

Summary of Minutes  
Special Board Meeting  
Wednesday, May 29, 2013

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The Board of Education of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District held a Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, May 29, 2013. **President, John R. Quinn** called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

**Superintendent Dr. Bernard S. Prevuznak** led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Board Secretary Leonard B. Przywara** called the roll.

8 MEMBERS PRESENT: Elmy, Evans, Galella, Katsock, Latinski, Susek, Walker, Quinn

1 MEMBER ABSENT: Toole

President Quinn stated:

- The chair wishes to announce that the Board held an Executive Session following the Committee Meeting of May 13, 2013.
- THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION RELATED SOLELY TO MATTERS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS, LABOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND/OR THREATENED OR ACTUAL LITIGATION.

### **Unfinished Business**

Ms. Katsock wished to thank the person who arranged the "Teacher Negotiations Meeting" scheduled for May 30, 2013 at 9:00 AM; however Miss Katsock asked that in the future, it should be taken into consideration that there are Board Members who work and are unable to attend meetings scheduled early in the day. Miss Katsock noted that she is on the Negotiation Committee and is unable to attend the "Teacher Negotiations Meeting" scheduled for 9:00 AM on May 30, 2013 due to her work schedule. Miss Katsock requested that at least one future meeting be scheduled at 5:30 or 6:00 PM.

There were no **Communications from Superintendent**

### **Communications from Citizens**

1. Barry Matthews, 20 Miner Street

Mr. Matthews addressed the Board regarding security cameras and the Skyward System. Mr. Matthews noted that he realized the cameras used by the city have been a point of contention and noticed that there is an RFP on the agenda scheduled to be brought forth. Mr. Matthews stated that he hoped that the Board is entertaining a thought to have a system solely for the District as opposed to one connected to the city. Mr. Matthews noted that a system solely for the District would be substantially less costly than what the city has provided. Mr. Matthews also stated that if it was possible to use the infrastructure in place, a huge savings would be realized.

Mr. Matthews also addressed the Board in regard to the Skyward System. Mr. Matthews expressed to the Board his concerns that the Skyward System cost a substantial amount of money and he (Mr. Matthews) did not feel it was being fully utilized. Mr. Matthews noted there are areas on Skyward where grades, teacher notes/comments and homework assignments can be entered. Mr. Matthews stated that the only times he sees the Skyward System updated is prior to progress reports and the end of the quarter. Mr. Matthews asked if there are any policies in place that require teachers to update Skyward. Mr. Matthews expressed to the Board that it is a shame that a system that cost the District a significant amount of money is not being adequately used.

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Dr. Prevuznak, Interim Superintendent, responded to Mr. Matthews and informed Mr. Matthews that the District purchased certain elements of the Skyward System and was working with Mr. Manning to make Skyward more effective. Dr. Prevuznak also stated that Mr. Kuhl, Director of Secondary Education, has been working with High School principals and requesting that they encourage teachers to list as much as possible on Skyward, for example, grades, discipline records and the scheduling process. Dr. Prevuznak further stated that Mr. Costello, Assistant Principal at Coughlin High School, who is extremely technology oriented, is also working to improve the services of Skyward.

Ms. Evans stated that as a parent she has been using Skyward since it became available. Ms. Evans noted that she has been able to see assignments and also see if the assignments were completed or uncompleted. Ms. Evans suggested to Mr. Matthews that if information regarding his child is not being updated on Skyward he should talk to the teacher.

Mr. Matthews stated that is why he is asking if there is a policy in place directing teachers that they are required to update Skyward in regard to the students they teach.

Dr. Prevuznak told Mr. Matthews that he would address his concerns regarding Skyward with Mr. Manning, Director of Technology.

Miss Katsock asked if there was a policy in place.

Mr. Matthews stated that he did address that issue with the principal of Kistler Elementary and was told that many people in the area do not have computers.

Dr. Prevuznak stated that the response was inappropriate.

Mr. Matthews stated that it was his opinion that without a policy in place, he (Mr. Matthews) does not believe you can hold the teachers accountable if they do not update information on Skyward regarding their students.

In regard to Mr. Matthews concerns regarding a camera system, Mr. Galella stated that the Board is looking into installing a camera system that will serve all facilities in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District.

2. Sam Troy, 95 Joseph Lane, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Mr. Troy requested additional time in addition to the seven (7) minutes allotted to address the Board. There was not a motion to grant Mr. Troy additional time.

Mr. Troy addressed the Board in regard to the 2013-2014 Budget. Mr. Troy asked how much of a tax increase was in the Budget and if the Mercantile and Business tax is the same thing.

Board Secretary/Business Manager, Leonard Przywara informed Mr. Troy that it was at this point in time a 1% tax increase, however, this is a preliminary Budget and cuts to the Budget are still a possibility. In regard to the Mercantile and Business Tax, Mr. Przywara stated they are basically the same thing.

