

Treynor Community School District
Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 13, 2016 -6:30 p.m.
HS/MS Media Center

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Schnepel.

Roll Call: Present – Board Members Erica Schnepel, Sally Myers, Gary Funkhouser and Amy Graber.

Absent – Board Member Kent Boese.

Also Present – Principals Gary McNeal, Jill Kay and Jenny, Berens.

There were approximately 19 members of the public present.

Moved by board member Myers second by board member Graber to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Unanimous.

Open Forum:

Ann Vorthmann – Ann was present in support of Jan Strutzenberg’s grievance appeal. She reminded the board that Jan had experienced three difficult life events in a short period of time. The events were the death of her father and father in-law and a diagnosis of cancer. Each required justified time away from her job. She would like the board to consider what care they would expect from the board of directors if it were one of them that had experienced these events.

Heidi Guttau-Fox – Heidi was present to comment on two of the board agenda items. First she discussed the board secretary position. She was at this meeting because several people had expressed concern over the negative press over her departure from her prior position. People have asked her how the hiring process works, because it is an important position. She requested reassurance, in light of all of the negative press about Treynor that they are not walking into further negative press. The position is the board’s employee so she assumes it would be the board or a board committee that would be involved in the hiring decision. If that is the case, and due diligence has been done as she would expect in hiring decisions that is great. She would like some confirmation and she believes a lot of the public would like confirmation as well. The circumstances seem odd to her given the present circumstances in Treynor. Second, Heidi was present in support of Mrs. Strutzenberg. She believes that Jan should get her sick pay in this situation. The message that is being sent is that the district paid an employee, after he was arrested, for more than a year to do nothing. And to not pay someone after going through what Jan has gone through sends the wrong message. She assumes the board will take appropriate and compassionate action on this matter. She would also like the board to investigate the decision making on this matter and the treatment of Jan during her illness. She believes there have been some very negative actions and possible violations of the law. She has detailed the information in an email to the board. She finds it upsetting and she thinks it is a liability. She is sad that her children are in a school where teachers and administrators do not show compassion. It needs to stop and there needs to be some changes.

Moved by board member Funkhouser, seconded by board member Myers to approve bills, financial statements, officials’ contracts and minutes of previous meeting as submitted. Ayes: Unanimous.

Moved by board member Graber seconded by board member Myers to approve a contract for the High School Special Education teacher. Ayes: Unanimous. Principal McNeal reported that there are still two vacancies and that they should be filled by the end of the week.

Board member Schnepel questioned why the position was listed as the Board Secretary/Treasurer on the agenda, as opposed to the title of Business Manager/Board Secretary. Karli North explained that the person in that position serves two functions. For the Board the position is Board Secretary/Treasurer and for the District the position is Business Manager. Erica commented that she had requested to be on the hiring committee and she believes the board should have been involved in the hiring process. In the future she would expect that the board would be involved in filling a position where they will directly work for the board. Moved by board member Funkhouser seconded by board member Graber to designate Doreen Mowery as the Board Secretary/Treasurer for 2016-2017. Ayes: Unanimous. Board member Funkhouser wanted to know if Doreen wanted to make any comment on why she left where she did so it could help people understand. Doreen introduced herself to the public and explained that she had worked for the City of Carter Lake for approximately 25 years and that she served on the Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Board. She did not desire to answer any further questions regarding her previous employment. Board member Schnepel questioned if the refusal to answer any questions was due to pending legal matters. Doreen reiterated that she was not going to be answering questions regarding her previous employment.

Moved by board member Schnepel seconded by board member Graber to approve Treynor State Bank as the depository for the 2016-17 fiscal year. Ayes: Schnepel, Funkhouser, Graber. Abstain: Myers.

Moved by board member Funkhouser seconded by board member Graber to authorize designated bank signatures for fiscal year 2016-17. Ayes: Unanimous.

Board member Schnepel stated that the board has reviewed all of the information that had been given to them regarding the grievance submitted by Jan Strutzenberg. Moved by board member Schnepel to overturn Mr. Elwood's decision and pay for the benefits at this time. Jan came before the board to appeal the decision regarding her grievance for benefits. She stated that through her cancer and surgery she tried to work half days. Her doctors and surgeons felt that she had gone above and beyond what patients normally do when going through what she has. She wanted to work and fulfill the needs of her students and prepare for the multi-cultural day. She stated that no substitutes were hired to cover her absence. She has followed proper process for filing a grievance and has provided the board with Supt. Elwood's response. She requested the board review her grievance with the district. She clarified that the documentation of days missed were inaccurate. She was docked for May 13 when she was working in the concession stand with the dance team. Additionally she was docked for Mar. 25, which was Good Friday. She also stated that the district has already set precedence with the Randy Donahue case when he had cancer. He received full pay without being docked. There were other employees that received pay under less than favorable circumstances. Mrs. Strutzenberg requested that the board grant her full pay, waiving all dock days and consider the circumstances as stated. Board member Graber questioned if the doctors were willing to fill out disability forms. Jan was not aware of a disability benefit and she never requested that information from the doctors. Board member Schnepel stated there is a board policy #409.3 that discusses disability coverage. Karli North explained that employees have the opportunity to purchase a long term disability policy that pays after 90 days of being unemployed and it pays up to \$1,500 per month. Board member Graber questioned if the doctor provided any type of letter stating the time off that would be needed. That was not requested. Board member Myers stated that Mrs. Strutzenberg experienced very extenuating circumstances and expressed her sorrow for what she has been through and she hopes no one ever has to go through that again. Board member Myers stated that Principal Kay and Supt. Elwood made the decisions that she

would have expected based on the contracts. Considering the extenuating circumstances she seconded board member Schnepel's motion. She stated that the contracts were followed and that since they were being requested to go outside the contracts it was appropriate for the board to be making the decision. The board unanimously approved overturning the decision made by staff and agreed to pay Jan Strutzenberg as requested. Board member Schnepel pointed out that Jan was not a part of the actual contract but there is board policy #409.5 that should have been reviewed when the superintendent was making his decision.

The principals' reports included dates of upcoming training. The coaches are going to training in August. Board member Schnepel suggested that the coaches also go to the Model Teacher training as well.

Board member Funkhouser presented a list of IASB legislative goals for 2016-17 and suggested the top four items that he would like to consider. Board member Schnepel suggested that teacher leadership and development be considered. Moved by board member Funkhouser seconded by board member Schnepel to submit items #2, 13, 20, and 28 to IASB as the top four priorities. Ayes: Unanimous.

Moved by board member Funkhouser seconded by board member Myers to approve the 2016-17 SPED consortium agreement with Council Bluffs. Ayes: Unanimous.

There were no open enrollment requests at this time.

Board member Schnepel suggested that in the future the board should look at a policy to address special circumstances like were experienced by Mrs. Strutzenberg.

Moved by board member Myers seconded by board member Schnepel to adjourn the regular board meeting. Ayes: Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erica Schnepel, President

Doreen Mowery, Board Secretary