Care Assistant – 30 hr/wk @ $25/hr x 8 wks. $6,000.00
Speech – 2.5 hrs. /wk @ $75/hr. x 8 wks. $1,500.00
Behavior Consult/ABA – 20 hr. /month @ $80/hr x 2 months$3,200.00
OT – 1 hr. /wk. @ $75./hr x8 wks. $600.00
TOTAL: $18,300.00

SS-58-A

The vote was 8 yeas, 0 nays. NOTE-Mrs. Acosta was in attendance for the vote.
Yeas: Mr. Denbowksi, Mr. Heebner, Mrs. McCree, Mr. Storch, Mrs. Torres-Figueroa, Mr. Washington, Mrs. Acosta, Ms. Stroman.

Nays: None. The motion carried.

DISCUSSION –
APPOINTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATOR TO
THE READING
RECREATION
COMMISSION

Mr. Washington explained the Rec Commission appointments. Mrs. Torres-Figueroa asked that we follow the process; two of the original individuals are still interested.

Mr. Heebner shared that he would like Todd Conn to be the administrator appointment, due to all the discussion with regard to facilities. This is for the administrative position.

Mr. Denbowksi said that this should be someone who could make decisions. For example, the athletic department would have to go to the facilities department for final approval. This should be someone at the Cabinet level. This is something to keep in consideration.

How often does the committee meet? The second Tuesday of the month. Mrs. McCree stated that this is a lot of time for an administrator to put in. Cabinet level administrators are still the main people who need to make sure the decisions made happen.

Ms. Stroman asked if anyone knows the structure in Lancaster. Mr. Washington shared that the athletic director attended, but the representative was the assistant superintendent. The district is hoping that the REC Commission can pick up the ball with regard to middle school sports, so it is more a collaboration with the athletic department. We have a number of options; it could be the director of elementary ed, but no matter who we choose, it still goes through the school administrators, athletic director and facilities. There is no one individual who will do it all.

Mrs. Torres-Figueroa shared that we should model this as close to the one that currently exists. Mr. Washington said that ultimately it will be Dr. Purcell’s position. Ms. Stroman shared that we will leave that with Dr. Purcell. She also said that we need to make an informed decision on the community person. Mr. Washington said that we are not getting very far.

Mrs. Torres-Figueroa asked that we bring the three names forward -
DISCUSSION - CLOSING OF A SCHOOL BUILDING

Mr. Gefken and the two others. We will send the information by email, and the board will weigh in. This will be for June.

Ms. Stroman asked that Mr. Guida speak to whether the district was within their rights to close the building or not.

Mr. Guida said that last Monday Mrs. Greth sent an email to him with regard to not following procedures for closing schools, according to WFMZ, Channel 69. Mr. Guida explained that he shared with 69 that it was only if we were closing permanently. We contacted PDE to determine where we were with the request. Mr. Guida shared that Steve Fisher from PDE has it on his desk, and he informed Mr. Guida that he needed the recommendation of the superintendent in order to make his decision. Mr. Guida sent an email that we had to make a decision. Mr. Guida said that either Dr. Purcell makes the recommendation or come up with a plan that she could agree with.

Ms. Stroman said that she is concerned because she thought it was already moving forward. Mr. Guida shared that board action should be enough, but PDE wants the approval of the superintendent.

Mrs. Torres-Figueroa is concerned that we cannot pass the budget until PDE grants our request. She asked Mr. Guida is we could submit a budget without the approval of PDE for program curtailment, and Mr. Guida said that this was a very good question.

Mrs. Gokay shared that for some of the recommendations, a form needs to be completed, in terms of numbers of students, etc. PDE has all that information, but will not entertain any of those requests until after June 14. Mrs. Gokay also shared that any school district going through this must go through the process.

Mrs. Torres-Figueroa is asking about this because the board is concerned that we will not be able to strike a budget for this timeline. Mrs. Gokay said that all we need are the grade configurations and a letter signed by the superintendent.

Ms. Stroman shared that she brought this forward because she has gotten calls because the media is asking/alleging that we are not doing what we need to be doing.
Mr. Cooper explained that his annoyance is that if it’s not the Reading Eagle, it’s Channel 69. He could care less what those media outlets do. We need to follow the path that we set. There is no accurate reporting. He said that we must focus on doing what’s right for the students. Mrs. Torres-Figueroa’s concern is that we’ve never been in this situation before. We are making sure what needs to be done is done.

Mrs. Gokay said that we did know the process, but unfortunately, the rep from PDE did not have the correct information. Mrs. Torres-Figueroa shared that after watching Mr. Washington on TV, it is restoring for her that we are doing everything we must do; human error happens. Mr. Cooper then said that based on what you heard or saw was what caused you concern.

Mrs. Acosta said that this is what happens when the board is not on the same page. Having arguments is not going to help. We need to work as a team and put the district and students first.

Mrs. McCree shared that she has hear about “team,” and the only people who were going to talk to the media were the president and vice president, but nobody listens to that. Telling your true story is not being responsible for getting the district’s story out. Many times we, the board, are feeding them and then we act like we’re not doing that, and then we say we’re a team. Well, a tem doesn’t rat out another one. Watch what you say when you walk out the door. The media is picking it up and running the stories.

