

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 31, 2012**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Thomas Newmeyer, William Ziegler, Karen Benjamin
Shirley Thornton, Ed. D., Mark Trotter
Superintendent: Valerie Pitts, Ed. D.

President Thomas Newmeyer called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

M/s/c Thornton/Newmeyer/all to amend the agenda as follows: Move Appointment of Board Liaison(s) to Marin City and Sausalito ahead of Board Policy on Equity – First Reading, and approve the remaining agenda order.

OPEN SESSION

Public Comment

Alex Frankel, neighbor to the old district office at the corner of Nevada and Buchanan in Sausalito, addressed the board to request more information about the district's rental of the former district office to a preschool and its impact on neighbors. Mr Frankel expressed disappointment that no letter had come from the district to residents adjacent to this property regarding the impending changes. Superintendent Pitts will contact Mr. Frankel.

Robert Fisher, Marin City resident, asked on behalf of several Marin City homeowners, how will Marin City benefit from a bond? Mr. Fisher proposed that the district consider using a portion of bond funds to contribute a new bridge to the proposed new gym at CSD, which is currently in negotiations.

Ray Menaster, Marin City resident, encouraged the district to include African American studies in its curriculum to expose students to those who have achieved and excelled among African Americans.

Superintendent Pitts introduced Mr. Daniel Norbutas, new chief Academic Officer and Principal at Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy. Welcome Mr. Norbutas!

Superintendent Pitts reported that really wonderful meetings had taken place throughout the day, all in the spirit of doing what is best for the district's children.

Superintendent Pitts shared that conversation of 'what could be', begins with conversation of what our guiding principles are. She introduced Ms. Victoria Bergsagel, Architects of Achievement, who works closely with architects to help districts around the country realize a vision. Ms. Bergsagle gave an overview of the meeting she had facilitated, which focused on developing principles to guide design and decisions.

Superintendent Pitts talked about where we go with this relative to bond. There has been a lot of talk about a comprehensive education program. Guiding principles and program help address facilities needed to address the educational program. The exercise is essential to the development of the bond

language. The board wants to conduct a larger community discussion before board action on a bond; a list of bond projects is needed no later than July 15.

Trustee Thornton recommended building in benchmarks and steps that keep the district focused on what it is trying to accomplish in terms of program plus building.

Superintendent Pitts noted that the A Team has expanded components of the education program, which will come before the board in a couple weeks' time.

President Newmeyer noted that he has been hearing a lot of the same things in Marin City and Sausalito. Trust is an issue; people want to be heard. The board wants to hear what everybody needs or wants; the board does not want anyone to feel they are not being heard.

Trustee Thornton voiced that she does not like the idea of two communities. President Newmeyer pointed out that today's meetings were almost exclusively about Marin City.

Trustee Trotter stated that he has been reluctant to pursue a bond measure (it is a distraction from education); however, the district does need funds for facilities. With revenues down, a growing charter encroachment, special programs the district wants to have, should the board be considering a parcel tax? Would a bond 'poison the well' for a parcel tax? Mr. Trotter stated he doesn't see how the district will do all it wants to do in the next five years, educationally, and believes that the board should stay focused on education choices.

Superintendent Pitts responded that the fiscal piece must come into play; the district cannot sustain the two schools. She explained the current need for staffing two schools for 120 children; travel time for those who must cover both sites, burnout. The district needs comprehensive education programs at both schools to be competitive with other Marin districts. The existing MLK campus does not support a robust program; upgrades are needed.

Trustee Benjamin noted that a year of study sessions and discussion led the board to the International Baccalaureate Program. Funding is needed for that in addition to funding to sustain the campuses; a language program is also needed to be community competitive.

Zahra Arbelo, Willow Creek Academy parent, stated that more needs to be done to address the curriculum and enrichment needs of WCA students. Trustee Thornton clarified that the district board has no authority over academic program choices for WCA. Ms. Arbelo was advised to contact the WCA board and staff regarding her concerns. Trustee Ziegler added that there should be conversation between both boards; every child is our business.

Jeff Knowles, WCA board member, assured the board that WCA wants to be part of facilities conversations.

Robert Fisher asked how the board plans to do community outreach in a short span of time. Superintendent Pitts responded that the Sausalito City Council would be addressed on June 12; President Newmeyer will meet soon with Marin City Community Services District (CSD). The board wants to hold a town hall meeting in the next three to four weeks in an evening or on a Saturday; flyers will be distributed. Mr. Fisher offered to assist with a contact for television channel 26.

Terrie Green looks forward to enrollment growth in Marin City too; consideration of five additional classrooms seems to be too few; she is in touch with taxpayers in Marin City who have recommendations to make. Ms. Green hopes this plan is really about openness, collaboration and team playing.

Someone suggested hosting 94965 town hall meetings that aren't exclusive to Sausalito or Marin City, where anyone can attend any meeting.

Terrie Green asked when the next discussion of structure would take place, where options and affordability would be discussed. Superintendent Pitts responded that today's discussions will enable architects to create some scenarios –the process is three-fold: what is program, what facilities do we need for program and what are the costs?

Terrie Green wondered if the board should find out how much taxpayers would be willing to pay. The board had made an earlier decision not to pursue a survey due to the cost, estimated at \$15,000.

Trustee Benjamin recommended the board's plan be prepared for presentation.

Zahra Arbelo offered to provide additional suggestions for community outreach.

Superintendent Pitts asked the board whether they had any remaining questions regarding program; there were none.

Superintendent Pitts is working on a newsletter but encouraged everyone to visit the district website which already holds a lot of information.

Trustee Trotter suggested the presentation should be about proposing program and structure; address education needs and achievement gap first, leading up to discussion of a bond measure. He is willing to work on this with Superintendent Pitts.

