



River Valley Board of Education
River Valley School District
15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128
www.RiverValleySchools.org

Regular Meeting: 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 28, 2008
River Valley Middle/High School Library

1.0 Call To Order

President Farhat called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Members present: William Farhat, J.C. German, Steve Graziano, Fred Knutel, Ronald Petro and Vickie Wagner.

Member Absent: Michael Ehlert.

Finance Coordinator Cheryl Capiak was in attendance.

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

President Farhat led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 Approval of Agenda as Presented

Farhat called for any additional agenda items. Moved by Petro, supported by Knutel, to accept the proposed agenda as presented. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Farhat reported that, as everyone knew, Superintendent Schroeder was home ill and to keep him in our thoughts.

4.0 Public Comment on Agenda

There were no public comments on the agenda.

5.0 Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2008

Farhat asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. Moved by German, supported by Knutel, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2008. All Ayes. Motion carried.

6.0 Student Board Representative Report

Brittney DeRuiter presented the Student Board Representative Report. She reported on Pennies for Patients, Teacher Appreciation Day and talent show, upcoming Band and Choir spring concerts, and the Science and Art Expose, where students received many awards for their artwork. Miss DeRuiter reported on the Boys' Baseball, Girls' Softball, Girls' Soccer, the Track and Golf Teams. She noted Students Against Drunk Drivers (SADD) placed a wrecked car with a "Think" banner at the Middle/High School entry for awareness during prom week.

Farhat thanked Miss DeRuiter for her report.

7.0 Superintendent's Report

As Mr. Schroeder was not in attendance, a Superintendent's Report was not given.

8.0 Committee Reports

8.1 Personnel Committee

Knutel gave the Personnel Committee report. Knutel, German, Farhat and Capiak met on Monday, April 21 at 5:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room. The Committee discussed a recommendation to hire a Working Food Service Supervisor and a recommendation to hire a Junior

Varsity Baseball Coach. The administration received a resignation letter from the Girls' Varsity Volleyball Coach, Andrew Martz. The Committee also discussed a Junior Varsity Football Position, a reduction in personnel, administrative and supervisory contract extensions, and the Athletic Director's position.

Farhat thanked Knutel for the report.

9.0 Correspondence

A March 25 letter of resignation was received from Andrew Martz, the Girls' Varsity Volleyball Coach.

Moved by Knutel, supported by Petro, to accept the resignation of the Girls' Varsity Volleyball Coach, Andrew Martz, with regret and appreciation, effective March 25, 2008. All Ayes. Motion carried.

10.0 Old Business

There were no items of Old Business.

11.0 New Business

11.1 Approval of Accounts Payable for April, 2008 and the Treasurer's Report for March, 2008

Finance Coordinator Capiak reviewed accounts payable and gave the treasurer's report:

Accounts Payable for April, 2008

General Fund \$80,631.57
General Fund Prepaid \$202,395.28
General Fund Payroll \$260,265.33
Athletic Fund \$3,782.05
Athletic Fund Prepaid \$2,490.42
Athletic Payroll \$5,685.68
School Lunch Fund \$7,649.77
School Lunch Fund Prepaid \$3,912.60
School Lunch Payroll \$7,526.64
Total Accounts Payable \$574,339.34

Treasurer's Report for March, 2008

General Fund \$3,269,110.11
Combined School Service Fund \$14,184.17
Activity Fund \$276,675.84, including scholarship dollars and funds donated to the school district

Farhat asked about the expenditure for Paradigm Equities and Capiak noted it was an annuity for staff payroll withholding. Farhat thanked Capiak for her report.

Moved by Petro, supported by Knutel, to approve the accounts payable report for April, 2008 and to accept the treasurer's report for March, 2008. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.2 Consider Approval of Third Quarterly Budget Update for FY 2008.

Finance Coordinator Capiak reviewed the Third Quarterly Budget Update for Fiscal Year 2007-2008 (FY 2008) and noted the District was doing better financially than anticipated

Revenues:

Local Revenue increased by \$39,809, to match actual receipts.
State Revenue increased by \$14,788, to reflect actual state aid.
Federal Revenue increased by \$5,600, to reflect actual Carl Perkins (federal grant) revenue.

