

DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-4A
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES FOR MAY 24th, 2018
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Special Board Meeting
Professional Development Room

May 24th, 2018
2:00 p.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER - The Dolores School Board special meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. on May 24th, 2018.
- II. ROLL CALL - Members present were: Casey McClellan, Vangi McCoy, Kay Phelps, Dee Prock and Deanna Truelsen. Scott Cooper, Superintendent, Gary Livick, Elementary Principal, Doreen Jones, Finance Manager, staff and community members were also in attendance.
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
A motion was made by Dee Prock and seconded by Vangi McCoy to approve the agenda.
Votes: McClellan-aye; McCoy-aye; Phelps-aye; Prock-aye; Truelsen-aye
- IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL ISSUE
A motion was made by Deanna Truelsen and seconded by Vangi McCoy to break into executive session for the purpose of discussion regarding personnel matters as authorized by C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(f). Those present at the outset of the executive session shall be members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent.
Votes: McClellan-aye; McCoy-aye; Phelps-aye; Prock-aye; Truelsen-aye

The Board broke into Executive Session at 2:00 p.m. and returned at 2:45 p.m. with no votes taken or decisions made.

A motion was made by Casey McClellan and seconded by Deanna Truelsen to deny Clint Schurr's resignation; Mr. Schurr is to be removed from administrative leave immediately; Ms. Huffman and Mr. Cooper are to write a letter to the parents and students exonerating Mr. Schurr of any wrongdoing.
Votes: McClellan-aye; McCoy-aye; Phelps-aye; Prock-aye; Truelsen-aye

V. DISCUSSION

A. Teacher Salaries – Ms. Prock reported this time of year is important in budget preparation. She would like to see something done to show appreciation for the teachers, to move forward and give them the boost they deserve. In the past, this time of year the budget was in place and for the past several years Dolores has operated in the red in the proposed budget, but then came out okay. Ms. McCoy feels they don't have the full picture with what was handed out at the last meeting that she didn't attend; and at the last meeting it was voted to give the step and the minimum wage increase. Ms. Prock is frustrated with the current atmosphere; a lot of good things are happening and it's the result of the hard work of the teachers. If they're not supported, problems will continue. The school is not falling apart, employees and staff are holding the district together. She would like something done to offer encouragement and she doesn't want to wait a month.

Ms. Jones said the budget needs to be voted on by the end of June. Ms. Phelps agrees with Ms. Prock. Ms. Truelsen reported last night's award ceremony was a huge success, many students received tremendous awards, a direct result of teachers. Mr. McClellan would like to see the salaries increased, but can they just wait a few weeks to see where the district is at financially, with the drop in enrollment and some of the other issues going on. Ms. Jones would also like to do it in June if the money is there, then they'll have good numbers and solid contracts. The current contracts will go out next month with the step increase and an additional increase can also be given when more information is known.

Mr. Cooper said they will not know enrollment numbers in three weeks. There is plenty of money in reserves, the district is healthy financially. This is the next to last day for existing teacher contracts, and it would be helpful for teachers to have a contract with the raise set before leaving for the summer. Morale is down, many teachers have left feeling unappreciated.

Ms. Truelsen asked about enrollment numbers. Ms. Jones reported it has dropped significantly. Ms. Jones would recommend waiting a couple weeks for solid numbers.

Mr. McClellan asked the teachers if there was any problem waiting three weeks; those present responded yes, they want a contract with the 780 Mr. Cooper has suggested. Mr. Vaughn reported being at the district for 17 years, he's been patient enough. Looking at reserves over the years, there's been plenty of money and salaries have been frozen.

Mr. McClellan reported CASB recommends three to five months of operating budget in reserves and Dolores has this at the lower end. A deficit budget has already been approved for expenses and revenues and he wants to be fiscally responsible. He wants to give the raises and would approve it today under different circumstances. He feels the number approved for the health clinic was too high for the construction cost after talking to other contractors. Ms. Prock does not want to discuss the health clinic, it and its grant being a separate issue; however, Mr. McClellan feels it all comes full circle; they've approved a 90,000-dollar overrun for the clinic.

Ms. Prock moved to the signing of the contracts; teachers don't want to sign contracts unless they include appropriate compensation. There is a lot of turmoil right now and they need to show support for the teachers and their enthusiasm for continuing their hard work. She understands they want acknowledgement and she wants to provide that. All board members are in support of raises, there's disagreement on when to approve the raises. Ms. Prock said the district always seems to come out okay and reserves look good despite a doom and gloom year.

Mr. McClellan doesn't think that's a way to run a business. He wants to see raises given, too, just wait two weeks.

Mr. Cooper said the most important thing in any district is the teacher; in 10 straight years Dolores has never used their reserves to balance the budget, there's always enough carryforward. They just transferred \$500,000 for the bus barn and teachers are more important than a bus barn; if they do contracts based on the 780 it will be an additional cost to the district of about 60,000.

Ms. Truelsen asked how many would not sign the contract currently, a number of folks present raised their hand; however, Ms. Jones pointed out many teachers were not in attendance who said they'd be glad to sign their contracts as they are now. Ms. Jones is not saying the teachers don't deserve the money, but the board and administration need to make smart financial decisions

Unidentified Speaker: Current teacher, upset mad about the approved schedule, wanted the four-day week, and the board needs to back them.

