

River Ridge School District
Press Release
Wednesday, June 1, 2016
(Release amended on June 10, 2016)

The River Ridge Board of Education held a Special Board meeting on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at 6:00 pm in the Multi-purpose Room at 11165 County Highway P, Patch Grove, WI.

The following business was conducted:

Call to Order – Board President, Ken Nies, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call – All board members were present. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Jeff Athey, Business Managers Carol Harris and Kevin Kocer, and members of the public.

Proof of Notice – Cory Moravits reported that public notice for this meeting was posted at 2:00 pm on May 25, 2016. Kerri Schier moved that the meeting was properly noticed. The motion was seconded by Jason Cathman and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Appearances – No one from the public had signed up to speak to the Board.

Roof Repair – Carol Harris stated that \$30,975.00 is still owed to Allen Roofing (Monona, Iowa) on the balance for the recent roof repair at Patch Grove. **Board Action:** The Board authorized payment of the \$30,975.00 from the General Fund.

Purchases from Savings Accrued through Insurance Premium Holidays – Board Action: The Board approved the purchase of: 1) a set of bleachers for the softball field at \$1,399 for a 20' x 3 sections high, and 2) a replacement pitching machine for the softball team at \$2,400. The items will be purchased with savings from the health insurance premium holidays.

RRSD Long-Range Plan Discussion – Following the May 19 Special Board meeting, each of the following Board committees met to discuss long range planning recommendations from citizen task forces. At the June 1 Special Board Meeting, each of the Board committees reported their long range planning discussions and recommendations to the full Board as follows:

Co and Extra-curricular – The Policy/Curriculum Committee met on June 1st and only had time to discuss “Academics.” They did not get to the topic of Co and Extra-curricular.

Communications/Community Relations –The Staff Employee Relations Committee met Monday, May 23 to discuss the “Communications/Community Relations” recommendations. Committee Chair Jason Cathman reported on the following: the committee believes the district has already taken some positive steps forward in addressing these recommendations. For example, we’re already including public appearances at the beginning and end of meetings. He said the committee liked the idea of having a drop down screen to show information at meetings as a way of reducing paper copies. The Board has already approved the purchase of a large screen TV to post announcement information electronically and to show pictures of students in clubs, organizations, and sports. The Help Desk is working with Dr. Athey to proceed on this. J. Cathman said the Board receives a weekly communication from the superintendent called “The Week in Review” and that Dr. Athey is receptive to write/submit articles for

the website every two weeks. The committee recommends the district website be updated more frequently. The committee supports the idea of videotaping board meetings. Next steps involve making the purchase, determining who will set it up/film/and take it down and who will manage the process of loading videos to the website. This equipment can also be used by the yearbook staff to video dance routines, ball games, concerts, etc. The equipment will be stored in the business education classroom. J. Cathman said the committee also discussed “Chain of Command” and recommends that concerns of parents, members of the public be taken to the source first, e.g., to a teacher, coach, athletic director or administrator.

Technology – The district’s Technology Committee (a staff committee) met May 17 and 31. Cory Raisbeck, a board member representative on the committee, said the committee is in favor of spending the health insurance premium savings on as many Chromebooks as it can get (rather than Chromeboxes for the labs at the UE and HS. This would put more devices at both buildings and move us closer to a 1:1 platform. (Right now, we’re more of a 2:1 platform – two students for every one device). **Board Action:** The Board approved the purchase of the technology equipment outlined by the Help Desk as “Option 2”. The Technology Committee is also recommending that the district hire a person who can provide teachers with training on how to use technology and lay out a scope-and-sequence of what technology skills students should be learning at each grade level.

Academics – The Policy/Curriculum Committee met on June 1 and discussed long range planning for the topic of “Academics”. Committee Chair Keri Schier reported that the committee discussed the following: AP (Advanced Placement) course offerings. River Ridge currently offers AP English Language and AP U.S. History. Nicole Bailey is interested in teaching an AP Biology course beginning in 2017/18. The committee discussed a number of ways students are able to take courses when we’re not able to offer it here (e.g. Youth Options, Course Options, transcribed credit through SWTC, Distance Education/SRTNC, and virtual schools). The district is looking at how 8th grade students can take high school courses for credit (i.e. taking Algebra 1 as an 8th grader so that by the senior year he/she could take Calculus). The committee discussed early childhood education (i.e. 4 year old programming and whether to move to every day 4K and/or whether to add early childhood education for 3 year olds). Administration is interested in researching what other districts around us are doing with these age groups. The committee discussed keyboarding at the elementary level and wondered if keyboarding skills can be taught from a non-licensed/certified teacher.