Expenditures:

Instruction decreased by \$8,461, to reflect actual expenses.

Support Services increased by \$29,603, to coincide with additional revenues and matching expenses to the revenue.

Transfer Expenses increased by \$3,369, due to the addition of a part-time Athletic Director position.

Revenues Less Expenditures:

The third quarter budget amendment had a positive effect on the current budget. Our fund equity increased by an additional \$35,686 for the quarter; therefore, our 2007-2008 revenue minus expenses is \$100,105, resulting in a projected fund equity for June 30, 2008 of \$1,396,281.

Farhat complimented Capiak, noting the fund equity was a great reflection on Capiak's and Superintendent Schroeder's budget forecasting. Capiak said the administrators and supervisors had worked hard to hold down costs. Wagner asked if the projections included the bus purchase in June, which Capiak confirmed.

Moved by Knutel, supported by Petro, to accept the Third Quarterly Budget Update for FY 2008. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.3 Consider Recommendations

11.3.1 Consider Recommendation to Hire Working Food Service Supervisor

Farhat said the administration recommended hiring Teri Brown as Working Food Service Supervisor and that Ms. Brown has been acting interim supervisor since October.

Moved by Knutel, supported by Wagner, to hire Teri Brown as Working Food Service Supervisor retroactive to October 15, 2007 at \$14.75 per hour. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.3.2 Consider Recommendation to Hire Junior Varsity Baseball Coach

Farhat said the administration and part-time Athletic Director recommended hiring Zachary Robertson as the Junior Varsity Baseball Coach. He stated Mr. Robertson had coached the Seventh Grade Boys' Basketball Team this past season and that he is a River Valley graduate.

Moved by Graziano, supported by Knutel, to hire Zachary Robertson as the Junior Varsity Baseball Coach effective March 22, 2008. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.4 Consider Participation in Schools of Choice for Fall, 2008

Farhat reported the administration recommended that the Board accept Schools of Choice applications for Fall, 2008.

Moved by Knutel, supported by Petro, to accept Schools of Choice applications for Fall, 2008. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.5 Acceptance of Donations

11.5.1 Accept Berrien Community Foundation Donation for February, 2008

Farhat reported that David and Marci Johnson donated \$100 toward our fine arts through the Berrien Community Foundation.

Moved by Petro, supported by Knutel, to accept with sincere appreciation the donation of \$100 from David and Marci Johnson for the River Valley School District Fine Arts Program through the Berrien Community Foundation. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.5.2 Accept BP Fabric of America Donation

Farhat reported that Brian Sellin, a British Petroleum (BP) employee, recommended Three Oaks Elementary School as "one that makes a positive contribution." To express their gratitude, BP would like to present the school with a \$500 gift donation from the BP Fabric of America Fund. Farhat said the money would be used to purchase library books.

Moved by Petro, supported by Knutel, to accept with sincere appreciation a \$500 gift donation from the BP Fabric of America Fund and sincere appreciation to Brian Sellin for recommending Three Oaks Elementary School for this gift. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.6 Consider Resolutions

11.6.1 Consider Resolution Calling for Bond Election – August 5, 2008

Farhat explained that the Thrun Law Firm, P.C., said a formal ballot resolution had to be adopted by the Board on April 28 for the bond election scheduled for Tuesday, August 5, 2008. Farhat then read the following resolution:

WHEREAS:

