



Poudre School District Board of Education

2407 Laporte Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80521 • 970-490-3607

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from Board of Education Business Meeting
August 13, 2019

DINNER SESSION - 5:30 PM

PRESENT: President Christophe Febvre, Vice President Rob Petterson; Directors DJ Anderson, Nate Donovan, Kristen Draper, Naomi Johnson and Carolyn Reed; Superintendent Sandra Smyser; Assistant Superintendents Todd Lambert and Scott Nielsen; Executive Directors Matt Bryant, Dave Montoya, Madeline Noblett, Dustin Reintsma and Victoria Thompson

ABSENT: None

LATE: None

The dinner session began at 5:30 p.m.

1.0 DISTRICT INFORMATION AND BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS

1.1 Legal Counsel Job Posting

Executive Director of Human Resources Vicki Thompson distributed a draft job description for in-house legal counsel.

Board discussion included:

- Proposed pay grade is comparable to other school districts.
- In-house counsel reports directly to Superintendent at other districts.
- Important topics to consider for in-house counsel position:
 1. Establish and clarify who is the client.
 2. Define and clarify who will be given legal advice by counsel.
 3. Confirm position has direct reporting with normal HR processes.
 4. Position to include service as Designated Elections Official.
- Superintendent should have the ability to hire and fire in-house legal counsel subject to discussion with Board.
- Recommendation made the hiring committee include a Board member and a member of outside counsel.
- Hiring will follow the standard process for PSD.
- BOE interacts directly with counsel and it's reasonable to include requests and distinctions.
- Board members gave Executive Director Thompson permission to move forward with posting the position for legal counsel.

1.2 FCHS Graduation Ceremony

Superintendent Smyser provided an update on removal of two traditional songs from the Fort Collins High School (FCHS) graduation ceremony.

Board discussion included:

- Question regarding removal of two religion-based songs was raised over a year ago.
- FCHS ceremony tradition of songs dates to 1938 and 1943.
- Concern was expressed about providing an inclusive setting for students.
- Planning for graduation generally begins when the school year starts.
- May be possible to add an item that will focus on inclusivity instead of deleting something.
- Former graduates expressed interest in decision-making.
- No decisions have been made about the graduation ceremony at this time.
- FCHS has a new principal this year with a large workload.
- Assistant Superintendent Nielsen will keep Board members informed.

1.3 URA Update

Executive Director of Finance Dave Montoya provided an update on the URA.

Board discussion included:

- Mediators were selected in February, and mediation occurred July 23.
- All parties must wait 90 days for the Findings of Fact to be released.
- Legal counsel will discuss next steps with the Board upon release of findings.
- Results could be precedent setting for the URA moving forward.

1.4 Timnath IGA

Construction Manager Brenden Willits provided an update on annexation for the Prospect and Wellington sites.

Board discussion included:

- Town of Timnath anticipates the PILO agreement is near completion.
- MOU/IGA comes with the annexation process.
- 2010 bond funds are allocated with most projects complete.
- Any remaining 2010 bond projects will be finished by the end of summer 2020.
- 2016 bond projects started this summer.

2.0 AGENDA PLANNING

There were no items discussed.

3.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no items discussed.

Dinner session ended at 6:25 p.m.

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING - (BOARDROOM) – 6:30 PM

PRESENT: President Christophe Febvre, Vice President Rob Petterson; Directors DJ Anderson, Nate Donovan, Kristen Draper, Naomi Johnson and Carolyn Reed; Superintendent Sandra Smyser; Assistant Superintendents Todd Lambert and Scott Nielsen; Executive Directors Matt Bryant, Dave Montoya, Madeline Noblett, Dustin Reintsma and Victoria Thompson

ABSENT: None

LATE: None

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

President Febvre called the regular business meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Febvre led the Board of Education and audience members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda

4.0 RECOGNITIONS AND REPORTS

4.1 Communications Awards

Executive Director of Communications Madeline Noblett introduced the following award winners:

EMMY Award for Short Format Program presented by the Heartland Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences

- Matt Gohl, Producer and Phillip Primo, Editor for PSD TV's Student Experience video piece featuring Casey Kraft.

