

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2014**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: William Ziegler, Caroline Van Alst, Joshua Barrow, Thomas Newmeyer,
Shirley Thornton Ed. D.
Superintendent: Steve Van Zant

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board and Superintendent convened closed session at 3:31 p.m.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Open session reconvened 6:07 p.m.

REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Trustee Ziegler announced that no action was taken in closed session.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustee Thornton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ORDER

The agenda order was approved.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Trustee Newmeyer said that he visited the school when Dr. Thornton was interim principal and that it was nice to see all the classes being productive.

Trustee Van Alst said on December 3, the Marin County School Board Association is having a holiday event at Rancho Nicasio to discuss articulation. She asked board members to put the date on their calendar.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Alan Rothkop, the director of maintenance and operations, said that a new burglar alarm system has been installed at the district office and the Willow Creek campus. We have discontinued our contract with Sonitrol Security at the MLK campus and signed on with Advanced Security – this change will save the district over half of its current alarm budget. We are also rekeying the campus at the cost of \$4500 to ensure continued security.

Trustee Newmeyer thanked Mr. Rothkop and said that he appreciates the new path leading to the multi-purpose room at Willow Creek.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Van Zant asked principal Newton to report on academic progress at Bayside MLK Academy. Ms. Newton gave a PowerPoint presentation on the assessments conducted at the beginning of the school year. First and second grade students were tested in August and September, and their reading scores show that they are not too far behind national averages, she said. In the 3rd grade, 18 out of 20 were reading at below the 50th percentile for the nation.

In 4th grade, nine out of 11 students were reading at below the 50th percentile. In 5th grade, the numbers are 11 out of 12; in 6th grade, seven out of 10; in 7th grade, six out of six and in 8th grade, all 10 students were below the 50th percentile. Trustee Ziegler said that this looks very dire. Principal Newton said that is why we decided to do a school-wide K to 8 reading intervention program. But the methodology requires a lot of training that must take place before it can become effective. We are slowly rolling out the plan to answer the particular needs of all the students, some of whom need help with phonics, while others are trailing in fluency and comprehension.

Ellen Franz showed board members a graph of all students at the November re-assessment, showing that many of them have moved up since the initial testing and that most do not need additional help with phonics. The problem is with language development, fluency and comprehension.

Trustee Barrow asked that in future the report show the number of students in the special education and English learner programs, as well as the number of newly enrolled students.

Principal Newton said we also have a writing program, a math program and a new language program that we share with Willow Creek Academy. The Spanish instruction program's rollout was challenging but we are moving forward and teachers are reporting that the students find the program fun and interesting.

Trustee Newmeyer thanked everyone for their honesty in showing where the students are academically. Superintendent Van Zant said it is good to have the information on the starting line.

The superintendent and several teachers spoke at the Sausalito Woman's Club last week, where their presentation on district schools was very well received.

WCA REPORT

Head of School Royce Conner said that he is working on the takeover of custodial duties from the district. On the subject of assessments, he said that Willow Creek is implementing an online system called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and beginning to sift through the data to arrive at a baseline and determine where teachers should focus until the next assessment in January. Real-time data is very helpful, he added.

Trustee Barrow asked if there any vision of standardizing assessment across schools. Mr. Conner said that there is no plan yet, but that he would be open to suggestions.

Mr. Conner thanked Dr. Thornton for her service to the children of the district – you have challenged us to do what is right, not what is easy, he said.

CONSENT AGENDA

Roll Call /Newmeyer/Van Alst/ All to approve the following consent agenda item:

Minutes of the October, 2014 Board Meeting

Payment of Warrants – Batches 16-20

Field Trips

Marin Clean Energy Presentation

Justin Kudo of Marin Clean Energy said that his organization is a public power company that currently serves the county of Marin and the city of Richmond. He told the Board: We buy electricity from renewable power sources

on behalf of our customers. We serve 77% of customers within Marin county and Richmond. Over half of the electricity we provide is renewable, wind, hydro, solar and geo-thermal. Our rates are lower than PG&E, saving our customers about \$6 million a year. We did a price comparison and found that we could save the district between \$2000 to \$3000 per year in energy costs. As a public agency, all the money we earn is put back into our organization, he concluded.

Trustee Ziegler said that the Board will review any proposal by Marin Clean Energy at a future meeting.