Unidentified Speaker: Current teacher with 34 years experience; loves what she does, loves the district, has a part-time job to make ends meet. There are quality people in the district and she and they need and deserve the extra money.

Mr. Nielson – He is one of four returning MS teachers, doesn't like seeing the turnover, need the extra money.

Mr. Kercher - They can get a raise anywhere they go; they love it here that's why they stay, but can go somewhere else easily and get more money.

Unidentified Speaker – Most of the staff voted for a four-day schedule and they didn't get it. Now they can go to Mancos since it wasn't approved here. Ms. Truelsen clarified only 60% of the staff voted for the four-day calendar. Ms. Phelps would like to reconsider that next year.

Mr. Nielson – Student success is about the teachers, but he also doesn't appreciate losing colleagues every year. He has six kids at home, and drives an hour each way.

Mr. Livick – The district reputation has been hurt, they need to invest in the teachers and their longevity. The first two years are hard for a new teacher, and they need to be careful or they will be training new teachers who will then move on, which has already happened. They must keep qualified people.

A motion was made by Vangi McCoy and seconded by Kay Phelps to add 780 to the teacher salary schedules.

Discussion: Ms. Phelps appreciates Ms. Jones being fiscally responsible; Ms. Jones said the board is making the decision so they're responsible. Ms. Phelps feels waiting two to three weeks would not be good, there's too much at stake; Ms. McCoy agrees.

Votes: McClellan-aye; McCoy-aye; Phelps-aye; Prock-aye; Truelsen-aye

Ms. McCoy had to leave.

Ms. Prock thanked the staff for being respectful in their presentations.

- B. Meg Neeley's Substitute contract (Action Item) – Mr. Livick reported a third grade teacher is leaving this summer to have a baby and will be back late fall. A third grade teacher also retiring and would like to stay as a substitute; he feels it's a win-win and would be seamless, high quality instruction for kids without interruption. We have good subs, but this is a high quality, skilled teacher so the students won't suffer. Mr. Cooper said Ms. Neeley would like to be paid at her current daily rate, she won't do it at the current substitute rate. The difference is about \$6,000 with 70 additional instructional days. Ms. Prock has asked if that's happened before; Ms. Jones said Ms. Powell came back as a master teacher, but she did it per policy with the existing sub rate. Mr. Cooper reported that Ms. Neeley was clear she wouldn't do it if her current rate was not honored. Mr. Livick feels she's really not subbing anyway; Ms. Neeley would be doing the full curriculum.

Unidentified Speaker – current teacher, to ask a sub to do all the things involved in the very important semester of third grade, school to farm, restaurant, etc., would be asking too much. She's in support of Ms. Neeley's proposal.

Mr. McClellan – a lot of problems have been caused by working outside of the policies; this is another case of working outside of current policies, it could set a precedent, and he would prefer to stick with the policy in all cases. Stop operating outside of them, they seem to be bypassed more than worked within.

Ms. Jones reported that Ms. Powell was paid per the current substitute policy; it's hard to make an exception for one and not others, because every person that comes back is going to want this treatment; you can't do it for one and not the other ones. Ms. Prock feels they might get excellent teachers to come back; Ms. Jones disagrees; Ms. Powell is a great teacher and came back without this demand.

Mr. Livick feels it's about what's best for the kids; Ms. Neeley is an amazing teacher teaching, the curriculum is something she designed, and he feels there's no better person to fill the slot. She's the most qualified; sure, Ms. Powell could do it, but Ms. Neeley is the most qualified. Mr. McClellan said they go through the transition every time a teacher changes, someone else has to pick up where they left off. Why is this any different? They shouldn't work outside of the policy.

Ms. Prock feels they're having this discussion because they're doing something outside of the standard policy, and they need to determine what's best to do.

Unidentified Speaker – current teacher – the 3rd grade curriculum is project based expeditionary learning, the kids drive the whole project. To have a sub would do a disservice to the kids. Kids first.

Unidentified Speaker - parent – H has a 3rd grader next year, and this is what he wants for his kid.

Ms. Prock said Ms. Neeley will literally be continuing on and then retiring in November.

Unidentified Speaker - 4th grade teacher – having two new teachers next year will be difficult for project planning. she supports Ms. Neeley's teaching.

Ms. Phelps – She appreciates Mr. McClellan's concern about the policy, but they stand to lose more than they gain by keeping Ms. Neeley.

Mr. McClellan feels it sets a precedent that they'll pay for later.

Mr. Livick – said people run off in the middle of year; this will happen again, and they should fill the spot with the best person possible; kids will suffer without the benefit of a master teacher.

Mr. McClellan again stated this is operating outside of current policy; Ms. Truelsen said nobody's ever asked for it before. Why does that matter?

Mr. Cooper recognizes a major teacher shortage throughout the state, there are fewer teachers to choose from. Ms. Neeley will do it for her current daily rate.

Unidentified Speaker – current teacher – Can Ms. Neeley's contract be amended so it doesn't look like the policy is not being followed; Ms. Jones answered no, her retirement contract has already been started.

A motion was made by Kay Phelps and seconded by Deanna Truelsen to approve Ms. Neeley's substitute contract based on her current daily rate.

Votes: McClellan-nay; Phelps-aye; Prock-aye; Truelsen-aye