- 1. In the opinion of this Board it is necessary and expedient to erect, furnish and equip a new elementary school; develop and equip playgrounds and an athletic field; erect, furnish and equip an addition to and partially remodel, furnish and refurbish, and equip and re-equip the middle/high school; acquire and install education technology; and develop and improve sites; and*
- 2. This Board estimates the necessary cost of the project to be Seventeen Million Sixty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Thirty-Seven Dollars (\$17,063,337); and*
- 3. It will be necessary for the District to borrow the sum of Sixteen Million Six Hundred Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$16,690,000) and issue the bonds of the District therefore, the remaining funds to be derived from the investment of the bond proceeds; and*
- 4. This Board intends to submit one or more propositions at a special election to be held on Tuesday, August 5, 2008; and*
- 5. On or before 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27, 2008, the Board shall certify any ballot proposition to be submitted to the voters at such election to the election coordinator or coordinators designated to conduct elections within the District (the "Election Coordinator").*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. A special election of the electors of the District be called and held on Tuesday, August 5, 2008.*
- 2. The proposition to be voted on at the special election shall be stated on the ballots in substantially the form as set forth in Exhibit "A."*
- 3. The Election Coordinator is requested to:*
 - a. Utilize the South County Gazette and Herald Palladium newspapers published or of general circulation within the District, for publication of notices in accordance with the election law requirements.*
 - b. Utilize ballot proposition summary information, as prepared by legal counsel, in the form of the notice of the last day of registration and notice of election in the form as set forth in Exhibit "B" attached hereto.*
 - c. Provide a proof copy of the ballot to the District and its legal counsel in sufficient time to allow the ballot to be proofread prior to printing.*

4. This Board estimates the period of usefulness of the improvements for which bonds of the District in the amount of Sixteen Million Six Hundred Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$16,690,000) are to be issued to be not less than forty (40) years.

5. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution be and the same are hereby rescinded.

EXHIBIT "A"

BONDING PROPOSAL

Shall River Valley School District, Berrien County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Sixteen Million Six Hundred Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$16,690,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefore, for the purpose of:

erecting, furnishing and equipping a new elementary school; developing and equipping playgrounds and an athletic field; erecting, furnishing and equipping an addition to and partially remodeling, furnishing and refurbishing, and equipping and re-equipping the middle/high school; acquiring and installing education technology; and developing and improving sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2008, under current law, is .95 mill (\$0.95 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation). The maximum number of years the bonds may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, will not exceed thirty (30) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 1.20 mills (\$1.20 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

If the school district borrows from the State to pay debt service on the bonds, the school district may be required to continue to levy mills beyond the term of the bonds to repay the State.

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited, and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

EXHIBIT "B"

SUMMARY OF BALLOT PROPOSITION TO BE INSERTED IN THE NOTICES OF LAST DAY OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTION:

**RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
GENERAL OBLIGATION UNLIMITED TAX BOND PROPOSAL
FOR BUILDING AND SITE PURPOSES IN THE AMOUNT OF
NOT TO EXCEED \$16,690,000**

Full text of the ballot proposal may be obtained at the administrative offices of River Valley School District, 15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128, telephone: 269-756-9541.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT THE BONDS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, IF APPROVED BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE ELECTORS AT THIS ELECTION, WILL BE GENERAL OBLIGATION UNLIMITED TAX BONDS PAYABLE FROM GENERAL AD VALOREM TAXES.

Moved by Wagner, supported by Knutel, to adopt the Ballot Proposition Resolution. Roll call vote: Farhat, Aye; German, Aye; Graziano, Aye; Knutel, Aye; Petro, Aye; Wagner, Aye (all Ayes). The resolution motion was declared adopted.

11.6.2 Consider BCISD General Fund Operating Budget Resolution

Farhat reviewed that each local education agency is required by law to approve a resolution regarding the Intermediate School District general fund operating budget and that the administration recommended the Board approve the Berrien County Intermediate School District (BCISD) General Fund Operating Budget Resolution as presented. Farhat read the following resolution:

WHEREAS: This Board received the Berrien County ISD General Fund Operating Budget on or before May 1, 2008; and

WHEREAS: In accordance with Section 380.624 of the Revised School Code, this Board must now adopt a resolution expressing its support or disapproval of the proposed Berrien County ISD budget, and must submit to the Berrien County ISD Board any specific objections and/proposed changes the Board may have to the budget prior to June 1, 2008.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Berrien County ISD General Fund Operating Budget for the 2008-2009 school year be supported, and that the Secretary of the Board is hereby directed to submit a copy of this Resolution to the Secretary of the Berrien County ISD Board of Education, along with any specific objections or proposed changes to the budget.

