

Cassopolis Public Schools
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Board of Education
Minutes
Regular Meeting
March 23, 2015

Welcome: This regular meeting of the Cassopolis Board of Education was held on Monday, March 23, 2015 in the Board meeting room at Squires Educational Center and called to order at 7:00 p.m., as President Ward welcomed those attending.

Roll Call:

Members Present: George Calvert, Sue Horstmann, John Bright, Jesse Binns, Lisa Cutting, Deb Deubner, Scott Ward

Members Absent: None

Also present: Tracy Hertsel, Becky Smith, Dee Voss, Dave VanLue, Robyn Bright, Rosa Haines, Matt Brawley, Cindy Martynowicz, staff members and community members

Lisa Cutting led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda - **Moved by** John Bright, **supported by** George Calvert to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Horstmann, yes; Cutting, yes; Bright, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Ward, yes.

Approval of Minutes: **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Lisa Cutting to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of February 23, 2015, as written. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Binns, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Cutting, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Communications or correspondence – None.

Reports, Information Items from School Staff –

Sam Adams Elementary / Voss: Mrs. Voss said that she met with the ISD this morning on transitional IEP's for incoming Kindergarten students. Also, the building participated in United Way's day of reading for K-2nd grade students. Also Judy Singley, a former 4th grade teacher, read the ABC's of Trees" to Kindergarten students. Both events go along with March being reading month. Last Friday, the ED YES reports were submitted for all three schools and at the district level. This Thursday the elementary will have a good behavior assembly and will wrap up the reading contest. Mrs. Voss thanked Jeff Locke and the Cassopolis Fire Department for partnering up with the elementary, it has been a great incentive for students to encourage reading. Mrs. Voss said that next Monday and Tuesday will be Kindergarten registration. Screening for Kindergarten will be after school is out in June.

Mrs. Voss said that she has been working with the high school on the schedule for M-STEP testing, which will go from April 13th through the rest of the school year.

Ross Beatty JSHS / VanLue: Mr. VanLue gave a personal "shout out" to the Robo Rangers. He attended the first competition in Howell, MI and also attended the event this past Saturday in St. Joseph. He said that our team took 3rd place overall and missed the finals by only two points. The team had a great showing and it was wonderful to see them interact with each other. Mr. VanLue said that the M-STEP testing schedule will be challenging. The whole state will be testing online at the same time. He said that Mr. Hertsel, Mrs. Voss and himself attended a Social Media training in Edwardsburg last week. The district now has a Twitter account that Mrs. Brawley is overseeing, and we will continue to get

positive information out. The WNDU “our school rules” segment will be on Friday, April 17th and he is still working on putting that event together to make sure that Cassopolis is well represented.

Food Services / Bright: Mrs. Bright said that the Health Department conducted our food establishment report last week and both buildings scored 100%. The Health Department representative hadn’t been in district for a while and was impressed with our new kitchen equipment. Mrs. Bright said that the Superintendent kept her informed last week about the problem with the water in the village so that we had no disruption of services at all.

Operations & Transportation / Haines: Mrs. Haines read the following letter announcing her retirement:

“To the Cassopolis Public Schools Board of Education:

I would like to thank all of the individuals of this school district. Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, and all that are employed/work/volunteer here. I have learned much from many. I also would like to take this time and say I believe this school district is a great institution for children. At its best it provides opportunity and I believe that is the most you can ask from a school. I raised three children who are all quite different and chose different paths but were all afforded that opportunity through this unique school. That is to say they were given a great education from this school system. In addition to my own children I have watched a grandchild graduate and have several other grandchildren now going through this school system.

It has been said and I do believe that teaching beings in the home, however, we are here in this place to teach and model for the children sent here to be in our care for the majority of a day. Throughout my time here I have come to understand that teaching is not only for teachers, but for any adult that is within this system. Regardless of whether you are cleaning, driving a bus, serving up lunch your role does not matter, because children are looking for a model, some are looking for a friend, a dad, mother, a brother, a sister or a grandparent and as adults we must always be mindful that we are modeling and teaching whenever we are in the presence of those very impressionable minds.

