

**MINUTES**  
**McLean County Unit District No. 5**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Special Session**  
**April 19, 2006**

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District No. 5, McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois, met in special session on April 19, 2006, at approximately 6:30 p.m. at the District Office, 1809 West Hovey Avenue, Normal, Illinois.

- 1.0 Roll Call** Members present: Gail Ann Briggs, Meta Mickens-Baker, Martin O'Connor (exited at 8:55 p.m.), John Puzauskas, Jay Reece, Steve Whittington, and Board President Scott Lay. Members absent: None.
- Also present: Superintendent Dr. Alan Chapman, Assistant Superintendent of Operations/H.R. John Pye, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction Jim Braksick, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer Tod Altenburg, Clerk of the Board Cynthia Prescher, Donna Evans (Clerk of the Board as of July 1, 2006), Meghan Leiseberg, Michelle Steinbacher from The Pantagraph, Kevin Heinkes from WJBC, Chuck Hartseil, Vickie Mahrt, Ben Matthews, Donna Lutkehaus, Shelly Erickson, Tim Arnold, Chuck Bartlett, Cory Tello, and others.
- 2.0 Pledge of Allegiance** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 3.0 Public Comments** None.
- 4.0 Board Work Session** President Lay opened the meeting and indicated the purpose of the board work session was to provide the administrative team with direction and feedback on various topics, including finance, growth, planning for the future, Citizens Advisory Council report recommendations, board/administrative relations, and policy issues. He noted that board members had been provided with some key questions to help guide the discussion.

Chapman stated that the list of key questions was not intended to limit discussion. He encouraged questions and feedback throughout the meeting and added that the administrative team would be presenting information relative to each of the agenda topics to facilitate discussion.

**4.1 2005-2006 Citizens Advisory Council Reports**

Chapman presented a summary of the recommendations made by the Unit 5 Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) in its three reports (Alternative Educational Structures, Change Management, and Unit 5 2025) presented at the March 22 board meeting.

Board members and administrators offered the following:

- Do more research on year-round schooling. The CAC's report did not include interviews with districts that have experienced year-round schooling.
- Investigate magnet schools and program clustering at high schools.
- Keep the alternative educational structures in our minds as we consider growth challenges. Another option might be considering systems to complement our approach to managing growth.
- If we consider alternative educational structures, involve the Unit Five Education Association (UFEA) to provide teacher input.
- An appropriate venue for researching alternative educational structures might be the District's Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) Task Force.
- At what point should the Board seek feedback from the public on alternative educational structures? It might be a waste of time to spend many hours researching year-round schooling, if the public has no desire for it in Unit 5.

- We need to know how the community defines public education and what is wanted in Bloomington-Normal. Class size seems to be important, but we have not really discussed with the community what else is important to define public education.
- The change management process is critical to communicating needed information and receiving input/feedback from our public.
- Concerning change management, the community should feel it is part of the decision-making process.
- In regard to change management, there might be a need for all involved to be change managers for each new process, particularly in regard to initiatives.
- Much of the CAC's Change Management report evolved from its previous Communication report.
- Greater use of the District's network of building principals was suggested in communicating with staff, parents, and the community on district-wide issues.
- Concerning the Unit 5 2025 report, long-range planning on an ongoing basis is needed to avoid shortsightedness.
- In addition to the Unit 5/Local Government Committee, consider involving other community stakeholders in long-range planning for the District.
- The Community Connections Committee is looking into the Study Circles concept as a means of communicating with and involving community stakeholders regarding District issues.

#### 4.2 2005-2006 Budget Report

Altenburg reported that as of March 31 the District had completed 75 percent of its budget year. In the major operating funds, he reported expenses to be on track with the budget. As expenditures in the Life Safety Fund have exceeded the budget by about 9 percent, Altenburg noted that the Board would need to consider the adoption of an amended budget at the June 14 board meeting to accommodate the additional expenditures. In response to whether there would be any additional Life Safety expenditures this school year, Altenburg clarified that additional Life Safety expenditures this school year were not anticipated. Concerning the geothermal heating systems to be installed at two schools this summer, he remarked that those expenditures would be applied to next year's budget.

