

The Organizational Meeting was called to order by Dr. Norman Christopher, President, at 7:07 P.M., and was held in the Highland High School Media Center.

Roll Call: Mrs. Thomas, present; Mr. Petek, present; Mr. Kelly, present; Mr. Houska, present; Dr. Christopher, present.

ADDITION(S), CORRECTION(S), AND/OR DELETION(S) TO THE AGENDA

Change - Item VIII – Date Change – Monday, February 28, 2011

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE 11-01-(O)-2

Mr. Kelly appointed Dr. Christopher as President Pro-Tempore for this meeting.

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD PRESIDENT 11-01-(O)-3

Dr. Christopher called for nominations for Board President for 2011.

Mr. Kelly placed the name of Mr. Dan Petek in nomination for President. Mrs. Thomas seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations, it was moved by Mrs. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Kelly, that nominations be closed.

Roll call on nomination for Mr. Petek as Board President:

Mrs. Thomas, yes; Mr. Kelly, yes; Mr. Petek, abstain; Mr. Houska, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes.

Motion carried.

OATH OF OFFICE – PRESIDENT

Mr. Neil Barnes, Treasurer, administered the Oath of Office to newly elected President, Mr. Petek.

No action necessary.

At this point, Mr. Petek presided over the remainder of the meeting.

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT 11-01-(O)-4

Mr. Petek called for nominations for Board Vice-President for 2011.

Mrs. Thomas placed the name of Mr. Houska in nomination for Vice-President. Dr. Christopher seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations, it was moved by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mrs. Thomas, that nominations be closed.

Roll call on nomination for Mr. Houska as Vice-President:

Mr. Kelly, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mr. Houska, abstain; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

OATH OF OFFICE – VICE-PRESIDENT

Mr. Neil Barnes, Treasurer administered the Oath of Office to newly elected Vice-President, Mr. Houska.

No action necessary.

AGREEMENT TO SERVE AS OSBA LEGISLATIVE LIAISON FOR 2011

Dr. Christopher agreed to serve as the OSBA Legislative Liaison for 2011

APPROVAL OF MEMBERSHIP IN OSBA FOR 2011 11-01-(O)-5

Mr. Kelly made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Thomas, that the Board of Education approve membership in the OSBA for 2011 in the amount of \$5,953.00.

Mr. Kelly, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mr. Houska, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

APPROVE OSBA LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUND SERVICE CONTRACT 11-01-(O)-6

Dr. Christopher made a motion, seconded by Mr. Houska, that the Board of Education approve the OSBA Legal Assistance Fund Service Contract for calendar year 2011, in the amount of \$250.00.

Dr. Christopher, yes; Mr. Houska, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Mr. Kelly, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

TREASURER'S, PRESIDENT'S AND SUPERINTENDENT'S BOND 11-01-(O)-7

Mr. Houska made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kelly, that the Board of Education approve the purchase of performance bonds in the amount of \$100,000.00 for the Treasurer, Board President and Superintendent.

Mr. Houska, yes; Mr. Kelly, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT OF LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE ENSUING SCHOOL YEAR 11-01-(O)-8

Mr. Kelly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Houska, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of legal counsel for the ensuing school year, as follows:

Britton, Smith, Peters and Kalail Co., L.P.A.
McGown, Markling and Whalen Co.
Scott, Scriven and Wahoff, LLP
Squire, Sanders, and Dempsey

Mr. Kelly, yes; Mr. Houska, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

ESTABLISH MEETING DATES/SITES 11-01-(O)-9

Mr. Houska made a motion, seconded by Dr. Christopher, that the Board of Education establish the following dates, time and place for its' regular monthly meetings, including specific variations for 2011:

Dates: Monday, January 24th; Monday, February 28th; Monday, March 21st; Monday, April 18th; Monday, May 16th; Monday, June 20th; Monday, July 18th; Monday, August 15th; Monday, September 26th; Monday, October 17th; Monday, November 21st; and Monday, December 12th.

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Place: High School Media Center, except March – Sharon Elementary; October – Hinckley Elementary; and December - Granger Elementary.

Mr. Houska, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Mr. Kelly, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS 11-01-(O)-10

Dr. Christopher made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Thomas, that the Board of Education will participate in all applicable Federal Programs for FY12. The Superintendent is to be the authorized representative for all federal programs and grants, and is authorized to appoint designees to represent Highland for FY2012.

Dr. Christopher, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Mr. Kelly, yes; Mr. Houska, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

SERVICE FUND 11-01-(O)-11

Mr. Houska made a motion, seconded by Dr. Christopher, that a Board of Education establish a Service Fund in accordance with ORC 3315.15.

Mr. Houska, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Mr. Kelly, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND/OR DELEGATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Bruce Hulme, 7771 Darcy Drive, on behalf of the Wrestling Team, thanked Debbie Parker, Secretary to the Supervisor of Operations, for ensuring that transportation was provided for the JV Team on short notice over the Winter break.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2012 ALTERNATIVE TAX BUDGET 11-01-(O)-12

Mr. Kelly made a motion, seconded by Dr. Christopher, that the Board of Education approve the Fiscal Year 2012 Alternative Tax Budget as presented.

Mr. Kelly, yes; Dr. Christopher, yes; Mrs. Thomas, yes; Mr. Houska, yes; Mr. Petek, yes.

Motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEY UPDATE – PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS

Mrs. Aukerman introduced Vanessa Tey Iosue from Burges & Burges Strategists, who gave an overview of the research process and Kathy Severinski, Senior Partner with Triad Research, Inc. who shared information and details regarding the one-on-one phone surveys conducted with Highland residents, to help the District and the Board get a better feel for community sentiment and plan appropriately moving forward.