Moved by Petro, supported by Knutel, to adopt the Berrien County Intermediate School District (BCISD) General Fund Operating Budget Resolution. Roll call vote: Farhat, Aye; German, Aye; Graziano, Aye; Knutel, Aye; Petro, Aye; Wagner, Aye (all Ayes). The resolution motion was declared adopted.

Wagner commented on the amount of funds used by the BCISD for personnel and suggested the District request some of the ISD designated funds, such as Tech Prep grant monies, for actual academic use in the District. Capiak said she would look into the matter.

11.6.3 Consider Resolution for Reduction in Professional Personnel

Farhat asked Personnel Committee Chair Knutel about the reduction in professional personnel. Knutel and Capiak confirmed that the reductions in personnel (layoffs) were a result of a decline in enrollment, awaiting funds for At Risk/Class Reduction, and the number of Kindergarten sections. Capiak said that with impending retirements, there will be recalls and that the information was presented to the River Valley Education Association (RVEA) President and the building principals. Farhat said the Board had to make notification now due to contractual agreements. He then read the resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the River Valley School District has reviewed its projected revenues and expenditures for the 2008-2009 school year and staffing requirements for its programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that a reduction in teacher personnel is necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The following teachers are hereby placed on layoff status effective June 30, 2008, and their services are hereby terminated and discontinued by reason of a necessary reduction in teacher personnel and will not be required until further notice:

Joy Ackerman
Jeff Degner
Karen Goodenough
Debra Kopaceski

Christina Martin
Joy Savenas
Kim Schmaltz

2. The Superintendent is hereby directed to notify each teacher affected by this action in writing that he or she has been placed on layoff status effective June 30, 2008, and that his or her services have been terminated and discontinued by reason of a necessary reduction in teacher personnel and will not be required until further notice.

All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution be and the same are hereby rescinded.

Moved by Knutel, supported by Petro, to adopt the Reduction in Professional Personnel Resolution.

Graziano asked about recalling these teachers. Capiak stated that after May 30, the District would have the number of retirements and hopefully, the reduction of professional personnel would be resolved at that time. She said the administration plans to make a concerted effort to recall teachers when more information is known and that the intention is to get everyone "back on board" as soon as possible.

Farhat called the question to adopt the Reduction in Professional Personnel Resolution. Roll call vote: Farhat, Aye; German, Aye; Graziano, Aye; Knutel, Aye; Petro, Aye; Wagner, Aye (all Ayes). The resolution motion was declared adopted.

11.6.4 Consider Resolution for Reduction in Support Personnel

Farhat said that reductions in paraprofessionals were a result of reducing special education staff until numbers are more concrete in the fall and reducing a position at the Middle/High School that was started due to a large class size situation. Farhat read the resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the River Valley School District has reviewed its projected revenues and expenditures for the 2008-2009 school year and staffing requirements for its programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that a reduction in personnel is necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The following support staff are hereby placed on layoff status effective June 30, 2008, and their services are hereby terminated and discontinued by reason of a necessary reduction in personnel and will not be required until further notice:

*Denni Glickman
Shelly Reese
Lindsay Reitz
Joni Rochman*

2. The Superintendent is hereby directed to notify each staff member affected by this action in writing that he or she has been placed on layoff status effective June 30, 2008, and that his or her services have been terminated and discontinued by reason of a necessary reduction in personnel and will not be required until further notice.

All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution be and the same are hereby rescinded.

Moved by Petro, supported by Knutel, to adopt the Reduction in Support Personnel Resolution.

Graziano asked Capiak about the reductions. Capiak said classroom support staff had increased to address class size, such as two Special Education teachers' aides and a high school teacher's aide. Capiak said that the District did not anticipate recalling the support personnel but if funds became available, the administration would look into it.

Farhat called the question to adopt the Reduction in Support Personnel Resolution. Roll call vote: Ehlert, Aye; Farhat, Aye; German, Aye; Graziano, Aye; Knutel, Aye; Petro, Aye; Wagner, Aye (all Ayes). The resolution motion was declared adopted.

