

Summary of Minutes
Special Meeting-General Purposes
April 25, 2016

President Joseph A. Caffrey called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

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

Board Secretary Leonard B. Przywara called the roll.

9 MEMBERS PRESENT: Evans, Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Susek, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

President Caffrey stated:

- The chair wishes to announce that the Board held an Executive Session on April 19, 2016 and prior to the Special Meeting-General Purposes of April 25, 2016.

- THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION RELATED SOLELY TO MATTERS OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS, LABOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND/OR THREATENED OR ACTUAL LITIGATION.

There were no Communications from the Superintendent

Unfinished Business

Rev. Walker expressed to the Board and those Citizens in attendance that it has been a long journey filled with many obstacles. Rev. Walker noted that as information was presented and reviewed on changing situations it is sometimes necessary to adapt to those situations. Rev. Walker stated that we as a Board have labored and anguished over some decisions we have had to make. Rev. Walker noted that he can't speak for the Board, however, this evening he is speaking for himself. Rev. Walker informed those in attendance that approximately two years ago he was asked by the Superintendent to come to Coughlin High School to see some building concerns that needed to be addressed in order to ensure the safety of the students. Rev. Walker stated at that time it also became clear that there were some concerns in regard to Meyers High School and it was then decided that the District needed to do something in regard to the feasibility of repairing our old schools or building new schools. Rev. Walker noted that everyone knows where he stands in regard to the merger of Meyers and Coughlin High Schools and closing Meyers. Rev. Walker stated that he voted against the motion to merge the two schools, believing that the three neighborhood school model is the best educational model for our students while ensuring the integrity of our communities, however, this Board with vote, does not support a three school model and we are moving forward with a merger of Coughlin and Meyers High schools at the North Washington Street site. Rev. Walker noted that he (Rev. Walker) began to think do we hold onto the idea of neighborhood schools or are we forced to embrace a moving forward of some sort and questioned how do we do that. Rev. Walker stated that the train has left the station in terms of neighborhood schools and we at the very minimum are going to move forward with a combination of Meyers and Coughlin because that is the motion that is set in place. Rev. Walker informed the public that the Board has done their homework and in doing so, the Board had outside consultants from PDE review the District's financial situation and the consultant's report indicated that our financial state was not good and perhaps worse than the Board thought. Rev. Walker stated that the District needs to consider what it requires financially to maintain schools, noting the biggest cost is staff and very difficult decisions are going to be made moving forward. Rev. Walker presented the three options in regard to moving forward; (1) Neighborhood Schools, (2) Current motion in place, two school consolidation, (3) Full consolidation.

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Communications from Citizens

1. Richard Holodick
2. David Wilson
3. Joe Jacobs
4. Mark Schiowitz
5. Matthew Ford
6. Tracey Hughes
7. Kim Borland
8. Ruth Borland
9. Joe Borland
10. Charles Fick
11. Paul Weidlich
12. Melissa Patle
13. Bob Holden

Miss Katsock moved, seconded by Ms. Thomas, to suspend the rules in regard to Citizens Comments and allow Attorney Kimberly Borland to speak on behalf of Joseph Borland, who had signed in to speak but was not present at the conclusion of Citizens comments. The vote was as follows:

9 Ayes: Evans, Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Susek, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

The above listed Citizens addressed the Board in regard to the following:

1. Is it necessary to have 3/3rds of a vote to change the motion that was made in June, 2015 regarding consolidation?
2. Research reveals that students who live in our demographic situation do not do well in large schools.
3. Consolidation does not save money.
4. The State has recommended renovations as opposed to consolidation.
5. The District states that they have no money and the Board continues to spend substantial amounts of money.
6. The Internal and External Task Force recommendations have not been considered.
7. Board does not want input from Citizens
8. Save Our Schools has offered help and would also be willing to help in the selection of the new Superintendent.
9. Neighborhood Schools are the best option.
10. The deterioration of Meyers and Coughlin High Schools should come as no surprise.
11. Is zoning permission in place for the new consolidated High School and the Times Leader Building?
12. Schools can be repaired
13. Are you requesting a variance from the Planning Commission?
14. What are the demolition costs of Coughlin High School compared to the demolition costs of Meyers High School?
15. What is the cost of bussing for consolidation?
16. Murray Complex is a much better site for new High School
17. What is the name of the new High School going to be?
18. Curriculum is never discussed in regard to new High School?
19. Emergency responses to PlanCon are over emphasized.
20. Transition is an issue for students.
21. Favorable modes are K-6 and 7-12.
22. The Elementary schools are overcrowded.
23. There is a need to re-consider what you are doing in regard to consolidation.
24. There is a need to focus on what will encourage and increase student achievement.
25. There will be significant tax increases for several years due to consolidation.

