

**MINUTES OF MEETING
JACKSON SCHOOL BOARD
Jackson Grammar School**

February 4, 2010

1. **Call to Order:** The Jackson School Board met at 6:00 p.m. Present were Jerry Dougherty, Genn Anzaldi, Andrew Kearns, Keith Bradley, Joe Kopitsky, Dr. Carl Nelson and Gayle Dembowski. There were four members of staff/public present.

2. **Approve Minutes (1-19-10): Motion was made by Mr. Kearns, seconded by Ms. Anzaldi, to approve the Minutes of the Jan. 19th meeting as circulated. Motion carried with 4 votes in the affirmative and Mr. Kopitsky abstaining as he had not been present.**

3. **Citizen Comments:** Sarah Duffy, whose daughter participates in the Nordic ski program at Bartlett, questioned why skis are not allowed on school buses and wished to know how this can be changed. Dr. Nelson explained there are not supposed to be loose items such as skis and poles on the buses, they need to be contained. He noted that some buses do have storage compartments underneath, some schools have a cage built onto the back of the bus. Mr. Kearns suggested for the next bus purchasing cycle (in two years) that be looked into.

Ms. Duffy questioned if it would be acceptable if the skis were contained in a bag. Dr. Nelson pointed out that the issue is safety. Ms. Anzaldi suggested investigating other options. Mr. Dougherty suggested looking at caging off an area at the back of the bus, possibly removing two of the seats. Dr. Nelson offered to research other options, including using ski bags. Lauren Synnott questioned whether this might be part of the Safe Routes to School Program. Ms. Anzaldi said that is in the future and suggested they might be able to look at something more immediate.

Budget Review/Public Comment: Dr. Nelson noted that excluding grants, the budget shows a 4.4% decrease. He then proceeded to review increases and decreases in individual categories: Health Insurance is up slightly; the health insurance pool relates to the new plan the Board would like to institute providing for a \$500 deductible plan under Harvard-Pilgrim, which raises it \$1,122. There is a 14.9% increase in premium over this year's plan. Dr. Nelson explained the \$3,000 pool was added in case there is someone who hits the deductible twice – this is money to reimburse them. We are on a July to July school calendar, the health insurance is January to January.

Salaries increased, \$20,000 of which is for English as a Second Language, a 20 hour per week position. The Board also instituted a 2-year plan for salary increases for teachers and other staff. The Maintenance position is budgeted at 30 hours, custodian at 35 hours, with ten hours extra to be used by either one of those if needed. The \$3,000 under additional compensation is for staff, should the

Principal see a need to have someone stay after regular hours or for additional work.

Tuition at middle school is up because the 11 students they had is increasing to 16 next year. Bartlett is charging \$15,515 per student. The high school tuition is down because the number of students is down. Jackson's share of the bond is based on equalized valuation, as is the Maintenance Trust.

Special Education is down \$82,700 because it is not needed at this time. Contracted Services is nearly \$2,000 for the Whitney Center; snow plowing for the school (\$5200) will be removed.

Dr. Nelson noted a decrease in Library Contracted Services because they will be looking at an individual one day a week to be under the Jackson School District.

Estimated Tax Rate – Dr. Nelson stated without the warrant articles there will be a decrease of \$.21 in current spending, or about 4%.

Dr. Badger questioned reduction in hours for the instructional assistant. Dr. Nelson stated there has been a 10-hour reduction. Dr. Badger noted that two years ago there was a teacher defending an aide in a specific classroom. Some discussion took place at that time that because of Jackson's two grades per classroom, every classroom should have an aide. He wished to know what it is that merits an aide in the classroom. Ms. Dembowski said when looking at the number of students who had some specific needs, they tried to calculate, based on hours, how many student hours are needed. She stated Jackson's 6th grade class which is moving on, was a high needs group; we are also anticipating our enrollment going down into the 40s.

Dr. Badger questioned whether Ms. Dembowski feels after having been here a year that given the nature of instruction in this small school, an individual teacher should be able to handle a certain number of kids in a classroom with two grades? Ms. Dembowski said we have a fairly wide span in the classroom, and it is much more challenging in terms of planning and assessment and the number of things that are happening in the classroom - at the same time there are a number of adults helping out in the classroom as well.

Dr. Badger questioned enrichment salaries and what Ms. Dembowski's role is. Ms. Dembowski said she is actively involved in the classroom, she does some regular instruction in K-1, and is doing more with Mr. Harding's class this year – it varies. She is also involved in the Green Team activities, Project blocks and activities, and Destination Imagination. Dr. Badger questioned whether she is trying to eliminate parents helping in the classrooms. Ms. Dembowski said we are using parents during collaborative time – when teachers are involved in professional development; also for response to intervention which involves sometimes five teachers together at the same time. She noted sometimes there is

also a need for a third body outside at recess. Dr. Badger said he is uncomfortable using individual parents, anyone who has not gone through the hiring process, if anything happens in that classroom, it is unusual in a school to have a parent being sole monitor in a room for any length of time. Ms. Dembowski assured him they are not the sole monitor in a classroom for any period of time. She stated it was not a decision she made easily. Mr. Kearns said we are in such a great position to have a Principal we have confidence in to move forward with her recommendations, and feel O.K. to move forward with those recommendations.