11.7 Consider Approval of Superintendent's Contract Extension

Farhat reviewed that the contract between the District and the Superintendent in the past had been a three-year contract, but prior Boards had reduced contracts to a yearly basis. Farhat said the Personnel Committee recommended that Mr. Schroeder's current two-year contract, expiring on June 30, 2009, be voided and replaced with a three-year contract that would expire June 30, 2011. Graziano asked about salary and Farhat said salary and benefits would remain the same until the budget is finalized. He stated administrative and supervisory contracts would be brought to the Board in May.

Moved by Knutel, supported by Graziano, to void Superintendent Robert Schroeder's current two-year contract that expires June 30, 2009, and replace it with a three-year contract that would expire June 30, 2011. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.8 Consider 2008-09 BCISD Payroll Services Agreement Between River Valley School District

Capiak reported that the cost for the 2008-2009 Berrien County Intermediate School District (BCISD) Payroll Services Agreement, between BCISD and River Valley School District, would remain the same as last year. When asked, she confirmed the services were working well.

Moved by Graziano, supported by Petro, to approve the 2008-2009 BCISD Payroll Services Agreement Between River Valley School District for the amount of \$2,625. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.9 Consider Appointing Superintendent to Act on Behalf of the Board of Education in Recalling Staff

Farhat explained that in order to expedite the process of recalling individuals, the Superintendent requested that the Board appoint him to act on behalf of the Board in the recalling process. This would allow the District to get information to affected individuals as soon as possible.

Moved by Wagner, supported by Knutel, to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to act on behalf of the River Valley Board of Education in recalling staff. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.10 Consider Acceptance of 2008-2011 District Technology Plan

Farhat stated he was impressed with the District Technology Plan. Board members commented on the amount and quality of work. Farhat recognized Mrs. Carter who was instrumental in the development of the plan.

Moved by Wagner, supported by Knutel, to accept the 2008-2011 District Technology Plan. All Ayes. Motion carried.

11.11 Consider Approval of Teacher Tenure Candidate

Farhat reported that Shawn Gedert had successfully completed his probationary period and was recommended by his principal for teacher tenure status within the District.

Moved by German, supported by Knutel, to approve tenure status to Shawn Gedert. All Ayes. Motion carried.

12.0 Items for Discussion Only

Farhat reminded everyone that the Board of Education election would be held May 6. The candidates for the two seats are Victoria Pfauth and incumbent Fred Knutel.

Wagner reported that she, German and Farhat participated with the North Central Association (NCA) Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) audit visit. The three Board members met with the NCA audit team and the team commented on the positive environment and how well informed the students were on the upcoming renovations and construction proposal. Farhat confirmed that the NCA audit team members were impressed with the students.

13.0 Hearing of Persons Present

Interim Middle/High School Principal Wayne Warner reported that the NCA CASI audit visit went well and that he had received word that the District would receive a Recommendation For Accreditation, i.e., the school meets the quality standards and any noted recommendations do not seriously impact the quality of the education being provided.

Principal Warner reported that the Variety Show held the previous evening had earned over \$1,000 toward the Band's trip to the Liberty Bowl. He reported that the BCISD Career and Technical Education (CTE) Awards Banquet would be held at the Mendel Center at Lake Michigan College on May 1 and that several River Valley students would receive CTE awards. Warner also reported Senior Recognition Night would be held May 5 at 7:00 p.m.

River Valley Elementary Principal Garry Lange reported on the successful Literacy Night, which focused on early literary skills and readiness for Kindergarten and first grade students. He reported on the upcoming walk-a-thon which will raise funds for the health initiative and the Parent Teacher Organization, and the May 9 event at the New Troy Community Center from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Lange gave an update on the radio program, *It's Elementary*, and the living Wax Museum held Saturday, April 19. German and Wagner complimented the Wax Museum event, specifically the students' presentations and costumes.

Principal Lange reported that registration for Kindergarten and pre-school were going well and that enrollment was approximately the same numbers as the previous year.

There were no other comments from persons present.

14.0 Adjournment

Moved by Graziano, supported by Knutel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Wagner, Secretary