#### 4.3 2006-2007 Projected Balances

Altenburg reviewed the estimated ending balances as of June 30, 2007 in the Educational, Operations and Maintenance, Transportation, and Working Cash Funds. An estimated deficit of over \$2.4 million was reported for the Operations and Maintenance Fund. Altenburg offered the possible options of transferring \$2.5 million from the Transportation Fund to the Operations and Maintenance (O & M) Fund or abolishing the Working Cash Fund and permanently transferring that fund balance to the O & M Fund. He noted that the transfer of funds from Transportation to the O & M Fund would need to be accomplished by June 2007, but abolishment of the Working Cash Fund could be done annually by board resolution. In response to a board member question about his recommendation, Altenburg responded that he favored abolishing the Working Cash Fund and transferring the balance to the O & M Fund. He indicated that portions of the Transportation and Working Cash Funds could also be transferred. A list of pros/cons or prohibitions for the alternatives to be considered was requested. It was noted that upcoming expenditures for portable classrooms and the addition to Grove Elementary School were included in estimating the ending balance in the O & M Fund. Also requested, were options for maintaining a positive cash flow in the O & M Fund.

#### 4.4 Enrollment Projections

#### 4.5 Growth Challenges

Chapman summarized actual and projected enrollment figures for 1996 through 2012. He reported that in-district average growth projections would slightly decline from 2006 to 2010, but would increase again in 2011. Chapman also reported that kindergarten growth over the past two years had averaged 63 students and special education growth over the past three years had averaged 53 students. He indicated the District had seen stronger growth over the last five years than over the last ten years. The estimated

overall student growth from 2005-2011 was reported to be 2,129 or 18.18 percent. Chapman felt a conservative approach had been taken in projecting growth. It was suggested it might be more realistic to take a less conservative approach given the enrollment increases over the past several years and consideration of a referendum.

Chapman shared local population projections provided by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, which indicated most of the projected growth for the McLean County metro area from 2005-2030 would be in Unit 5.

In regard to elementary enrollment and classroom needs projections, needs were expected to exceed available regular education classrooms in 2007-2008, with a classroom average of 23. With a classroom average of 25, needs were expected to exceed available classrooms in 2009-2010. At the middle school level, it was reported that enrollment would exceed permanent capacity in 2008-2009. It was reported that enrollment would exceed capacity in 2010-2011 at the high school level.

Current and planned residential development at all levels was presented. (Attachment #1)

In regard to special education enrollment projections, Chapman remarked that Cory Tello and Dr. Chuck Hartseil, directors of special education, had provided information based on growth for each special education area. A concern was noted about the expanding special education population. Tello stated that the District needed to address tier levels of support for all students, as mandated by No Child Left Behind and reauthorized special education federal law. She felt the addition of a tier level of support between regular education and special education would help reduce the special education enrollment. Tello felt the District was not over identifying special education students and noted that over the past several months there had been an influx of special education students from District 87 to Unit 5 due to the opening of several new housing complexes in the District. Pye stated that it had become necessary to add some special education classrooms due to the specialized nature of services needed by some students; i.e., autistic and early childhood students. Tello felt special education staff could also be reallocated in order to more efficiently utilize personnel.

#### 4.6 2006-2007 Staffing Projections

Pye presented a historical view of staffing projections from 2001-2002 to 2006-2007, which included the percent of change in enrollment and employee groups. (Attachment #2) He highlighted the need for 50 additional certified staff to accommodate student enrollment for the coming school year. In addition, he highlighted the need for 3 additional administrators, 5 additional teaching assistants, and 11 additional transportation employees. Pye noted that it was still a challenge to employ an adequate number of bus drivers for the District. In regard to the recommended increase in administrators, Pye stated that one of the three positions recommended was due to one principal no longer serving half-time at Carlock and Towanda Elementary Schools. He recommended the addition of an assistant principal at each high school to address minor student infractions within reasonable time frames; for timely follow-up on attendance issues; to maintain sufficient contact with students, staff and parents; and to proactively address behavioral issues. A comparison of the student-to-administrator ratio for Big 12 Conference schools was also provided.