Ms. Iosue explained this was a qualitative research process which involved 2 listening sessions with staff and community members to get their thoughts and perceptions on how the district is doing academically, financially, and what it means for the long-term future of the community, not just the schools. This data helped to develop the online survey, of which 691 online surveys from the community and 172 from staff members were received. The Triad survey was, in large part, based upon the results of the listening sessions and online surveys. The Triad survey was administered by telephone.

Ms. Severinski from Triad Research said they have been in business since 1975, and their expertise is working with the public sector to provide research for such entities as universities, school districts, libraries, transit, etc. Their job is to understand each district's situation, some of which was learned through the online surveys, from the Board and Superintendent, as well as Burges & Burges, and then condense the information obtained.

The survey explored what the general opinion is of the District, what people think of the quality of the education, how informed they are, and measured support for or against a levy.

Results of the survey:

- Voters hold the schools in very high regard and felt informed with the schools and rated the quality of education either excellent or good.
- Rated the job the teachers, administrators, and School Board are doing, and the results were positive.
- Support for the levy: The District needs to continue to provide positive reasons and reinforce the need to put an emergency levy on the ballot that would generate \$4.6 million dollars and would be paid for by a 6.9 mill levy for a period of 10 years. This message to voters is very important, especially for those who are undecided.
- Voters were asked about a 1% income tax increase, and less than half said they would vote for the tax increase. A traditional levy seems to work the best in Ohio.

- Demographic differences regarding the emergency 6.9 mill levy: Biggest differences occurred by age, and if they had children attending in the district. Support was highest in Granger, then Sharon, then Hinckley.
- Agree or disagree regarding reasons for proposing the levy: The need for additional money – people believe the District has enough, or they do not believe they can afford more taxes. The District will need to provide more information regarding the need for additional money and how it will be used. Overall, voters said they would like to vote for the levy but the affordability is a stumbling block.
- Raise awareness: Many residents believe there is a disconnect and are unaware that of what is going on in the District and what the schools have done to be efficient to save money, both past and present, or what has been done to remain off the ballot for the past 12 years from an operational funding standpoint. Very few school districts have been able to do this. The normal time frame is typically 3 to 5 years for a District to ask for additional operating money.
- Need to reiterate the District's current financial condition, or basis to understand the need; the District has the lowest per pupil cost in the County; since 1999, enrollment has increased by 1,000 students with no additional tax increase; school administrators have taken a pay freeze for the past 2 years; changed the teacher's health insurance plan, which saved over \$800,000 during the first two years after implementation; have already cut \$2 million dollars from the budget and 40 staff positions (10%); and that State leaders have said to expect funding cuts to Schools up to 15 to 20%.
- Explain to the community what happens if the levy passes and if it fails: If the levy passes – All the money will be used for classroom instruction and programs. If it fails - More cuts will be needed, such as transportation, staff, and programs. Excellent rating for the past 11 years, important to the community to maintain quality rating, however there is a disconnect that this will not be affected if the levy fails – with another round of cuts, this would affect the quality and excellent rating and will be at risk without additional funding from taxpayers; community does see the link between good schools and the quality of the community saying good schools, good property values.
- Ways to generate money and support: Community does not want the schools to get worse and would like to maintain the quality; Community divided on having students pay more for extra-curricular activities; divided on reducing retirement, health care benefits, salaries, or losing staff, opposed to high school busing cut; in favor of open enrollment. What these results say are, the community does not want to see the schools change and they want excellent schools. The community sees the administrators took a pay freeze, and the teachers helped with saving money for health benefits, however, they believe if the teachers offer up a pay freeze or cut, will help to build more support for the levy, and a little increase for pay to play for more parent support. The voters are looking for everyone to pitch in, and not leave it up to the taxpayers for everything.
- Communication: Options include direct mail, newspapers, E-mail, internet, community meetings, website or cable TV. Residents favor direct mail, local newspaper, and E-mail.
- What was learned from the survey: The community holds the schools in high regard; one of the highest quality ratings Triad has seen in the past few years; want to keep the excellent rating, and feel the schools are important to their property values. Not sure enough voters are completely aware of the District's current financial condition, what has been done to stay off the ballot for the past 12 years; increase of 1,000 students and no new taxes; recent salary freezes, and change in health insurance, and what will or will not happen with the passage or failure of the levy.

- This will be a challenge and a lot of work to pass this levy and the need to communicate the right messages is great.

There was a question and answer period that followed.

Mrs. Aukerman said the District will make the results available as soon as it becomes final.

Mrs. Aukerman closed by saying the Board will have a lot of difficult decisions ahead of them, such as potentially cutting high school busing, allowing open enrollment, maintaining the high quality school district we have and would like it to remain that way, and the question of do we want Highland to maintain the excellent education we have enjoyed, or we move in the direction of State minimum standards, for which we will all pay a price. We realize the difficulty in this economy, and are starting to see some positive indicators, and hopefully with the reductions that have already been made will help position us more favorably with our voters.

Mr. Kelly asked about the true feeling of the community by asking 300 people and if this is a sufficient sampling or what a national survey may be like. Ms. Severinski answered by saying it would be the same and it is based on the randomization of the sample, that everyone has the same chance of being selected to participate in the survey, and felt this is a very robust sample for our District.

ADJOURNMENT

With all in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

President

Treasurer

(A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE IN THE TREASURER'S OFFICE)