

Albany School Board

Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2009

Present: Board members James Sabina, Laurie Ferris and Colleen Cormack. Also in attendance were Kim Guptill and Carl Nelson. (Colleen and Kim came in just after the meeting had begun) Public: 0

- (1) James Sabina called the meeting to order at 5:15pm.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes (8-11-09) – James Sabina made a motion to approve the minutes. Laurie seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 2-0-0.**
- (3) **Board Member Comments - none**
- (4) **Signing of Checks and Manifest – no comments**

Colleen and Kim joined the meeting

- (5) **Business Affairs** – We were under budget by \$37,406 for last year. This will be used to offset the tax rate. Carl pointed out that the major reason for that was in the transportation line. It was due to a student moving out of district that required special transportation. He pointed out that is a good reason to not have our own vehicle, as it would be sitting right now. Colleen mentioned that the previous special education director had explained to her that we often needed special transportation because of the inability to access Golden Oaks with a bus. Now that a bus can access it, she agrees, it would not make sense for us to purchase a vehicle.
- (6) **Other Business** – The next SAU9 board meeting will be in Eaton on November 12th, 2009 at 6:30pm.

James asked the board members if they had any questions or concerns about the budget that they would like him to address at the next executive meeting. There were none.

Colleen asked Laurie if she was satisfied with the explanation received about the facilities charge from North Country Independent Living. She said she was okay with it as we really don't have much choice about it. She just thought it was odd that North Country Independent Living charged a "facilities fee" and thought it was expensive and billed in an unusual manner.

Colleen told Carl she would like to hear from Brian directly about his decision not to show President Obama's speech to students. She had read an article in the newspaper, but wanted to give him an opportunity to make sure it was accurate. Laurie explained that some classes did see it, her daughter saw it. Carl explained it was left up to individual principals to decide whether or not it fit into what they were doing. Brian left it up to individual teachers. Colleen said the speech was about the importance of staying in school and that one of Carl's goals/objectives is to lower the drop out rate. The speech also encourages kids to set educational goals and take responsibility for their own education regardless of the challenges they face. Colleen said we periodically hire speakers to come

in to motivate kids to stay in school, not drink and drive, the importance of good leadership etc. Here we had an opportunity to have a highly skilled and inspiring orator do that for free and some didn't use it. She said it doesn't matter what race you are or what political party you're from, the message was a message we all should be sending. Laurie pointed out that we followed along with much of the rest of the country and made it a choice. She said while she is a supporter of Obama she understands the hesitation. Laurie explained that as a parent she was surprised by the classroom teachings of 9/11 and can understand why the school would want to be careful since Obama's speech was a controversial issue around the nation. Kim Guptill pointed out that there wasn't any notice to parents about what was going to be said. Colleen said administrators had time to read it ahead of time. Carl agreed there was not much notice for anyone. Colleen said that as parents, we don't know what teachers are going to say to our children ahead of time and we've never, to her knowledge, ever received a copy of a speech ahead of time from the speakers we hire. We put a certain amount of trust into our teachers and administrators that what is put before our kids is appropriate. Colleen pointed out that Obama was not the first president to address our students. She said Pine Tree Elementary students watched it all together in the afternoon in their first day assembly. Carl said that was Laura's call and all the principals are different. Colleen said she hopes these decisions aren't based on fear and feels it was a lost opportunity.

Next meeting date is December 8, 2009 at 5:15pm at the Albany Town Hall.

- (7) Colleen Cormack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30pm. The motion was seconded by Laurie Ferris. The motion passed 3-0-0.**