Board members and administrators offered the following:

- The two high schools will see an increase in enrollment from this May to the start of school in August of 149 students.
- It was suggested consideration be given to adding administrative interns at the high schools rather than assistant principals. There is a pool of individuals interested in becoming administrators.
- In the past, administrative intern salaries were based on their teaching salaries and a per diem for the additional days worked. The intern program would be an option for consideration.

- Is there data-driven information from the high schools to show the impact of not having an additional administrator at each building?
- Perhaps the CEC could provide some best practices to address the issues without adding administrators.
- Other options should be explored before adding administrators.
- The charge to the administrative team this school year was to hold the student-to-staff ratio constant. There should be further refinements to address staffing numbers. We should take a look at the custodial/maintenance group, as it was not impacted in past reductions.

*The meeting was briefly recessed from 8:04-8:11 p.m.*

#### 4.7 Potential Referenda

- Projects
  - Elementary School(s)
  - Middle School
  - Land Acquisition
- Funds
  - Bond and Interest
  - Educational
  - Operations and Maintenance
- Timing
  - April 17, 2007
  - March 18, 2008

Chapman presented an update to the Facilities Report presented in November 2005, which included what had been accomplished/approved since the report. He emphasized that while no decision had been made yet regarding a future referendum or referenda, information pertaining to what a variety of referenda might accomplish was presented. The information included estimated construction costs and school construction timeframes. While specific information regarding land acquisition was not provided, Chapman estimated land could cost the District around \$20,000 per acre to acquire.

Board members and administrators offered the following:

- It was suggested the District might get more “bang for the buck” by adding onto some of its existing schools in high growth areas rather than building new schools.
- At what point does an elementary school become larger than desired in terms of serving students and having an appropriate educational environment?
- A previous CAC report recommended it was preferable, financially, to add onto existing buildings rather than build new ones.
- When an elementary school’s enrollment becomes larger than 700 students, you begin to lose the desired educational environment. To add onto some buildings, more than a classroom addition would be needed. Additional gymnasium, art, music, and kitchen facilities would be needed in some instances.
- Parents like the fact that the principal knows the name of every child in an elementary building, which becomes more challenging with a larger population.
- In building a new elementary school, at the minimum, it should be a quad to accommodate future growth.
- Transportation demands should be taken into consideration when deciding whether to add onto an existing school or build a new one.
- Even with two new quad elementary buildings, the District could still reach its capacity in five years.
- Retrofitting an existing school could be costly; i.e., adding sprinklers, etc.
- We are going to need two new schools. We are going to have to hold a referendum. We have an agreement with a developer, which states we must pass a referendum by 2008 in order to take advantage of that the offer.
- The Grove on Kickapoo Creek would seem like a logical place to build a school, as 1,000 homes are predicted to be built in that subdivision.

- As part of the School Land Dedication Ordinance, the District has an option to build a school in Northbridge Subdivision by 2009. The property will be sold and the assets from the sale would eventually come to the District, if a school is not built at that subdivision.
- I am not in favor of building a school on a corner of the NCHS property.
- A quad could be built on the Northbridge site, but it would be somewhat crowded.
- Parking at the NCHS site would be a concern for me.
- Will development in The Grove on Kickapoo Creek area progress quicker than the proposed subdivision in south Bloomington?
- Development in The Grove area is anticipated to be spread over a number of years.
- In looking at the big picture, maintaining our existing facilities should be a consideration.
- The District's school site at Hershey and Ireland Grove Rds. would accommodate a middle school. Enrollment figures suggest the need for a fourth middle school is approaching. The site is physically situated in an area that would serve a wide area of the District in east, south, and west Bloomington.
- The timeframe for constructing a middle school would be two plus years.
- Would it be possible to have land dedicated for a secondary school site?
- While an elementary school in a subdivision is an incentive for people to buy homes, the same does not hold true for a secondary school.
- We have not had conversations with anyone interested in providing a high school site. We are involved in informal discussions with a variety of property owners to see if anyone would be interested, as a matter of public service or tax incentive, to donate land to the District or sell at a favorable price, etc. It is estimated that 85 acres would be desired for a high school site. The NCHS site is 83 acres. A site in the south or southwest portion of the District would seem logical.