Colorado School Public Relations Association Communications Excellence (COSPPRA)

- Alicia Stice, Communications and Social Media Specialist - The Excellence Award in Marketing Materials/Campaigns for social media achievement and growth.
- Matt Gohl, Video Production Manager and Phillip Primo, Video Production Specialist - The Excellence Award in Television Programming for the entire "Student Experience" video series.

On behalf of PSD and the Board of Education, Director Donovan congratulated the award winners and thanked them for continuing great work in the District.

4.2 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Smyser welcomed everyone to the 2019-2020 school year.

- Thank you to staff who worked this summer.
- Incoming kindergarteners will graduate in 2033.
- PSD is known as a premier district in the state.
- Thank you to employees, families and community members for always doing their best for children.

4.3 Board Report

In the District

- District Advisory Board leadership
- Special meeting to discuss survey results from the mill levy override

Board Development

- Active Board Subcommittees
 - Legislative
 - MLO mill levy override

In the Community

- Meet with constituents about possible MLO and other topics
- McBackpack input form revamp
- PFLAG meeting
- URA Finance Committee and Board
- Center for Family Outreach Board
- Fort Collins PRIDE
- Colorado School Finance project
- State Advisory Council of parent involvement in education

Next community engagement session will be in September. Check the PSD website for details.

Mill Levy Override Committee:

- Directors Anderson and Donovan co-chair the committee.
- Board authorized hiring of a strategy consulting firm to provide advice on constructing a survey.
- Survey was conducted in July.
- Committee composed of Board members and district staff.

5.0 COMMUNITY COMMENT

Parent Joanna Knudson spoke about student bias and the importance of teaching all students inclusivity, and thanked Superintendent Smyser for her recent letter to parents stating hate would not be tolerated in PSD schools.

6.0 CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.1 Personnel Action**
- 6.2 Meeting Minutes: June 11, 2019, June 27, 2019 (Special Meeting), and July 30, 2019 (Special Meeting)**
- 6.3 Intergovernmental Agreement for 2019 Coordinated Election**
- 6.4 Karen Harris Field at Laurel Elementary**
- 6.5 Renewal of Commercial Building Lease for PSD Employee Assistance Services**

Director Johnson requested Consent Agenda Item 6.4 be pulled and placed on Action Items.

Director Donovan moved to approve and adopt the remaining recommended items on the consent agenda.

Director Petterson seconded the motion.

The voting was as follows:

Those voting AYE: Directors Anderson, Donovan, Draper, Febvre, Johnson, Petterson and Reed

Those voting NO: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed 7-0

7.0 INFORMATIONAL REPORTS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 2020-2021 SY Draft Calendar

Calendar Committee Co-chairs Brett Larsen and Melanie Mierzwa presented the draft calendar for the 2020-2021 school year.

Board discussion included:

- Gratitude was expressed for the important, difficult and often unappreciated task of creating the calendar.
- Committee is always open to new members.
- Attendance data does not support the need to take week of Thanksgiving off.
- First semester would end on December 18.
- Imbalance between first and second semester is due to holiday schedule; testing occurs in second semester to balance days.
- Calendar creation is a give-and-take between necessary and important items.
- Feedback continues to be accepted on draft calendars for 2020 through 2025.

7.2 Long Range Planning and Construction Update

Executive Director of Operations Matt Bryant and Assistant Superintendent Scott Nielson provided an update on Long Range Planning and Construction.

Community Comment:

Prospect Site resident Sandy Cochran shared concern about the current proposed plans and highlighted multiple areas of negative impact on her family and in-home business.

HOA representative and Prospect Site resident Kathy Schmidtke stated she will await a potential decision from PSD regarding traffic flow changes before relaying information from her community to the Board.

Executive Director of Operations Matt Bryant introduced a video showing projects and improvements made over the summer.