Trustee Thornton sees the issues as fiscal and the issue of how to educate children in a diverse world. Trustee Trotter shares these concerns; how can it be done? He likes IB but dislikes the idea of segregated campuses. How the district will proactively address the achievement gap and isolation is still a concern to him.

Robert Fisher suggested accessing email lists from local organizations to expand outreach to the community's voters.

Superintendent Pitts asked if the board was comfortable conceptually for her to proceed with outreach. Her approach would be to say what the board is considering.

Alexis Wise did not think there would be enough time for outreach in Marin City due to the fact that many people do not have technology and could not be contacted via voice message or email. She encouraged the board to focus on solidifying its education program.

RACE AND ISOLATION

The Board reviewed sample policy statements on equity from 1) Castro Valley Unified School District, 2) Evanston, Indiana, 3) Juneau (Alaska) School District, 4) Burlington, Iowa Community School District and 5) Portland (Oregon) Public Schools.

Trustee Trotter thought it advantageous to know which have been successful.

Trustee Thornton cares about true commitment and that there are guarantees. There should be a rubric with benchmarks. There should be an ombudsman (not a board member) built into budget.

Trustee Trotter would like to incorporate equity into the education program.

Trustee Benjamin emphasized that the district is a multi-cultural environment, not just black and white.

Superintendent Pitts advised that teachers are committed to summer training and that staff and administration have been working with National Equity Project (NEP) this entire school year.

Superintendent Pitts will prepare an equity policy with administrative regulations for a first reading. The administrative regulations will address specifics as requested by Trustee Ziegler.

Trustees Ziegler and Trotter wanted it noted that they are in absolute philosophical agreement on this!

Giselle Ferreti, a WCA parent, believes it is a parent's choice whether or not to be involved in the schools.

Jeff Knowles asked the board to think of an equity statement as something that affects WCA; the district has a responsibility to hold WCA to its charter. Trustee Benjamin: If our board adopts and then WCA adopts - great! We cannot direct them to do so. Trustee Trotter suggested the district board could encourage WCA in the next charter consideration.

Trustee Thornton brought up that the two boards have yet to have a discussion.

Fran Nelson thought the equity example from Portland was most specific. Trustee Thornton added that Portland has program for African American students.

FACILITIES

Study Session for Community Input on Facilities Bond and Grade Level Structure

There was no formal transition of the conversation begun with Race and Isolation to this topic.

GOVERNANCE

Appointment of Board Liaison(s) to Marin City and Sausalito

The Board discussed board liaisons to Marin City Community Services District, the Marin City Community Development Corporation and the Sausalito City Council.

M/s/c Trotter/Newmeyer/all to appoint Thomas Newmeyer liaison to Marin City Community Services District, Mark Trotter liaison to Marin City Community Development Corporation and Shirley Thornton to Sausalito City Council.

MAINTAIN SOUND FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND OPERATIONS

District Budget 2012/2013: Governor's May Revise Proposals and District Multi-Year Projections

Paula Rigney reviewed both the Budget Draft 2012/2013 per the Governor's May Revise and Budget Assumptions for Budget Draft 2012/2013.

Discussion

Trustee Trotter asked whether reserves are meant to get through times like this. Superintendent Pitts clarified that reserves are for much greater crisis.

Paula Rigney advised that:

- Districts overall are dropping reserves from an average of 16% to 7% for next year.
- Basic aid districts will be impacted; community funded districts represent about 10% of California school districts and generally are not included in discussion or in most verbiage regarding state wide proposals, budgets, etc.
- It is still unclear what the effect of a weighted pupil funding formula will be on basic aid districts.
- The budget will be impacted by having to provide services no longer provided by mental health services.
- Without a bond, a \$40,000 contribution toward deferred maintenance will not be enough to handle district wide needs.
- For school years 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/15, the district will be deficit budgeting if it continues with existing staff and structure.
- The district will actually be in worse shape if taxes pass due to a weighted pupil funding formula.
- One principal and two assistants will become two principals and one assistant next year.
- Efficiencies are being considered in detail.

Question: What should the supplement to Willow Creek Academy be?

Paula Rigney: It must be within a balanced budget; we are not balanced at this point. Does WCA fund raise? Do we cut staff to supplement WCA?

Superintendent Pitts: The district is looking at equity; we need to ramp up our program, then decide what supplement can be provided to WCA.

Superintendent Pitts: The increase in property taxes has not been seen in this district as in neighboring districts; a 1% property tax increase equals approximately \$60,000.

Trustee Thornton: We need to have the discussion of combining grade levels as opposed to cutting education program.

Trustee Trotter: The supplement to WCA has to be on the budget discussion table. Mr. Trotter then gave a history of the supplement, adding that the rationale for the supplement has changed over the years - what will we cut; what is sacred? He thanked everyone for straightforward and open budget discussion.

Question: What happens if WCA can't make the \$75,000 special education invoice payment?

Superintendent Pitts: The invoice has been paid by the district; we are in conversation about it; the district uses the formula used countywide.

Trustee Trotter: Apportionment is almost irrelevant; the district is mandated to provide services; kids get the service either way.

Trustee Benjamin: Sometimes to receive services, kids must enroll in public school; we could consider that.

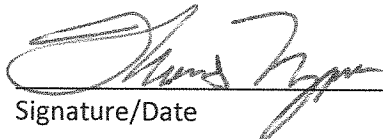
Trustee Thornton: If you were paying the bill, you would look more at how services are rendered.

Comment: Review special education services to make it more fiscally sound.

Paula Rigney: The current budget for 2012/2013 supplemental funds allocates an amount of \$300,000; last year it was a \$328,000 supplemental grant to WCA.

ADJOURNMENT

M/s/c Trotter/Newmeyer/all to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

 8/23/12

Signature/Date

President

Title