Dr. Badger questioned teachers' salaries, noting we are still the lowest ten school districts in the State in starting teacher salaries - it is a retention issue. He wished to know whether there is still a long term plan to raise teachers' salaries to a certain percentage level relative to the State. Mr. Kearns said we looked at it last year and put together a 3-year plan to get the Jackson teachers up to levels - last year we took the first step of the increase. Mr. Kopitsky said at the end of three years they should be up with the comparison schools. Dr. Nelson pointed out that Jackson's starting salary is higher than both Bartlett and Conway. Dr. Badger said he hopes that when there are savings we take advantage of them to move forward to increase teachers' salaries. Mr. Dougherty said the idea of increasing teachers' salaries valley-wide is something that has to happen; year to year savings in the budget does not mean anything as to where teachers' salaries are at. Mr. Kearns stated now it is 9% over three years, we will revisit it when that cycle comes to an end. Mr. Kopitsky added that we want to keep the teachers we have because they are good; in a year or two we will be right up to where everyone else is.

Ms. Duffy questioned projected enrollment for next year. Ms. Dembowski said it is projected to be 47, the following year about the same. Ms. Duffy questioned whether there has been any consideration for cutting anyone else's hours. Ms. Dembowski said they will deal with it year by year. Ms. Duffy wished to know whether there is any consideration to decrease hours for next year, for instance, for guidance? Ms. Dembowski said she would have to look at it then and consider the needs of the kids at that time. Mr. Dougherty said they were meeting the needs of a particular K-1 grade that year; the assistants is where you can fluctuate on a year to year basis and that will continue to change – if we need less, it is our responsibility to have less. He said he does not remember a discussion about there being a specific number of aides that we keep. Mr. Kearns said custodial and maintenance hours were reduced for this budget.

Review of Warrant Articles:

Article 1 – Budget - \$2,232,515. Dr. Nelson questioned \$5200 for snowplowing. Mr. Dougherty noted there is still the question of flex cards for the staff. It was agreed plowing is out (\$5200). Mr. Kearns said with regard to the flex card, there are 13 people taking benefits, \$250 per staff member equals \$3250. The other option was to divide the \$5200 being cut by 13. There are five people on the 2-

person plan, 8 on the family plan. Mr. Dougherty said they have been asked to look into increasing dental benefits from \$750 to \$1,000 (the same as Conway); however, if we do that and the money is not spent, Delta Dental gets to keep it. The alternative was to have a flex card which staff could spend as they wish - prescriptions, over the counter items such as aspirin, dental, etc.

Mr. Kearns pointed out if they took the 8 family plans and added \$350, adding \$300 for the five 2-person plans it would amount to \$5,550. Mr. Bradley said he has a problem in that we have 13 on the plan and two will have \$4,000 in out-of-pocket expenses if they use every service in a calendar year. Ms. Bennett stated when this was discussed by staff, half were comfortable going to the change, half felt it would increase their cost. Mr. Kearns said it is an increase in the flex card, plus the \$3,000 deductible pool

Dr. Nelson said the pool is set up so if an individual hit a second deductible they would be able to get reimbursed for it. Mr. Dougherty said if they increase the budget by \$5,550 [Mr. Kearns' proposed plan] less the \$5,200 being cut for snowplowing, the budget would increase only \$350 – it will cost *some* more, but many of them less.

Mr. Bradley stated we need to put something in the budget to do some playground work. Mr. Kearns agreed the way they are spread out now they need three people on duty in the event someone has to go inside, leaving two people in charge. Ms. Dembowski said the way it is set up, kids can be out of the line of sight. Mr. Kearns questioned the impact of losing a third person. Ms. Dembowski said it effects planning time, teachers meeting with parents, etc. They are presently on a set rotation schedule; she is proposing changing a little for next year, using assistants to free up more teacher time. She said we are coping for the moment.

Mr. Bradley suggested doing some of it as it is better to ask for a little at a time rather than all at once; secondly, we have a huge difference in dynamics on the playground - someone may not be able to play where he/she wants because there are not enough teachers to watch everyone. Mr. Dougherty said without the blacktop it would be \$36,000+/-; the problem with doing the basketball court separately, is that it cannot be done separately, we cannot touch anything beyond the ditch. The permit is to fill in that area that is wet, there is no way to just put the pavement in where it is planned without filling in the wetland. He said as regards changing what we are considering at this point and then applying an arbitrary number at this late time, really makes no sense. Mr. Bradley asked at what point do we feel comfortable asking for \$60,000? Mr. Dougherty said where we feel more comfortable is when we know the exact number; we still do not have a reply from the State. Until the process flushes out, we do not know what to do with it - we are in the middle of the process.