Mr. Troy expressed to the Board that it is his opinion that this Budget is a travesty of justice to the home owner, stating that there was not a sincere effort made by this Board to find ways to cut the Budget to avoid a tax increase. Mr. Troy further stated that if this Board has a conscience, you will vote against this Budget. Mr. Troy also expressed to the Board his opinions in regard to Health Care Costs, Athletic costs and Attorney Wendolowski's contract. Mr. Troy asked if anyone on the Board wished to respond to his statements.

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Vice President Elmy responded to Mr. Troy, stating that this is a "Preliminary Budget" and the Board has until June 30, 2013 to pass a final 2013-2014 Budget. Mr. Elmy further stated that this Board will continue to seek ways to cut costs with the intention of possibly eliminating the 1% tax increase.

Mr. Troy stated that he has heard that story before, especially from Miss Katsock, who has voted for a tax increase every year.

Miss Katsock emphatically stated "I have not".

Mr. Troy asked Miss Katsock why she has not found ways to cut the Budget and avoid a tax increase.

Miss Katsock responded to Mr. Troy, "Who was the one, the only one, who voted against Mr. Wendolowski's contract".

Mr. Troy stated that as far as he knew, Miss Katsock voted for a tax increase every year.

Miss Katsock informed Mr. Troy that she did not vote for a tax increase and requested that Mr. Troy check her voting record.

Mr. Troy asked if she would show him a record of those votes.

Miss Katsock said she would provide a record of those votes and you (Mr. Troy) will owe me a public apology.

Ms. Evans informed Mr. Troy that three (3) Public Budget Finance Committee Meetings were held and you (Mr. Troy) had an opportunity to present your cost cutting ideas at any one of the three(3) Public Budget Finance Committee Meetings. If you wish to give me your suggestions/ideas I will present them to the Budget Finance Committee.

Mr. Latinski informed Mr. Troy that he has sat next to Miss Katsock for four (4) years and is familiar with her voting record in regard to past Budgets and noted that you (Mr. Troy) are totally wrong.

### **CONTRACTED SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Dr. Susek presented the following report and recommendations for the Board's approval:**

1. That approval be given to authorize Apollo Group, Inc., the District Project Manager to prepare a Request For Proposal (RFP) for Architect/Engineering Services in respect to Design Services for a District wide Security Camera Network, and to advertise same.

Miss Katsock asked where the information in their packet regarding Security Wide Camera came from.

Dr. Prevuznak informed Miss Katsock that the packet came from Apollo.

Miss Katsock asked why it was necessary to have Apollo draw up an RFP for a design system.

Attorney Wendolowski informed Miss Katsock that there were a series of discussions between Jim Post, Purchasing Agent, Apollo and himself and the consensus of opinion was that to do this job right, we need to have the in-put of a design professional to make sure a new system integrates with what we have, make sure the system functions the way we want it to function and none of the people currently employed by the District have the expertise to do that.

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Miss Katsock stated, so there is no way to have those individuals design an RFP who could possibly bid on this, come in and give us a scope of work.

Attorney Wendolowski informed Miss Katsock to say there's no way, I don't think you can say no way, however, the issue you may run into is, there is a possibility that a contractor who is interested in bidding may design a scope that is so limited that it is tailored to the contractor who has come in to provide that service, in which case you have issues with regard to competitive bidding and collusion.

Miss Katsock stated that she is not convinced that we need a design team; it's just another layer that is delaying the process of the project. Miss Katsock noted that Mayor Leighton is saying he is going to pull all the cameras that are around Wilkes-Barre Area Schools because we are no longer paying for the cameras. Miss Katsock stated that her answer to that is that we need our own system quickly. Miss Katsock noted to wait until June 17, 2013 for the RFP, to then put the RFP on display for thirty (30) days, to review and to award and then to bid out with specifications, we are looking at as many months as the swipe cards. Miss Katsock stated that she feels the District can do this in-house.

Rev. Walker asked if we can speed up the process to integrate all schools in the interest of safety and security.

Dr. Susek stated that the RFP can be passed and the Board can still investigate other possibilities and if necessary and appropriate decide not to use the RFP.

Attorney Wendolowski stated the RFP provides prices from design professionals who are interested in providing services to the District and a cost to getting the system designed. Attorney Wendolowski informed the Board that you can determine that the cost is prohibitive, delay the project and decide you are not going to continue with the project, you can also scrap all bids, you do not have to accept anything. Attorney Wendolowski noted that this RFP is not awarding anything, it is simply asking for quotes to design a system with a certain parameter contained in the RFP.

Mr. Matthews who is employed by a company who installs security surveillance systems asked to address the Board, permission was granted and Mr. Matthews offered his expertise to the Board regarding the installation of security cameras.

Ms. Evans asked Mr. Answini if we can find a company to do what Mr. Matthews suggests.

Miss Katsock stated that the District can do that; we do not need Apollo.

Attorney Wendolowski informed the Board that the potential problem is with the School Code of Conduct in regard to competitive bidding. Mr. Wendolowski stated that if you have a vendor detail the specifications for you, you run the risk of having specifications so narrow that you may be challenged regarding it being a competitive bid and questioned as to it being tailored for a company who gave you the expertise.