Chapman provided a summary of Bond and Interest Fund tax rates for various amounts of money for building/refunding bonds. For example, he indicated that \$30 million in bonds would add about 2 cents to the current Bond and Interest Fund tax rate of 62.79 cents over 13 years for a final rate of 18.75 cents. Fifty million dollars in bonds would add about 7.5+ cents to the tax rate over 14 years for a final rate of 63 cents. A \$30 million bond issue would result in an annual tax increase of approximately \$10.25, and a \$50 million bond issue would result in an annual tax increase of approximately \$37.90 for a \$150,000 home.

In regard to the Educational Fund, Chapman reported that the fund is projected to have a deficit balance beginning in 2009. He noted that a 15-cent increase in the tax rate for the Fund would result in a balanced budget through 2010. A 20-cent increase would result in a consistently balanced budget through 2011. A 15-cent rate increase would translate into an annual tax increase of \$75, and a 20-cent rate increase would translate into a \$100 annual tax increase for a \$150,000 home.

Chapman stated that the current tax rate of 50 cents for the Operations and Maintenance Fund is insufficient to generate a positive cash flow. A deficit fund balance is projected through 2011. A 15-cent increase in the tax rate would result in a deficit balance through 2009, with an upward trend beginning in 2010 and 2011. A 20-cent increase would result in a balanced budget beginning in 2007. A 15-cent increase would translate into an annual tax increase of \$75, and a 20-cent increase would translate into a \$100 annual tax increase for a \$150,000 home.

At the point of a decision regarding any referenda, Chapman stated that all proposals would be integrated into one financial model to show what the projected fund balances would be over a period of time, with tax rate changes and project expenditures.

*O'Connor exited the meeting at approximately 8:55 p.m.*

In regard to a future referendum or referenda and information that might be needed prior to making a decision, board members and administrators offered the following:

- Additional classrooms will be needed.
- As a result of the 2000 referendum, new buildings were constructed without any changes in the Educational or Operations and Maintenance Funds tax rates. In 2004, a significant reserve had been expended to the point that major adjustments were necessary in order to continue to provide for the operation of the new facilities. The Operations and Maintenance Fund has been in trouble for several years now. Consideration of the big picture is needed to avoid the problems of the past.
- It was suggested that two elementary schools and one middle school be constructed, with tax rate increases in the Educational and Operations and Maintenance Funds at the higher end.
- Once a decision is made regarding a referendum or referenda, the need should be communicated to the public sooner rather than later in order to get people to buy into any proposal.
- I think public education in the community must be defined before moving ahead with any recommendation. I do not think there is any clear-cut answer at this juncture, and all options should still be on the table, including alternative educational structures.
- I am concerned about the 78 percent of voters who do not have any direct contact with our schools and their perception of the need, as opposed to what has been experienced in the past. I have reservations about moving ahead without communication with the public on what we are talking about. At this point, I need a comfort level.
- I am usually against a tax increase until I am convinced it is the correct thing to do. Our most pressing need in the immediate future will be additional classroom capacity. Tonight is the start of a process.

The most likely possibilities for a potential Unit 5 referendum or referenda were reported to be April 17, 2007, March 18, 2008, November 4, 2008, April 7, 2009, March 16, 2010, and November 2, 2010. It was reported that the IASB has evaluated referenda and concluded that in even-numbered years there has been more success than in odd-numbered years. April 17, 2007 was suggested as the most viable referendum date given the school capacity information provided at the meeting. Professional assistance was suggested to help get the message out to the public.

