

Quick Board Summary

EPG

Connecting: ...to our students, staff, and community
Creating: ...the best learning opportunities
Committing: ...to student achievement

Board of Education

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John Hartness (2013)

Vice President

Eric Zehr (2015)

Secretary

David Mool (2015)

Member

Bill Schifferer (2013)

Member

Matt Stuckel (2013)

Member

Jeremy Faulk (2015)

Member

Rich Kiefer (2015)

Superintendent of Schools

Rick Johnston

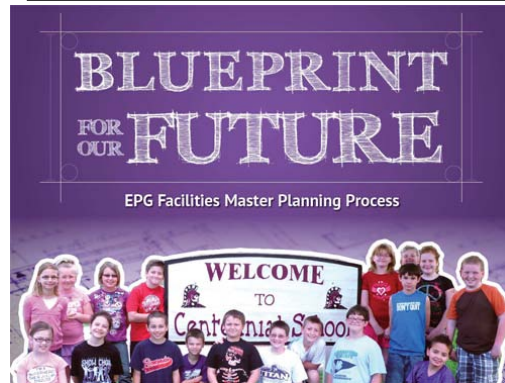
District Office

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Consent Agenda Items:

- A. Approval of minutes from the Board Meeting held on November 28, 2011
- B. Approval of minutes from the Board Closed Session held on November 28, 2011
- C. Approval of financial report
- D. Approval of bills
- E. Approve Katie Kurz as a volunteer for junior high girls volleyball for 2011-2012
- F. Approve Kristine Ruegge's resignation as a high school science teacher effective on the last day of the 2011-2012 school year
- G. Approve Dave Svehla's resignation as a teacher and head football coach effective the end of the 2011-2012 school year
- H. Approve the leave request of Abby Young.
- I. Approve submission of the Illinois State Library Grant for 2011-2012

Overview

The regular Board meeting was called to order by President John Hartness. All Board members were in attendance. All members of the administrative team were there. Visitors included Janet Smith, Jennifer Kearney (El Paso Journal), Nick Vlahos (Peoria Journal Star), Lois Kelsey, Chad Garey, Ted Garey, Randy Rote, Scott Kiefer, and Zach Kiefer. The posted agenda was not amended. There were no requests to address the Board of Education by the public prior to the meeting. President Hartness offered those in attendance the opportunity to address the Board if they desired and no one indicated that desire.

The Board of Education met in regular session at 7:00 pm at the Centennial Library in El Paso.

Overview (con't)

Sam Johnson, Carson Durham, and Jean Underwood BLDD Architects were in attendance to report to the BoE their findings from the public on the facilities master plan.

Chuck Feeney, president of the Citizens' Advisory Council, was in attendance to report to the BoE on the master planning recommendation and comments from the group.

The consent agenda was approved after Dave Mool asked about item G. It was clarified that as of right now, Mr. Svehla's resignation will be effected as of the end of the current school year. His resignation is a result of an employment transfer of his spouse.

Administrative Reports:

The administrators submit their written reports prior to the meeting so the BoE has those included in their board packet materials. Eric Zehr asked about the 1:1 Initiative Committee work to this point. Ms. Krug shared that the 1:1 team recently visited Pontiac HS and UHigh HS to see how their program has been integrated into the classroom. Math students in particular used their individual notebooks to complete tasks that were displayed in the front of the room so that the instructor could quickly review comprehension. Each department at EPGHS has a representative as part of the committee and the high school staff is undergoing trainings for developing a Google Docs environment in order to work collaboratively and communicate more efficiently with students. This work is being done in preparation for a possible environment at the high school next school year where every student will be assigned a personal electronic device to use daily. There were no other questions regarding the administrative board reports.

Superintendent Report:

January Meeting: There will be a board report from Ms. Karen Krug and Mr. Robby Tomlinson on the progress of the Transition’s Program at the high school and the alternative education program at the junior high.

Investments: Mr. Johnston reminded the BoE that three years ago there was no locally invested money by the district in the three financial institutions within our district. We investigated rates at the time and determined that we could securely invest \$250,000 in each of the three local banks at competitive rates. In addition, we rolled a \$1.2 million dollar investment to Heartland bank in a secured deposit that will create \$15,775 in interest income when mature versus what would have been less than \$600 had the investment strategies been maintained. While interest rates for investments remain low, we look for every opportunity to make our dollars work for the district. The Board reviewed the six month rates we just received on possible investments with current balances.

Long Range Facility Planning Report

- C. BLDD Architects summarized the Teacher Survey results when the 108 teachers in the district were asked to give their input. A formal summary was shared including comments submitted by staff members.
- D. Mr. Johnston shared the administrative team recommendations.
 - It is academically and socially essential to get all students in each grade level under one roof
 - Keeping a footprint in Gridley is sound for the district overall
 - Developing a plan that will create the best educational environment for the best value
 - It is with this mind that the administrative team endorses as a group Option 1 that emerged as the selection in the public process.
 - The administrative team understands that this is a living document that will have future public discussions and approvals through the referendum process. Nothing is set in stone as to the overall design/timeline for the master plan draft.
 - This plan lets those people in leadership roles for the district make the best decisions at the appropriate time given current facts.