Ms. Bennett questioned Mr. Bradley about his idea of doing it in smaller amounts. Mr. Dougherty said coming up with the wording for a warrant article on the spot

was the main concern; raising it in the regular budget means you have to spend it next year. Mr. Kearns said if it was a warrant article it would be maintenance of grounds, so if we ended up not using it for this, it would be for something else. Mr. Dougherty felt it would make sense to have one trust fund that could cover both – we could close one out and have a new trust fund for the buildings and the grounds. He said he agrees \$53,000 in one year has an impact, but it tells people what we want to do, how much it will cost, and why we want to do it. Dr. Nelson said it would be \$.15 for \$50,000 increase. Dr. Badger stated that would be \$40 for a \$200,000 property. Mr. Dougherty said he would recommend not changing it this year. Mr. Bradley stated it was a mistake not to have this in a warrant article this year.

Motion was made by Mr. Bradley, seconded by Mr. Kopitsky, to increase the budget by \$350 and approve a new proposed budget figure of \$2,232,865. Motion carried 5-0-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2010-11 PROPOSED BUDGET

Article 1 – Budget - \$2,232,865.

Article 2 - \$15,000 to be added to Capital Reserve Fund (School Buses) – Dr. Nelson reported currently that fund has \$63,000, bringing it to \$78,000. (New buses now are costing about \$94,000 with the new emissions control devices.) JSD will need to purchase a new bus in two years.

Article 3 - \$15,000 to be added to the Expendable Trust Fund (Tuition Trust Fund) – Dr. Nelson stated there is currently \$17,000 in that fund and the Board is proposing to add \$15,000 to take care of middle school tuition as the “bubble” comes through.

Article 4 - \$35,000 to be added to the Expendable General Trust Fund (School Building Maintenance Fund) – It was noted this fund is currently at \$36,000 which is targeted for the roof; the Board is looking to put another \$35,000 back into it as the roof repair will deplete what is already in there.

Article 5 - \$25,000 to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund (Special Education) – There is currently \$74,000 in this fund. This is needed to cover any placements that might come to pass.

Article 6 – To create an expendable maintenance trust fund to be known as the Whitney Maintenance Trust Fund, for repairing and maintaining the Whitney Community Center. This article would raise and appropriate \$5,000 toward this purpose and would name the School Board as agents to expend from this fund. Dr. Nelson explained this will be offset by contributions from the Whitney Foundation to begin the Trust Fund.

Motion was made by Ms. Anzaldi, seconded by Mr. Bradley, that the Board act to approve the six warrant articles as presented: (1) Budget – see Pg. 5.

- (2) \$15,000 for school buses – 5-0-0**
- (3) \$15,000 for tuition trust fund – 5-0-0**
- (4) \$35,000 for school building maintenance fund – 5-0-0**
- (5) \$25,000 for Special Education Capital Reserve – 5-0-0**
- (6) \$5,000 to create maintenance trust fund for the Whitney Center – 5-0-0**

Dr. Nelson reviewed the budget, noting an increase of \$350 (as explained on Pg. 4). Budget overall decreases by 4%+, includes health insurance program – a less expensive plan for the District and for the individuals. A deductible pool has been added for those who might reach a second deductible. Salary increases include second year of the plan to improve teacher and support personnel salaries.

He noted that salaries also includes ESOL for 20 hours (about \$20,000). It includes a decrease in hours budgeted for maintenance and custodial personnel, but has an additional ten hours that can be used with the approval of the Principal. Also included is \$3,000 in a pool for staff members for additional work that is needed. There is a reduction of ten hours in the teacher aid position.

Dr. Nelson stated middle school tuition is up due to number of students increasing from 11 to 16; high school tuition is down because there are fewer students this year. Special Ed has seen a decrease of \$80,000 because an anticipated need that did not occur.

Building and Grounds – snowplowing has been removed (\$5200), instead there is a \$5,550 increase to the health insurance.

There is a reduction in Library Services as the school will be looking to hire a Librarian one day a week - \$7,600 will cover one day a week and any benefits that go with it.

There was question of the 30 hours and 35 hours for the custodian and maintenance people, having been budgeted down. It was noted 35 and 40 hours respectively were budgeted, the number of hours has been reduced.

