

**BLACKHAWK SCHOOL DISTRICT
500 BLACKHAWK ROAD
BEAVER FALLS, PA 15010**

**BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS' SPECIAL VOTING SESSION
Blackhawk High School Library
June 29, 2015**

MEETING MINUTES

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Mr. Perry Pander, Board Vice President, called the meeting to order at 6:35PM. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss Northwestern and vote to submit PlanCon A. The deadline to file for PlanCon A is June 30th.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was taken. Those in attendance were:

Mrs. Helsing	Mrs. Kaszer	Mr. May
Mr. Pander	Mr. Yonkee	Mr. Young

Ms. Aquino, Mr. Fleischman and Dr. Rose were absent.

Also in attendance were:

Mr. Christian Bareford – District Solicitor
Mr. John Frombach – Interim Business Manager

The presentation by Eckles Architecture and Engineering regarding Northwestern Primary was moved to prior to the public comment section to allow the community an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the presentation.

The highlights of the Eckles presentation include:

- Hired to do a needs assessment and district wide facility study
- Explained the moratorium of PlanCon Part A effective July 1, 2015. Advised that it is wise to submit and become eligible.
- Approving PlanCon this evening is not committing and can be rescinded at any time.
- There are seven sections to the study that address the state guidelines
- The district's comprehensive plan is included
- The PDE projected enrollments are included and compared to the current enrollments. A six year projection is used.
- Existing building capacity is reviewed; in general Blackhawk is operating between 70-85%
- All buildings were studied and details documented in Session 5 of the study.
- Mechanical and Energy Systems were reviewed and benchmarked for efficiency
- Options that were previously presented were outlined in section six
- The final section, seven, provides the credentials of the authors of the study
- Copies of the study will be kept on file in the district office

Opened the meeting for questions.

Mrs. Helsing asked if the decision is made to complete a different building project, will the PlanCon A still be valid. No, the PlanCon A request is project specific.

Mr. Yankee inquired if the configuration of the grades in the building will impact PlanCon. Yes, PlanCon A would become null and void. The building has to remain as is while the work is being completed.

Mr. Pander clarified if we vote this evening to approve Part A and then decide not to do anything, the district is not committed to continue. Correct, the district would need to write a letter to the department of education and withdraw. The only commitment would be if the project had been bid and awarded.

The board was walked through the PlanCon A forms. Mrs. Kaszer inquired that the forms note that they expire 6/30/12. Yes, the forms are old and have not been updated by the state.

Mrs. Barb Brown, Chippewa Township inquired if the recommendation allowed for technology improvement, based on DSL or Fiber Lines. Yes, what is inside the building will be state of the art and would be able to connect to whatever utilities are provided to the building. Mrs. Brown noted that not being able to connect to the other schools in the district is a draw back; optimistic this will eventually change.

A member of the community asked what safety issues were discovered at Northwestern. The primary issue is that the main entrance is disconnected from the office. Suggesting a captured entrance. Additionally the security system, cameras and access controls at the perimeter doors should be evaluated and updated. Only 2 cameras in the building are working. Would like to have more cameras focusing on the doors. The question was raised regarding the steam pipes and asbestos; if the pipes leak what effect will the steam have on the asbestos. Eckles noted that they used previous reports to identify where the asbestos is and all hazard materials will be addressed. The steam pipes will not be in use in the proposed renovations.

Al Lyndes, Chippewa Township, inquired if the proposed entrance at Northwestern be similar to Highland. – Correct. It was noted that this is not the case at BIS or the High School. Eckles added that the recommendation is to replace all doors and indicators at Northwestern so the office will be aware when a door is open.

Mr. Tom Kindred, Chippewa Township, asked if the study included the cost of the project that is not reimbursable. For example, any abatement. Eckles responded by explaining caps on particular aspects of the project. This project is eligible for approximately 14% reimbursement. On a \$13M project, about \$3M is reimbursed. Mr. Kindred also confirmed that the district would not be obligated until Part G – correct.

Mr. Clendennen, Patterson Township, asked for Mr. Esposito to provide the public a general idea of how asbestos is abated in a building noting that water is part of the processing that keeps it from traveling and steam is not a concern. Mr. Clendennen noted that very little asbestos is not confined at Northwestern. A misunderstanding of terminology is the reason for concern. Mr. Clendennen has looked at the report, and noticed that the Burthill report from 2007 to 2009 was used. That project was actually stopped because the district wide feasibility study was not complete. To move forward with Highland VEBH had to update the feasibility study; none of the VEBH information was included in your

study. Mr. Clendennen noted his concern for the board to vote to accept the feasibility study when just received it. Part of the PlanCon project is to include community input. Mr. Clendennen feels the project is being rushed.

Mrs. Autumn Giocondi, Patterson Township, inquired about the timeline and when the district would begin to occur expenses. If the board decides to move forward with Part A, and select Eckles for design, then they would begin designing how to implement the project. That process will go on between now and next May, including bidding. During that time there will be progress payments over the summer and fall. Once bids received, will determine to continue. Mr. Esposito stated that their fees would be about 7% of the construction cost. Mrs. Giocondi confirmed that there were 3 different recommendations scenarios which with their own costs. – Yes, the board would need to decide. The most ambitious scenario was \$13.5M.