- A. Mr. Chuck Feeney shared the recommendation and comments from the CAC. Those main points were:
 - The group felt that the public process was very strong and allowed for all to feel they were heard along the way
 - They particularly liked the small group settings where input was given and then reported back to the full group
 - The CAC appreciated that they did not feel pressured or were steered in any direction in this process
 - The CAC had a very good 2 hour meeting where they are in agreement with Option 1
 - The group felt like we should do all we can do to get the Village Board of Gridley to make the district “whole” now and in the future. It was pointed out that the members who reside in Gridley in particular want to see the community reiterate to their Village Board this commitment.
 - They would like to see the district be conservative in spending dollars in those areas that may soon be replaced over time.
 - The CAC supports moving forward with the Master Plan for facilities

- B. Sam Johnson (BLDD) reviewed the public meeting process and the findings from those meetings. What began two years ago with BoE discussions on facilities included questions that needed to be answered. The answers to those questions turned into goals for the district direction within this process. Those goals are and remain:

1. *All students of the same grade level under one roof*
2. *Keep a footprint in Gridley*
3. *Select a plan that gives us the best educational environment for our students at the best value*

The process and recommendation developed by the public is as follows:

- ✓ 3 public meetings with strong public representation
- ✓ Began with three scenarios, reviewed a total of 11 difference solutions, two options rose to the surface for the final meeting ending with Option 1 as the final recommendation

- ✓ Building Configurations:
 - JP PK-2 (construction in Phase 2)
 - Centennial 3-5 (upgrades in Phase 2)
 - EPGJH 6-8 (in Gridley) (new building Phase 2)
 - EPGHS (classroom/cafeteria addition in Phase 2)
 - (Relocate Football field and construct all weather track in Phase 1)
- ✓ The advantages of the recommended plan include:
 - Educationally driven; grade levels grouped in same buildings
 - Keeps a footprint in Gridley
 - All buildings receive work by Phase 2
 - No elementary/high school interaction
 - New gym in Gridley in Phase 2
 - Lowest first cost and overall cost option
 - Least amount of change for students from current configurations

The Board had discussion around what the next steps would be. Mr. Hartness shared that adopting the 20-25 year plan gives direction to this Board and future decision makers. This would simply mean that on each step of the way, additional discussions would take place—this spring on moving forward with Phase 1, near 2014 when a Phase 2 referendum would need to be held for public approval, and then 20-25 years down the road when the public would need to vote on the future of the High school facility. The board later adopted the Master Plan draft and also directed BLDD to develop design and secure bids for future review for Phase I.

Resolution to Withdraw from MVSPEC

The final reading of the resolution was presented to the Board. Mr. Johnston shared that meetings are being organized with Unit #5 personnel, Tri-County SPEC personnel, and Unit #11 staff in order to review the transition for both districts. Before a final recommendation this spring as to the cooperative that EPG schools will look to join, further discussions will occur with the Board. The resolution is written so that the MVSPEC will dissolve in June of 2013. Unit #5 has already passed this resolution and will be creating a standalone special district.

Response to the Village of Gridley Board TIF Proposal

The Board of Education reviewed the proposal from the Village of Gridley governing body concerning the recently adopted TIF district. There were numerous factors discussed:

1. The proposal does not include any future commercial or residential property.

2. The original information presented to the district by the Village’s legal team managing the TIF demonstrated what making the district “whole”
3. This agreement sets a precedent should future TIF districts come about within our school district.
4. The public TIF organizational meetings held in Gridley indicated that the citizens of Gridley want the village to keep the school district “whole”
5. Based on potential future plans for Kerry Industries, this agreement does not protect the district and its taxpayers over the life of the TIF.
6. This agreement will affect revenues for the school district for the next 23 years.

Mr. Zehr recently presented to the Village Board an explanation as to how this affects our schools. He believes that the village citizens strongly agree that the village board should be fair to the schools. He noted that the village would receive the largest portion of their TIF revenue as a result of the school levy while still making the district “whole”.

Mr. Hartness stated “It has been my perception over the years that the Gridley community truly supported and valued their school district demonstrating that at many levels. This proposal by the village board certainly does not match that level of commitment and value system.”

The BoE saw no reason to take formal action on the proposal and directed Mr. Johnston and Mr. Zehr to go back to the Village Board for additional negotiations.

Tax Levy Discussion:

Mr. Johnston presented the tax levy to the BoE that had been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee. The levy is based on a 2.45% growth in EAV for the district and is an increase of 2.38% from last year’s total levy. The figures are more conservative than other area districts. ”Since our bond payment went up slightly for this year (\$45,000), we worked to find those dollars within our regular budget to help offset that increase”, Mr. Johnston stated.

Individual Action Items

- a. **Approve Facilities Master Plan Draft (All yeas)**
- b. **Authorize BLDD Architects to receive bids for Board of Education review regarding Phase I of the Master Plan (All yeas)**
- c. **Approval of Resolution to Withdraw from MVSEC effective June 30, 2013 (All yeas)**
- d. **Approve Tax Levy for 2011 (All yeas)**
- e. **Consider Response to the Intergovernmental Agreement proposal from the Village of Gridley**

Closed Session

The session included PERSONNEL discussions of non-tenured teacher employment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.