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26. What would encourage me to consider purchasing a home in Wilkes-Barre?
27. The hand out for tonight's meeting in regard to the four options, should have been on District website prior to tonight's meeting.
28. Numbers on costs and building size are constantly changing. What are the current/accurate numbers?
29. What are the credentials of the District Design Team in regard to expertise in building schools of this magnitude?
30. Football teams cleaned around the outside of Meyers as a community service project and the amount of trash was enormous. What are the custodians doing in regard to cleaning the outside property at Meyers on a regular basis?
31. There are no garbage cans at Meyers.
32. Kistler bathrooms are not clean.
33. Board has been going in circles since June of 2015 in regard to the consolidation plan and is now treating water.
34. There has been zero discussion in regard to educational services for students.
35. Consider the impact of closing G.A.R. and Meyers.
36. Board has been stubborn in refusing to consider research regarding neighborhood schools, Curriculum, a design team who has never built a school of this magnitude, zoning issues, appropriate locations for Board meetings, continuing to pursue four options that none of the tax payers of Wilkes-Barre want.
37. How much money has been spent up to date on the two school model plans?
38. What are your plans for Meyers and G.A.R.?
39. Where is the current information in regard to the purchase/lease of the Times Leader Building?
40. Public and students need concrete answers regarding the consolidation.
41. G.A.R. students will have no possibilities to participate in sports due to ability/ resources to get to practices if G.A.R. is closed.
42. Why is it just coming to light that G.A.R. has building issues?
43. Focus on taking care and providing for the students of WBASD.
44. Do not continue to make decisions on speculation.
45. Accept input from the community and value their expertise.
46. Money from PlanCon will not be available in 2017.

All questions and concerns were addressed by Dr. Bernard Prevuznak, Superintendent, Attorney Wendolowski, District Solicitor, Board Members, Joseph Caffrey, Dino Galella, Denise Thomas, Rev. Shawn Walker, Ned Evans and John Quinn, and members of the District Design Team.

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CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Galella presented the following report and recommendations for the Board’s approval:

1. That the following 2016-2017 calendar be adopted.

WILKES BARRE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
2016-2017 SCHOOL CALENDAR

August 24, 2016	Act 80/Professional Development
August 25, 2016	Act 80/ Professional Development/Staff Preparation Day
August 26, 2016	School Closed
August 29, 2016	Student First Day – School Opens
September 2-5, 2016	Schools Closed (Labor Day Weekend)
October 10, 2016	Columbus Day
November 11, 2016	Veteran’s Day
November 14-18, 2016	American Education Week
November 24-28, 2016	Thanksgiving Vacation
December 5-16, 2016	Keystone State Exams Wave 1
December 24 - January 1, 2017	Christmas Vacation
January 2, 2017	School Re-Opens
January 16, 2017	Martin Luther King Day
January 19, 2017	Second Semester Begins
February 17, 2017	Act 80/Professional Development
February 20, 2017	Presidents Day
*April 10-13 & 17, 2017	Spring Break
*April 14-16, 2017	Easter Vacation
April 3-7, April 24-28, May1-5, May 8-12, 2017	PSSA Testing
May 15-26, 2017	Keystone Exams
May 29, 2017	Memorial Day
June 6, 2017	Last Student Day
June 7, 2017	Staff, Clerical, Evaluation, Planning, Last Teacher Day
*April 10, 11, 12, 13, and 17, 2017	Designated Make-Up Days

Days of Pupil Attendance Days	180
Staff Days	4
Total Days	184

Mr. Galella moved, seconded by Rev. Walker, to adopt the report. The vote was as follows:
9 Ayes: Evans, Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Susek, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

CONTRACTED SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

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

1. That the Purchasing Agent be authorized to advertise for a Request for Proposal for the following:

DISTRICT-WIDE REFRESH OF LAPTOP, AND DESKTOP COMPUTERS
(BY LEASE)

Dr. Susek moved, seconded by Ms. Thomas, to adopt the report. The vote was as follows:

9 Ayes: Evans, Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Susek, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

New Business

Mr. John Panzitta, from Panzitta Enterprises, Inc. presented to the Board the current options and details regarding the lease of the Times Leader Building.