Mr. Clendennen asked Mr. Esposito to speak on the Act 34 requirements for this project. – There are none.

Mrs. Melissa Ziegler, Chippewa Township, inquired if there is an expiration of time for when the district will have to move forward. – None known; talked to PDE today and there are still some requests (other districts) from 3 years ago. Mrs. Ziegler spoke on the financial concerns and a priority listing of what is needed (captured entrances at BIS and Highland, new roof at High School) before entering into a project at Northwestern. Eckles noted that they did provide, in their study, a list of recommended improvements for all buildings in the district.

Mrs. Ziegler inquired as to when the public would hear the sewage report. Mr. Pander stated that it will be coming up next. Mr. Esposito reminded everyone that there was an allowance for sewage in their recommendations.

Mr. Jarrod McCowin, Chippewa Township, if a planning phased is used, how many rooms will be open for use – 6, This will allow to create a clear zone for construction; the ideal situation would be to relocate students somewhere else during construction.

Mr. Pander introduced HRG for their report on the septic system. Highlights included:

- System was constructed in 1954; 61 years ago
- The system is functioning; the life expectancy is usually 61 years
- Evaluated 4 scenarios:
 - 1) leave as is
 - 2) conveying the sewage to public sewer systems
 - 3) sewage waste treatment plant
 - 4) a new on-lot system
- The best recommendation is a new on-lot system. The school has the area to accommodate.
- The cost would be about \$200,000 to design and construct.
- Will work with Darlington Township sewage enforcement agency

Mr. Pander spoke on the DEP and the fact that they denied any conventional systems. HRG noted that conventional systems are below ground. What would be needed is both above and below ground; basically a sand mound. Mr. Pander confirmed with HRG that it is not 100% that the DEP will approve the sand mound – Yes, that is correct. Mr. Pander explained that the building is not being used at full capacity (currently ¾); if additional restrooms were added, the existing system would not be able to handle full capacity.

HRG explained that in 1954 when the system was developed, the football field did not exist. The overflow leach field is on the 50 year line and the actual leach field is in the end zone. Mr. May confirmed that there are 2 leach fields – correct. He further asked that only one is being used. Mr. Pander stated that the second is an overflow leach field. It was noted that a leach field can only be used for so long before it won't absorb anymore. The only time the overflow field is used is when there is a football game and the showers are being used. The system will not handle any renovations. It has been handled by pumping out twice a year. The recommendation was made by HRG to eliminate the tanks and all the pipes going out to the road, and come out the back of the building and put a sand mound in the back end of the property.

Mrs. Helsing confirmed that the cost for the recommendation was \$200,000 and then inquired if there were any monthly maintenance fees. No, there would not be any maintenance fees.

Mrs. Kaszer inquired as to what the district's second option would be if the DEP did not approve, and the associated cost. HRG noted if it was not approved, to leave as is. If there would be a malfunction it would be report to Darlington Township and then it would be reevaluated. Mrs. Helsing added that if planning on a building project contingent on certain permits and then approval is not received, what are the options. HRG stated have to go through the design process to evaluate the site.

Mr. Al Lyndes, Chippewa Township, confirmed the response to the inquiry as to what if the DEP does not approve and asked if there was a Plan B. Mr. Pander explained that there is a system that the DEP will approve but it is very expensive. The maintenance costs on a treatment plant are very costly. In talking with the DEP, they are 90% sure that the district can do a sand mound. They will not give a permit for a leach field or conventional.

Mrs. Autumn Giocondi, Patterson Township, asked for clarification. If the building is being used to capacity, the current system will not hold. The two options are a sand mound or a sewage system. Mr. Pander confirmed and stated that we wouldn't go any further with the project until the DEP approved.

Mr. Esposito noted that the budget that was developed included the sewage treatment plant. The board wishes to avoid this option due to the reoccurring costs to operate. The maintenance cost is about \$20,000 a year. He also explained that the process requires that permits and approvals be obtained prior to going out to bid.

The questions was asked as to how much is in the project budget - \$428,000 was included for sewage.

Mr. Lyndes asked if a feasible system that can be afforded on an annual basis cannot be implemented will the project halt. HRG noted that the two options are the sand mound or a water treatment plant.

Mr. Pander noted that while taking with HRG they are confident they can get the permit for the sand mound. Should have an answer within a couple of months.

Mrs. Ziegler noted HRG presentation was not on the agenda. Mr. Pander stated that it was part of the Eckles presentation.