I began this journey with Cassopolis Public Schools in 1978, needless to say I was quite young and could not possibly contemplate being here for 34 years. I have been touched by children and hopefully along the way some were touched in a positive way by me. Nothing feels better than to have a child grow up, become a parent and stop by an old woman’s home just to say “hello” and see how I am doing, to me that has all been an added benefit and to see they have become successful adults is most rewarding. As I look around and read stories from afar it is clear that Cassopolis Public Schools has graduated many great men and women through its doors.

Without hesitation, I am proud to say that I have spent my 34 years at Cassopolis Public Schools. I would not have traded it for anything and I will always be a RANGER!!!! So, with a heart bursting with all that it has shared and learned it is at this time I am submitting my letter of retirement to be effective June 30, 2015. Once, again, it has been quite the time of my life.

Sincerely,

Rosa Haines

Adult Ed Secretary

Attendance Secretary

Transportation/Maintenance Secretary

Maintenance Secretary

Warehouse Supervisor

Director of Operations

Director of Operations/Transportation”

Administration / Hertsel: Mr. Hertsel reviewed a Power Point presentation with information about Michigan’s Proposal 1 that will be on the May, 2015 ballot. He explained that passage of Proposal 1 would directly benefit the students of our district. It would mean safer roads for our buses. If Proposal 1 passes, the state will be able to improve our roads, highways and bridges. Michigan’s investment in

roads per capita is less than in any surrounding state. State and average local sales tax rate would be increased from 6% to 7% if Proposal 1 passes, but he noted that those of us living close to Indiana often purchase items across the state line, so we are already paying 7% tax. Mr. Hertsel encouraged the residents of Michigan to vote YES on Proposal 1 because its passing would have a very positive effect on school districts in the state, and if it is defeated it would cause serious financial hardships for local school districts.

Public Comment –

Tina Widerquist Bosler read the following statement into the record:

“I just wanted to reiterate just how proud I am of all the students who went to the robotics competition in St. Joe this past weekend. Not only did our team participate in the 3rd ranked alliance and win the spirit award, but every one of those students behaved beautifully!!! I never had to discipline a student once. They obeyed the boundaries we set for them, wore crazy hats and danced, were always in the stands to cheer on the team, helped haul and pack up and clean up - even if they weren't even members of the team. They built bridges to other teams, and when we were allied with Edwardsburg and the Strikeforce team, our kids moved over to cheer with them. Everyone at that event knew who the Rangers were - and everything they knew about Cassopolis was positive.

Despite the loss of their chief mentor these kids never lost hope or heart - they are true winners. We hope you will continue to help us support them.

We hope you will be as proud of them as we, their mentors, are!

Kristine Widerquist Bosler, on behalf of the Cassopolis Robo Rangers Robotics mentors”

Financials – February, 2015

Moved by Sue Horstmann, **supported by** John Bright that it is resolved that the Board of Education approves the payment of bills for the month of February as follows: General Fund \$231,625.10 and Food Service Fund \$44,592.01. **Motion carried** 7-0, as follows: Deubner, yes; Bright, yes; Binns, yes; Cutting, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Ward, yes.

New Business – Discussion Item

Request for overnight trip – Advanced Art Culture Field Trip – Mr. Hertsel introduced Mrs. Johnson and two of her Advanced Art students. He said that Ms. Johnson came to him with this idea a couple of months ago and has since found funding to make it happen.

Shelly Johnson said that Olivia Hertsel and Emily Cutting volunteered to attend tonight's meeting to explain their request. Mrs. Johnson said that she took the Advanced Art students to the South Bend Art Museum. They asked questions, volunteered answers, and totally enjoyed the experience. This request is for an overnight trip for the students to tour the Chicago Art Museum. The students each wrote a paper in their own words about their desire to tour the art museum and the Michigan Gateway Foundation offered a grant in the amount of \$2,850 to pay for their expenses.

Olivia Hertsel, a senior, said she is taking Advanced Art as well as two other classes of Mrs. Johnson's. She said Advanced Art has been a great class.

Emily Cutting, also a senior, said she has taken every class that Mrs. Johnson has offered. She thinks that all of the Advanced Art students would benefit from going to the art museum in Chicago. They think it would be a lot of fun and they would learn a lot.

Willie Moore said that Mrs. Johnson has helped him every step of the way. He got an art scholarship because of her. He would like to see the museum, has never been there.