#### 4.8 Bond Services

Chapman reported that the Strategic Planning/Finance Committee and several staff members met on Monday with representatives of First Midstate. He noted that First Midstate had served the District since the 1960's in regard to bond services and financial advisement. Puzauskas and Whittington reported the Committee's position regarding bond services for the District and recommended remaining with First Midstate at this time, as opposed to looking at other options. In response to a board member question, it was indicated that the committee had not talked with similar firms outside the community. Chapman reported that First Midstate had a lengthy list of school district clients throughout the state. He added that the District's attorney for many years, Robert Fleming, had worked closely with First Midstate on bond services. Since Fleming retired as the District's attorney, Chapman remarked that he had asked the District's current legal counsel, Frank Miles, for his opinion on First Midstate. Miles advice was that the District would be well served to continue with First Midstate. Briggs offered that she was not opposed to First Midstate, but had received inquiries from other bond services about whether the District had a "closed shop" in regard to bond services.

#### 4.9 Architectural Services

Chapman reported an interest by the Board in reviewing its options for architectural services. He indicated the District had utilized the services of BLDD Architects for its building projects for some time, including the Grove addition that is currently underway. Chapman stated he had not sensed any dissatisfaction with BLDD, but felt there was an interest in comparing services. He reported that a formal bidding process was not needed; however appropriate communication would be sent to similar architectural services to invite them to express their interest in any future construction projects of the

District. It was suggested that the District not lock itself into a contractual agreement whereby, for major projects, it would be required to use a specific architect. The topic was referred to the Facilities Committee for further review.

#### 4.10 Transportation Issues

Pye reported that the Board had approved a transportation plan for the current school year in February 2005. As the enrollment continues to grow, he stated that the District still needs to address three issues—recruiting and retaining quality bus drivers; increasing enrollment (which necessitates more routes and buses); and a lack of space at the transportation facility for a larger bus fleet. He suggested Board discussion of a three-tiered transportation system for 2007-2008, which would require an adjustment in school starting and ending times at all levels.

Board members offered the following:

- Before transferring monies from the Transportation Fund, consider options for recruiting/retaining quality bus drivers.
- In regard to previous discussion on starting/ending times, what have we actually experienced given the adjustments for this school year?
- Pye remarked that he was not aware of any significant concerns expressed about this year's time adjustments.
- I would like to see us consider a three-tiered system as soon as possible.
- A change to a three-tiered system would provide more hours for drivers and would increase their gross earnings opportunities, but at the same time would reduce the need for more routes, more drivers, and more buses.

#### 4.11 Potential Naming of High School Facilities

Chapman reported that he had shared the policy that addresses the naming of high school facilities. He indicated he had discussed the matter with the high school principals regarding possibilities. Chapman stated one possibility might be to consider naming of one or more specific portions of the high school facilities following established guidelines/policy. He sought direction from the Board on what portion of facilities they would want to consider naming and whether or not they like the idea, etc.

Board members offered the following:

- I view this as an inexpensive way to honor someone who has contributed dramatically to the District. It does not really cost us anything to rename a previously unnamed auditorium after a long-serving superintendent, board member, etc. This is a fairly common occurrence that honors particular individuals, but not at the expense of dishonoring others.
- I agree.
- Having been on the Board during the time schools were named, it can be a divisive exercise.
- I think naming of common areas would be more appropriate than classrooms.
- I think this would help to build character and a sense of community in a growing District where things can become too impersonal.
- A particular time block each year was suggested for making nominations for the naming of facilities.

President Lay referred the topic to the Community Connections Committee for further review.

#### 4.12 Roles/Responsibilities of Board Members

#### 4.13 Expectations/Recommendations for Administrators

It was the consensus of the Board to discuss the roles/responsibilities of board members and expectations/recommendations for administrators at a future board meeting.

**5.0 Announcements**

Announcements made at the meeting:

- Lay expressed gratitude to those who attended the work session and remarked that it was the beginning of a process that would be continued over a number of months.

**6.0 Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.

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Scott Lay, Board of Education President  
Community Unit School District No. 5  
McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois

ATTEST:

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Meta J. Mickens-Baker, Board of Education Secretary

*Approved:* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)