Trish Hanlon noted that, given that there will be designated people who can handle the Whitney Center, that will effect hours for the custodian. Dr. Nelson said after a history of what occurs has been established they will have a better idea of what they will need. Mr. Kearns noted also, sometimes they will need those people on a Sat. One citizen questioned whether what is going on at the Whitney Center can be included in a newsletter or internet link. Notation was made that there are already links. There was question of whether the Whitney Center could have its own. Ms. Dembowski said she has a calendar that is linked to the school's website. There was question whether it could be accessible

through the Whitney site. Mr. Dougherty said E-News could include a link to the Whitney page. Dr. Nelson will research this and get back to them. Ann Bennett volunteered to do this.

Mr. Bradley questioned, with regard to the revenue side, whether there are any students paying tuition to the school. Dr. Nelson stated there is this year; however, it does not affect the revenue side, just the tax rate.

Ms. Grady said regarding the blacktop for the playground, she would encourage that if they are going to have blacktop in that area, it would be great if it could happen sooner rather than later, noting it is a “bit of a stretch having children play around the corner.” Ms. Anzaldi stated we are very empathetic to your cause, but need to find out what the specific amount would be for that. Dr. Nelson said the State has 75 days to respond, the paperwork was submitted on Nov. 18. Mr. Kearns said he is not willing to put money into next year’s budget. Mr. Dougherty said we would not be putting any work into that until summer of 2011; we have some money left to begin some of the work this summer, but do not know the total amount that will be needed for ground work, drainage, blacktop. He noted we had a committee look at it, and it is the process we are having to go through – we have to take it one step at a time.

Mr. Bradley said he feels the District made a mistake by not starting a fund for this. Ms. Synnott suggested possibly parents could help with playground monitoring, that she had not been aware of the need for it. Ms. Hanlon suggested instituting a low budget position for a yard monitor for maybe two hours a day.

There being no further public comment, the public hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

4. Presentation of School Programs/FYI Items:

A. SAU – Other School Board Reports – Dr. Nelson noted there will be an SAU meeting on Feb. 25th at 6:30 p.m. at the Jackson Grammar School.

5. Old Business: discussed on Pgs. 4&5.

6. Instructional Issues: None.

7. Consider Personnel Actions: None.

8. Business Affairs:

A. FYI – 2009-10 Budget Status Report

B. Signing of Warrant and Budget Forms – All documents were duly signed.

9. Administrators' Reports:

A. Superintendent – Dr. Nelson provided copies of the Superintendent evaluation forms which need to be completed and turned in to the Chairman by the end of the month, to be forwarded on to the SAU Board Chairman.

B. Principal – Ms. Dembowski reported on the NECAP results: 33 students were tested. 97% were proficient or above in math, 93% proficient or above in reading. Those students who were not proficient were those with identified needs.

Ms. Dembowski reported they will be having a guest storyteller for the children on Friday. The kids are doing a “Telebration” on Feb. 11th at 6:00 p.m..

It was reported that the trial lock-down went well; the kids handled it well and were aware that they needed to go to the nearest manned classroom.

10. Citizens Comments: None.**11. Board Member Issues – Board Discussion:**

A. Set Date for Next Meeting – March 15th at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Dougherty noted the request for funds for the defibrillator for the Whitney Center. Ms. Bennett said the Lilapond Trust Fund would be appropriate. Mr. Dougherty will send a letter from the School Board requesting release of the funds from that trust in order to pay for the defibrillator. Ms. Anzaldi has contact with a salesman to get a discount. Mr. Kearns wished to make certain wall mountings are included. Mr. Kopitsky questioned training. Ms. Dembowski said they have scheduled training for this and for CPR at the end of the month.

Mr. Bradley questioned where we are at on the Whitney Center as far as not having to have maintenance personnel there at the same time? Mr. Kearns said we have been talking about having a list of others outside the staff on site, the process has started. Ms. Hanlon said they would choose a number of people in the town, people they know who use the Center regularly, and ask George Bordash to create a booklet listing where the shutoffs are, etc., then have everyone get educated on that. It was suggested Mr. Bordash be invited to attend the next Oversight Committee meeting.

Mr. Bradley questioned the situation of someone who is on the approved list and is holding a for-profit event. Mr. Dougherty said if they are in a community group they would be paying for the building anyway. Ms. Hanlon said the reason for having people from the outside is to help eradicate the need for overtime and the amount of money needed to run the Whitney Center. They want to see it streamlined, for instance, for a weekend long event such as a book sale. Mr. Bradley said it might be a good idea to not let the person whose event it is be the designated person. Ms. Dembowski said they did decide there would be an

approved list of those responsible, they will have a core group of people who have access to codes and keys. Mr. Kearns noted Messrs. Bordash and Ianuzzi would still be the persons to open and close.

12. **Signing of Manifest:** All documents were duly signed.
13. **Non Public Session:** None.
14. **Adjourn:** Motion was made by Mr. Kopitsky, seconded by Ms. Anzaldi and carried by unanimous vote, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier
Recording Secretary

Old Business for March meeting:

- (1) Allowing transportation of skis on buses