Old Business – Action Item

Advanced Art Culture Field Trip – **Moved by** John Bright, **supported by** Lisa Cutting that the request for an overnight field trip to Chicago for the Advanced Art students from May 7 to May 8, 2015, is approved.

Motion carried 7-0, as follows: Calvert, yes; Bright, yes; Horstmann, yes; Binns, yes; Deubner, yes; Cutting, yes; Ward, yes.

Superintendent's Report – Mr. Hertsel reported as follows:

- We have had a lot of success with students participating in recent events. He was with Mr. Brawley at the state wrestling tournament where Tymari Brown finished 5th at state. The FFA teams had a lot of success at state competition. The Parliamentary Procedure team will go to nationals as they won first place at state. The Junior High Conduct of Meetings team was the 3rd in the state. The Greenhand Conduct of Meetings team did not move onto finals but had a good showing. Jacob Roth got 2nd place in the state in Job Interview. The Robo Rangers also did very well at their competitions. He thanked the Robo Rangers team mentors for giving such a huge amount of their time.
- Attended a Social Media training last week that was offered to county agencies. Since then we have started a Twitter account in addition to our Facebook account.
- Thanked Robyn Bright and Rosa Haines and their staffs for helping during last week's water issue with the village.

Mrs. Voss said she also wanted to let the Board know that Mrs. Patton and her team are working very hard on the Michigan History piece. The team won 1st place at regionals and will compete at state in Dewitt on April 25th. She and Mrs. Bright furnished lunch for them at regionals and will again for state. Mrs. Voss said that she would like to do what is possible to help this group through the schools activity funds and reiterated that they did a great job.

Mr. Ward called a 5 minute recess, with the meeting to reconvene at 7:52 p.m.

Reinstatement Hearing – Mr. Ward reminded the Board and administration that the student in question is a minor therefore the student name is not to be used. Rather, refer to him as Student "A". Mr. Ward said that Mr. Brawley and a family representative are asking to speak on Student "A"'s behalf along with Student "A". All comments must be made to the Board as a whole. At the end of the hearing we will need a motion and a second from Board members about reinstatement or non-reinstatement of Student "A".

Mr. VanLue said at the Reinstatement Committee meeting they discussed if Student "A" is reinstated there would be certain stipulations for him to remain in the general population. These would include Student A is to take E-2020 classes online in order to earn credits. If Student "A" exceeds the number of allowable offenses on the Bully Free Schools rubric, he would be referred to Alternative Education. For example, if Student "A" receives either: five low-level referrals, four moderate-level referrals, or three severe-level referrals, he would be referred to Alternative Education. Also, if Student "A" receives one referral for a Gross Misconduct Incident, as listed in the school handbook, he would be referred to Alternative Education. Student "A" agreed to these guidelines at the Reinstatement Committee meeting.

Dr. Calvert said the committee recommended reinstatement for Student "A" under the conditions set forth.

Mrs. Horstmann said there were several steps also in regard to getting Student "A" back up and equivalent to his academic class by the fall time frame, including E-2020. She believes this would give Student "A" enough options to be successful in his return to school.

Mr. Ward asked Student "A" why he would like to be reinstated. Student "A" said he would like to be reinstated to have the education that everyone else has, he wants to get back in school.

There were then comments from the administration and also a family member of Student "A" regarding his possible reinstatement and plans to help him stay focused, followed by questions from Board members to Student "A".

Mr. Ward asked when Student "A" could return to school if he is reinstated. Mr. Hertsel said the 180 days has been served and he could start tomorrow should the Board decide to reinstate.

Moved by John Bright, **supported by** Lisa Cutting to reinstate Student "A" effective March 24, 2015, with the following stipulations: Student "A" is to take E-2020 classes online in order to earn credits. If Student "A" exceeds the Bully Free Schools rubric, then he would be referred to Alternative Education. For example, if Student "A" receives either: five low-level referrals, four moderate-level referrals, or three severe-level referrals, he would be referred to Alternative Education. Also, if Student "A" receives one referral for a Gross Misconduct Incident, as listed in the school handbook, he would be referred to Alternative Education. Student "A" agreed to these guidelines at the Reinstatement Committee meeting.

There being no further discussion, motion then passed 7-0, as follows: Binns, yes; Cutting, yes; Bright, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Deubner, yes; Ward, yes.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Education it was **moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** John Bright to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. All in favor.

Susan Horstmann, Secretary