Mr. Denbowski shared that the media is asking because the parents and community want to know, and unlike the private sector, we must inform the public. What is the timeline; is the superintendent going to approve this program curtailment? Dr. Purcell said that she will be sending in a letter on Monday.

DISCUSSION - SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT

Ms. Stroman shared that she met with Dr. Purcell about the board retreat. Dr. Purcell is working to seek a donor; facilitators have to be paid. The retreat will be on a Friday and Saturday. The key facilitator will be sending Dr. Purcell available dates, and she will inform the board of those dates. Dr. Purcell asked that Mr. Peters join the retreat.

BUDGET UPDATE

Mrs. Gokay shared that she will be working with Mr. Peters with
regard to the numbers before moving forward. Some of the actions are already being taken. The administration met with the staff members that were affected by the furloughs. Furlough notices were delivered to teachers prior to the rapid response team meeting.

The administration continues to work with the special ed department to identify specific staff members to meet the needs of our students. We will be creating a recall notice to handle those needs. The AFSCME representatives are here tonight and we worked through this today. Notices were given to that group of employees today also. Another rapid response meeting was scheduled for this Friday.

Notices were also given to RESPA. We will need to look at the Teamsters and Security staff; we will be talking to the board with regard to security.

One of the reasons we will be having an executive session is to discuss reassignments. We are trying to get everyone placed. Not everything is written in stone. The question was asked where we are with retiree benefits. To clarify, we have not done anything to increase rates at this time. We are working with John Stott to see who is not to be receiving benefits. We are also working with HOP so we must delay the implementation for putting changes through until August 1. We want to give individuals as much time as possible.

The administration continues to work with the various union groups to see what our district will look like based on contractual obligations.

Mr. Storch - “When you mentioned about contracts, suppose you retired in 1992, and you received benefits; not you want to come along with something that was put into play after the fact. Those people retired with that in their contracts.” Mr. Storch also said that he received at least 25 calls about this. He told those retirees to make sure they had their contacts when they retire, and if the board doesn’t see the reality, then they should file a class action suit. If a person didn’t pay anything, then make them pay or drop them.

Mrs. Gokay shared that while she has taken on the responsibility of the budget, we are dealing with a $40 million deficit. The retiree insurance has been brought to the board numerous times. The
action taken was submitted by the labor council. The issue we are facing right now is that we are losing a great deal of staff members, and we will continue to address the needs of students. There are only so many places to look for money. It is a collective bargaining agreement, and as a result everyone is bound by the agreement.

Mr. Cooper said that we don’t have our labor council and Loomis here. There is a lot of misinformation. We must have them at our next meeting.

Mrs. McCree shared that for 13 years, every single year, this was brought to the board. The board had too many friends or family members. The issue that continues to come to the table are the Cobra rates. The board has turned it down every year. This year we must face the reality. We are an educational institution. We have lost people who are the front line people in our classrooms. In some cases, we were not supposed to provide coverage and did anyway. For those who are eligible, we will continue.

Mr. Denbowski asked what is the number now? Do we know? Mrs. Gokay shared that this is what we need to work on along with Mr. Peters.

Mr. Denbowski then asked if we were planning any meetings to go over the budget. Ms. Stroman said that she doesn’t think we will have anything by next week.

Mr. Washington said that the the committee needs direction. For example, no middle school athletics? This is a meeting by itself.

Mr. Cooper asked what specific things do we need to move on? The board must decide. We need a workshop for this; can we have a workshop on Monday?

Mrs. Gokay shared that we will talk about many HR issues tonight, but there are many things we need. Is the 18th ok? The committee is going through and trying to implement some of the things that have already been decided, but there are still many other things that need to be flushed out.

Mr. Peters shared that he is concerned about the timeline. On Monday, it will be a regurgitation. The committee has been focusing on the expenditures side; he is working on the revenues side. His
recommendation would be to put together a list of reducing the fund balance. The tentative date is Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

DISCUSSION - READING PUBLIC MUSEUM

Mr. Denbowski shared that the Reading Museum Foundation is suggesting a Trust Agreement. The changes are now up to the district. The solicitors sent out a memo regarding the roles of the different governing bodies. Mr. Guida, revisiting the issue for the fourth time, shared that this started in the 1920's when the Museum was created. The district owned everything. In the 1970's, the district experienced financial problems and wanted to sell items, but we couldn’t. In 1991, we had an agreement with the Museum Foundation, which owns the content of the Museum. The Museum property is owned by the district. In 1991, the Foundation was created to operate the Museum. The original agreement states that the Museum would be run by the Foundation. Mr. Guida will get the proposed changes for the board’s review and possible action. Mr. Denbowski will forward copies to the board. We normally elect officers in December, but we could meet in the future to handle by-laws, reading library, and have further discussions.

DISCUSSION - COMMUNICATION WITH MEDIA OUTLETS REGARDING CURTAILMENT OF PROGRAMS

Mrs. Torres-Figueroa asked if there is enough time this month, or do we connect with the media and community in July? Dr. Purcell wants to wait until we hear from the State.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board called an executive session for personnel issues at 8:25 p.m. Ms. Stroman announced that we will not be going back into public session, and no voting will occur.

The meeting ended at 10:37 p.m.