Board discussion included:

- Zach Elementary construction is under budget with a few items still outstanding; modulars will be moved next summer to any sites in need.
- Conversation regarding ongoing maintenance should be considered soon.
- Mitigation of impact on adjacent properties should be considered for new construction.
- Some Poudre High School students will attend the new Wellington High School, which should relieve the current overcrowding.
- Contractors report good news about subs and the ability to field upcoming positions.
- Designs are close to completion on middle and high schools, and will be presented at the September 10 meeting.
- Designing grade 6-12 schools creates a new set of issues.
- Still trimming budgets and negotiating some aspects of plans to save money.
- Contingency reserves were built into the original budget; inflationary component needs to be determined.
- 40 students signed up for Futures Lab this school year at Fort Collins High School and will be housed in one classroom.
- Growth of the Futures Lab will require at least one more classroom; Fort Collins High School is full and cannot provide a second classroom.
- Finding space for manufacturing is key to expansion.
- Looking for Futures lab space within current facilities is appreciated.
- Request was made for patience from parents, students and community members surrounding the upcoming start time changes.
- Reminder was issued to slow down and stop for school busses.

7.3 Discussion on Possible Ballot Issue

Executive Director of Finance Dave Montoya and Executive Director of Human Resources Vicki Thompson spoke about the possible ballot issue.

Community Comment:

Teacher Brendan Gallagher requested mill levy ballot language clarify funds will be going directly to educator pay and mental health support.

Teacher and parent Kurt Knierim stated low teacher pay is a growing crisis, and although he appreciates the district attempting to stretch dollars as far as they can it is time something be done.

Teacher Shelly Wells thanked the Board of Education for moving forward quickly with the mill levy and added teachers look forward to working with an enthusiastic Board.

Teacher Carlos Meikel stated costs continue to skyrocket and pay does not keep up; teachers are not greedy but simply asking for what they are owed.

ACE President Sue Torres thanked the Board for supporting teachers and classified staff through the consideration of the Mill Levy Override.

Board recessed at 8:22 p.m.

Board reconvened at 8:29 p.m.

Board discussion included:

- Appreciation was expressed for Mill Levy Override work performed on a compressed timeline by multiple staff members.
- Questions were raised regarding appropriate amount of money to request.
- PSD community has long supported quality education and the resources necessary to retain that quality.
- Taxpayer tolerance has a limit; PSD must be responsible with amount requested.
- Asking voters to approve \$18 million rather than the statutory cap of \$21.7 million leaves room for future boards to request a mill levy override should the need arise.
- Board members agreed to recommend \$18 million dollars to the committee.
- Strategies360 recommended ballot language not include specific teacher salaries based on polling results.
- Current Administrative salaries are market competitive.
- No revenue from mill levy will be used for capital expenses.
- Board members agreed to move forward with the proposed ballot language.

8.0 ACTION ITEMS

8.1 Karen Harris Field at Laurel Elementary

Director Johnson moved that the Board approve the naming of the field at Laurel Elementary for Mrs. Karen Harris.

Director Draper seconded the motion.

Board discussion included:

- Director Johnson read portions of a letter written in support of naming the field after Karen Harris.

The voting was as follows:

Those voting AYE: Directors Anderson, Donovan, Draper, Febvre, Johnson, Petterson and Reed

Those voting NO: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed 7-0

8.2 Monitoring/Policy Review: EL 2.5, Emergency Superintendent and Executive Session

Director Donovan moved that the Board determine that the Superintendent has reasonably interpreted Board of Education Policy EL 2.5 in her Internal Monitoring Report dated August 13, 2019, and that the evidence presented supports the Superintendent's conclusions stated in the Internal Monitoring Report.

Director Draper seconded the motion.

Board discussion included:

- Succession plans are critical to the success of leadership and cross training is important.

The voting was as follows:

Those voting AYE: Directors Anderson, Donovan, Draper, Febvre, Johnson, Petterson and Reed

Those voting NO: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed 7-0

9.0 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Subcommittee

- First meeting to be held Friday August 15, 6:00 p.m. at Intersect Brewing Company.
- Formal requests will be forthcoming at a future meeting.

Outreach Committee

- Schedule coming soon through email.
- Board members are asked to plan accordingly.
- Director Donovan will continue to research venues.

PSD Foundation

- Retreat scheduled next week to kick off school year.

District Advisory Board (DAB)

- Meeting held for new leadership.
- Candidates running for BOE are invited to attend the October 7 meeting.
- Three areas of focus for the upcoming year include cell phone policy, mental health and school-based community hubs.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Brunner
Assistant Secretary to the Board of Education