AB 1200 Disclosure - Agreement with the Sausalito Marin City Teachers Association and the Classified School Employees Association

Trustee Barrow asked if this agreement results in a deviation from the budget. Superintendent Van Zant said that given the increase in property taxes, the deviation will not be significant.

Thornton/Van Alst/All to approve AB 1200 Disclosure - Agreement with the Sausalito Marin City Teachers Association and the Classified School Employees Association

Resolution 711- The Refunding of All or a Portion of the District's Outstanding General Obligation Bonds; Appointment of Bond Counsel, Disclosure Counsel and a Financial Advisor

The District's Municipal Advisor, Mark Pressman of Wulff, Hansen & Co., gave an overview of refinancing options for the District's outstanding bonds. The District has five series of general obligation bonds outstanding, all approved by voters in 2004. Refinancing only the 2005 Series of bonds would produce an approximate total savings of \$700,000 to property owners in the District over the remaining 16 years of the issue. The existing interest rate of 4.22% would be reduced to approximately 2.50%. Refinancing all five series of existing general obligation bonds would produce approximate savings of \$3,000,000 over the remaining 28 year life of the existing bonds. The existing interest rates of 3.65% to 5.21% would be reduced to approximately 3.60% with the added advantage of eliminating all capital appreciation bonds currently outstanding. Capital appreciation bonds have come under criticism by the State of California Treasurer's office in the last few years as being too expensive and costing school district issuers excessive interest. New legislation has also been passed to restrict their use.

With Net Present Value savings (net of all costs) estimated at 10%, the Board agreed that refinancing all outstanding general obligation bonds now to generate savings to property owners would demonstrate good stewardship in managing the debt portion of the District's finances. Mr. Pressman emphasized that the projected savings are dependent on interest rates which may change before the proposed transaction is completed. The matter will be brought back to the Board on January 13 for approval of the legal and disclosure documents and to authorize sale of the new bonds.

Roll Call/Newmeyer/ Van Alst/All to approve Resolution 711 – The Refunding of All or a Portion of the District's Outstanding General Obligation Bonds; Appointment of Bond Counsel, Disclosure Counsel and a Financial Advisor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Science teacher Denise Suto thanked Dr. Thornton for her tireless efforts on behalf of the district's students. Regarding Summer School, she asked how the district plans to deal with the question of promoting students who do not pass. She also asked for help with transportation so that she can continue to take students to the Spaulding Wooden Boat program in Sausalito.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Thornton/Newmeyer/All to approve the following Board Policy:
Board Policy 1325 – Community Relations – Advertising and Promotion

Barrow/Van Alst/All to approve the following Board Policy:
Board Policy 5123 – Students – Promotion/Acceleration/Retention

The following policy was brought to the Board for a first read:
Board Policy 5131 – Students - Student Conduct
Trustee Thornton said that use of cellular phone by students should not be allowed during school hours.

BOARD REQUESTS

Trustee Barrow asked for a discussion of summer programs and transportation.

Dr. Shirley Thornton

Superintendent Van Zant said this is Dr. Thornton’s last board meeting as a trustee. He added:” Over the years, at every meeting I attended as a superintendent, everyone knew and talked about Shirley Thornton. She always shows up, she volunteers and gives her all at the school. May Jane Burke has said that when she ran for the office of Marin County Superintendent, she was afraid that Dr. Thornton would beat her.” He read out from the letter of appreciation from Ms. Burke: You have taught us all how to be an effective trustee. You faced challenging times and found positive solutions. You helped make new construction possible. Thank you for 16 years as trustee. You leave with the good wishes of the entire Marin county education community.

Superintendent Van Zant then presented Trustee Thornton with flowers. Principal Newton also presented flowers on behalf of the school. She said:” The whole time I have been here she has asked me why don’t you teach the children to spell? Thank you for quitting as a board member and starting all over again as a volunteer at the school.” Trustee Thornton said this has been a wonderful experience. We had a lot of fights, but it’s been a great 16 years. Trustee Newmeyer said that there were occasional disagreements, but “thank you for fighting for the children and for your true public service.” Trustee Ziegler said “you have done great work for the children” and also thanked Dr. Thornton. Trustee Van Alst said we have had a lot of tough discussions but we have the same goals, namely serving the children of the district. Trustee Barrow said:”you have been a great board member and a great neighbor.”

ADJOURNMENT

Thornton/Ziegler /All to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.



Signature/Date

12/9/14

Title