Mr. Kindred raised a question as to the cost for PlanCon A and the development of the justification. Mr. Esposito responded that the fee is included in their study. There will be no additional cost to the district to file PlanCon A.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Clendennen stated that Eckles has included the cost of submitting PlanCon A in the cost of their feasibility study. Normally, PlanCon B is required at the same time. He noted his understanding the PDE has given permission to submit only PlanCon A. Mr. Clendennen added that Eckles has not been selected by the board as the architecture and that the study completed in 2009 by Burthill has been used as the background. Eckles stated that their study is a standalone document and not an addendum to the Burthill report. It was used as a point of reference only. Mr. Clendennen added that there is no architecture of record and spoke on the process previously used. Noted his concern that it is not in the best interest of the district and asked the board not to take action this evening.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS/REAL ESTATE

Mrs. Helsing motioned for approval to accept the Blackhawk School District, District-Wide Facility Study dated June 29, 2015. This motion was seconded by Mr. Yonkee. Mr. May noted that the Comprehensive Plan included in the study lists individuals who are no longer in the district and outdated. He also referenced that the study notes that Blackhawk does not have a PreK program. Mr. May stated that he has not had time to review. Mr. Yonkee initiated discussion regarding the PreK programs held in the district and the funding for them. Mr. Pander verified that if the study is not approved this evening the district would not be able to move forward with filing for PlanCon A – Correct. Mr. Frombach addressed the moratorium: the Governor has communicated a moratorium on any PlanCon projects as of July 1 and a freeze on any increases to PlanCon funding. The budget the house passed yesterday has not provided any money for PlanCon. In fact, as the state budget stands at this time, the district will receive \$375,000 less in state subsidies.

Mr. Pander stated his understanding that there is no cost to the district if the board approves this evening, however, if it is not approved and the state does issue the moratorium then the district will lose out on any reimbursement. Mr. May expressed his concern that there is a lot more to be reviewed; need to address the rest of the district. Mr. May asked if money can be saved if the district waited and submitted PlanCon A and PlanCon B together; noting other items the district needs. Eckles noted that capital projects like roofs are not reimbursement project and not eligible for PlanCon. Moving forward would be able to assist the district with prioritizing the needs of the district. Mr. May expressed interest in focusing on the needs of the district as a whole and not just one area. Mr. Yonkee stated that each board inherits from all previous boards and his desire is to be part of a board that does not ‘kick the can down the road’. Mr. May noted that he just receiving the information this evening. Mr. Pander expressed his prospective that it has been known for years that Northwestern needs renovated and reviewed the issues at Northwestern. A community member asked why Northwestern wasn’t addressed prior to Highland. Mr. May noted a need for Highland at the time; adding the each board just doesn’t know the future of the buildings.

Roll call vote was taken:

In Favor of approving the district feasibility study	Not In Favor of approving the district feasibility study
Mrs. Helsing	Mr. May
Mr. Young	
Mr. Yonkee	
Mr. Pander	
Mrs. Kaszer	

6 Yes; 1 No; Motion Carried

A motion to approve the submission of PlanCon A to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for Northwestern Primary School Alterations Project was made by Mrs. Helsing and seconded by Mr. Yonkee.

Roll call vote was taken:

In Favor of submitting PlanCon A	Not In Favor of submitting PlanCon A
Mr. Yonkee	Mr. May
Mr. Young	
Mrs. Helsing	
Mrs. Kaszer	
Mr. Pander	

6 Yes; 1 No; Motion Carried

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Visitors

Mrs. Ziegler received a telephone call from Ms. Tory Aquino stating that she was unable to attend this evening and wanted to participate by phone and was not allowed. Mr. Pander noted that he had received a message from Ms. Aquino asking if she could vote; he reviewed and advised her no. The only way for a board member to vote over the phone is if they participate in the entire meeting while on the phone.

Mrs. Ziegler thanked Mr. May for his comments and actions this evening.

Mrs. Autumn Giocondi expressed her concern for the Patterson students who need reading support since Patterson no longer qualifies for Title I. Mr. Pander noted that this would be best answered by Dr. Kerber and would follow up with her.

Mr. Clendennen stated that he sent an email on June 24th to the superintendent requesting agenda and documents for the June 29 and 30 board meeting per policy. When arrived, was told that there was an agenda in the back corner. Mr. Young noted that he has reviewed the policy and it states that the agenda will be provided to the board 3 days prior to the meeting. Mr. Clendennen noted policy 9.06 which states that the agenda and all pertinent documents are to be provide to the press and the public. He inquired if the feasibility study will be provided on the website for public.

Mrs. JaneAnn Fucci, Chippewa Township, thanked the board for moving forward with Northwestern. Appreciates that the board is trying to improve the environment of the building and her concern of health issues.

Administration

No Comments

Solicitor

No Comments

School Directors

Mr. Yonkee noted his respect for Mr. Clendennen but has sat in board meetings of past boards and saw mistakes being made. This board is trying to do the right things. Mistakes are made and pointed out; they depend on the expertise of the superintendent, solicitor and business manager. Everyone board has to learn.

Mr. Pander spoke on the HRG report that was received today.

Mrs. Aquino arrived at this time.

Mr. Pander noted that Northwestern is a difficult decision. Expressed concern for the safety and security of students and staff. Spoke on the air quality testing that has been conducted; a new air system may improve the air flow. Wants this project to be different by getting the community and staff involved.

Next Meeting – June 30, 2015, Blackhawk High School Library, 7:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm

Submitted by Missy Kaszer
Blackhawk School Board Secretary