At this time Mr. Evans made the following statement and motion.

Mr. Evans stated that when he first became a member of the Feasibility Committee, he questioned what the issues were and was told that there were several issues and concerns that needed to be addressed at Coughlin and Meyers High Schools. The Feasibility Committee toured Meyers and Coughlin a number of times and realized that there were issues that existed for years and should have been addressed. Mr. Evans noted that he is not placing blame on the past and the present Board, although not responsible for those issues, has taken on the difficult task of addressing and finding solutions to the existing conditions of our High Schools in order to provide a safe environment and quality education for the students of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District. Mr. Evans noted that the Board trusted the expertise of the Design Team and received an abundant amount of information in regard to the cost involved to correct all the issues in all three High Schools. Mr. Evans stated that for the first six months that he (Mr. Evans) served on the Feasibility Committee, option number one was to address and remedy all issues/concerns at Coughlin, G.A.R. and Meyers High Schools. Mr. Evans noted that the Board was made aware that the District could borrow one hundred million dollars and when the Feasibility Committee looked closely at the figures needed to remedy the needs of all three high schools, it was concluded that the District could not afford to do so. Mr. Evans noted that the Feasibility Committee then found it necessary to select a two high school consolidation plan and brought that consolidation plan to the Board. Mr. Evans noted that at that point in time he was opposed to a two school consolidation, he (Mr. Evans) wanted a full consolidation, however, it was not possible to put three schools into the North Washington site and he (Mr. Evans) reluctantly voted for the two school consolidation. Mr. Evans also stated that he agreed with the three school model and prefers smaller schools; however, the District can't afford to support three high schools. Mr. Evans stated that now with the possibility of the District leasing the Times Leader Building, there will be additional room and Mr. Evans stated that his goal is to give the G.A.R. students the same facility as the Meyers and Coughlin students. Mr. Evans further stated that combining three high schools into one building will generate astronomical savings and the new building will pay for itself in less time. Mr. Evans requested that the Board look to the present and future students at G.A.R. and noted that in five years when everyone sees the beautiful new high school everyone will want the G.A.R. students to be part of the new high school.

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Mr. Evans moved, seconded by Dr. Susek, to keep the Kistler project as planned and have a full consolidation of the three District High Schools; Coughlin, G.A.R. and Meyers.

After a discussion that involved multiple questions and concerns voiced by Board Members, Dino Galella, Rev. Walker, Miss Katsock, and Mr. Quinn, the vote was as follows:

2 Ayes: Evans, Susek

7 Nays: Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

Motion Failed

At this time Miss Katsock noted that the Meyers Chess Team has a Go Fund Me account to raise money for the Chess Club and made the following motion:

Miss Katsock moved, seconded by Rev. Walker, to give the Meyers Chess Club \$3,868 toward their fund raising goal.

The vote was as follows:

9 Ayes: Evans, Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Susek, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

At this time Board Members, Ms. Thomas and Mr. Quinn voiced their concerns over the recent auction that was held at Coughlin High School and expressed their displeasure as to the manner in which the auction was conducted.

Solicitors Report

Attorney Wendolowski requested the following motion:

Mr. Galella moved, seconded by Ms. Thomas, to authorize the Design Team to update the Feasibility Study and prepare related Plan Con documentation on the current model that was passed as of last June and have that Feasibility Study reviewed and approved by the Board at the May, 2016 Board Meeting and to allow the submission of the updated PlanCon submission documentation prior to the May 15, 2016 deadline. The vote was as follows:

9 Ayes: Evans, Galella, Geiger, Katsock, Quinn, Susek, Thomas, Walker, Caffrey

Board Secretary Report

Leonard B. Przywara, Board Secretary/Business Manager announced the following Meeting schedules.

May, 2016

Committee Meeting

Monday, May 9, 2016 – 5:30 PM

Regular Board Meeting

Monday, May 9, 2016– 7:00 PM

Meetings will be held in the cafeteria of G.A.R. High School

President Caffrey adjourned the Meeting at 8:08 PM