Fiscal Responsibility – The Buildings and Grounds Committee met on May 31. Committee Chair Ken Nies reported the following: RRSD has already hired a new Business Manager to replace Carol Harris when she retires at the end of June. Kevin Kocer started today, June 1, and will be able to work with C. Harris during the month of June. K. Kocer comes to us with 5 years of experience having served in a similar capacity for a school district in South Dakota. The committee discussed Action 14 – hiring qualified staff – and feels that we are doing our best to hire the best candidates possible. The committee looked at Action 12 – creating revenues through fees. We want to continue to monitor this. The committee looked at Action 5 – consideration of lengthening the contract time for education in a day. Dr. Athey had shared that all schools must be in compliance with Standard F – “Days and Hours of Instruction” of the Wisconsin State Standards. River Ridge is in compliance and does have a cushion of time built in its calendar should there be a need to miss school due to snow/inclement weather or an emergency, such as a leaky water pipe in need of repair, without having to extend the school year longer. At this time, Administration is not recommending a change in length of calendar or the daily start/stop times.

Facilities – The Buildings and Grounds Committee met May 31. Committee Chair Ken Nies reported on the following: the committee expressed that it is not interested in the district being dissolved or having to consolidate with another school district. But, it did discuss four options that we should consider before deciding on one for the long-term. The first option would be to maintain the two sites we now have and continue with the 5th and 6th graders attending at the UE in Bloomington with everyone else in the Patch Grove site. A second option discussed was having the 4K-4th graders attend school in Bloomington and have the 5-12th graders attend school in Patch Grove. This option would house 5-8 graders on the current elementary side of the building and keep the high schoolers where they are presently. A third option that was discussed was a one site option – having all students in the district attend school at the Patch Grove site, but still make use of the existing track/football field in Bloomington. This plan would call for building a minimum of four classrooms and a second gym. The fourth option discussed was one site, everyone at the Patch Grove site, and having football and track at Patch Grove as well. Again, a minimum of four classrooms and a second gym would be needed as well as construction of a football field, track, and additional parking. K. Nies said more information is needed on each option. The committee recommends McKinstry be asked to supply estimated costs and potential savings for each option as well as evaluate needs for specialty rooms, remodeling needs and the space impact of offering daily 4K and/or adding 3K. **Board Action:** The Board approved a motion authorizing Administration to contact McKinstry provide RRSD with costs for the four facility options that were identified by the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The motion passed on a 6-1 roll call vote. Ken Nies noted that DeSoto schools built a two-story gymnasium with the gym on one floor and locker rooms, weight room, and wrestling room on the lower level. The Buildings and Grounds Committee is planning to visit DeSoto schools next week to tour the finished project.

Continuation of Long Range Planning Discussion – Board Chair Ken Nies asked that board members reflect upon the information shared this evening and be prepared to further discuss the topic of a long-range plan at the regular board meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 16th at 6:00 pm.

Dates/Times for Upcoming Meetings

Ken Nies reported that the following meetings are scheduled as of this time:

- June 16 – 5:00 pm – Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting
- June 16 – 6:00 pm – Regular School Board Meeting
- July 6 – 5:15 pm – Policy/Curriculum Committee Meeting
- July 13 – 5:00 pm – Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting
- July 13 – 6:00 pm – Regular School Board Meeting

Appearances – Shelly Stagman thanked the board for discussing the long-range plan tonight. She complimented the Buildings and Grounds Committee for looking at four facility options. She thought this was a good start for moving toward getting a long-range plan in place. She said teaching keyboarding skills to elementary students is important as students have to take state assessments using computers. She urged the Board to hone in on addressing this need.

Adjournment –The meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.