**Dr. Susek moved, seconded by Mr. Latinski,** to adopt the report. The vote was as follows:

**7 Ayes:** Elmy, Evans, Galella, Latinski, Susek, Walker, Quinn

**1 Nay:** Katsock

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Mr. Elmy presented Resolution #1

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, in accordance with law, prepared the following budget, of the amount of funds that will be required by the School District in its several departments for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2014 in the amount of \$102,822,500.00.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District hereby presents the expenditures as hereinafter set forth during the fiscal year 2013-2014 and levies a tax of 15.6772 mills per dollar (\$15.68 per thousand dollars) of assessed valuation on real estate; re-enacts and/or continues in force the Resolution of June 29, 1971, providing for the levy, assessment and collection of the following taxes: (a) one (1) per centum on transfers of title of real estate; (b) a local services tax (formerly occupational privilege tax) of ten (10) dollars; (c) the earned income tax (wage tax) of one (1%) per cent; (d) the mercantile tax at the rate and under the terms and provisions set forth in the Resolution previously adopted; re-enacts and/or continues in force the Resolution of June 30, 1986 providing for the levy, assessment and collection of the business privilege tax at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½ ) mills; re-enacts and /or continues in force the Resolution of June 26, 1987 providing for the levy, assessment and collection of a per capita tax of ten (10) dollars.

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Following the presentation of Resolution #1, Board Secretary, Business Manager, Leonard Przywara gave a brief overview of the 2013-2014 Budget. Mr. Przywara noted that it was a "Preliminary Budget" and there will be changes. Mr. Przywara stated that there is work to be done prior to the final 2013-2014 Budget that must be passed by June 30, 2013; however, if everyone works together it will be possible to complete a Budget that will be financially responsible and fair to the taxpayers of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District.

Rev. Walker asked when the Board typically begins the Budget Committee Meetings/Budget Process to prepare for the following year.

Mr. Przywara noted that establishing a Budget is an ongoing process and also noted that once the Budget is passed on June 30, 2013, the Budget is still adjusted as needed.

Both Dr. Susek and Interim Superintendent, Dr. Bernard Prevuznak, stated that the establishing and making additions /changes to the Budget is a year round process.

Vice President Elmy stated that the Budget Finance Committee will continue to work on the 2013-2014 Budget with the hope of establishing a 0% increase in taxes.

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Ms. Evans noted on behalf of Mrs. Toole that she (Mrs. Toole) has requested that a Curriculum Committee meeting be held to establish the number of retirements and also establish how many of the upcoming vacancies will be filled.

Dr. Prevuznak asked and encouraged Mr. Latinski, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, to schedule a Curriculum Committee Meeting prior to the June 10, 2013 Regular Board Meeting.

**Mr. Elmy moved, seconded by Mr. Latinski**, to adopt the Resolution. The vote was as follows:

**6 Ayes:** Elmy, Evans, Galella, Latinski, Susek, Quinn

**2 Nays:** Katsock, Walker

### **New Business**

**Ms. Evans motioned, seconded by Mr. Elmy**, that the Wilkes-Barre Area School District Board of Directors assist Mujahid Chesson, a student at Coughlin High School, with no more than \$1,200.00 to help finance a trip to Australia, in order for him to compete with young people from around the world in an invitational worldwide track meet.

Rev. Walker asked Ms. Evans to meet with him after the Board Meeting to discuss raising the necessary funds to enable Mujahid Chesson the opportunity to travel and compete in the invitational worldwide track meet. Rev. Walker noted that he would reach out to individuals/organizations to secure the additional funds needed.

Ms. Evans withdrew the previous motion.

Miss Katsock, spoke as a Board Member of the LIU in regard to a recent motion which she was required to vote on at the LIU. Miss Katsock informed the Wilkes-Barre Area Board of Directors that Special Need Students who attend the LIU, some of which are Wilkes-Barre Area School District students, grow and sell vegetable plants every year at the "Wilkes-Barre City Farmers Market". Miss Katsock noted that it was necessary for her to vote on a motion at the LIU which granted permission for LIU funds in the amount of \$500.00 be approved to pay a \$500 fee charged by the Mayor and the City of Wilkes-Barre for the use of a table at the "Farmers Market". Miss Katsock stated that she found it abhorrent that the Mayor and the City of Wilkes-Barre would require a fee from Special Needs Students in regard to a table at the "Farmers Market". Miss Katsock would like to go on record and request that we ask the City of Wilkes-Barre to reconsider the \$500.00 required fee.

There were no **Communications from Solicitors**

### **Communications from Board Secretary**

**June – 2013**

#### **Committee Meeting**

Monday, June 10, 2013 – 5:30 PM

#### **Regular Board Meeting**

Monday June 10, 2013 – 7:00 PM

**Ms. Evans moved** to adjourn the Meeting.

**President Quinn** adjourned the Meeting at 6:30 PM.