

*IT IS THE MISSION OF THE SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOLS
to develop our students to become "...active, reflective, creative learners. In our schools, they will engage in rewarding work and practice behaviors that are intelligent in both an academic and a practical sense. Students will develop the attitudes, skills and understandings that will allow them to fulfill their potential and to function successfully in their individual and social roles."*

SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
1216 Maple Hill Road, Castleton, New York 12033-1699

December 15, 2011

Maple Hill High School Library

Present: Andrew Fleck, President, Michael Hiser, Vice President, Christine DiGuilio, Bruce Romanchak, Paul Puccio, Mary Yurista, Lisa Lafferty (arrived 6:08) and George Warner (arrived 6:37).

Absent: Michael Charsky

Also present: Robert Horan, Monica Kim, Matthew LaClair, Jason Chevrier, Michael Bennett, Ron Agostinoni, Donna Watson, and Michele Reickert

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES – REGULAR

1. Meeting called to order by Board President, J. Andrew Fleck at 6:06 p.m.
2. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of present agenda. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
3. President Andrew Fleck asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
4. Mary Yurista moved for approval of minutes of regular meeting November 17, 2011 and workshop meeting December 1, 2011 as amended (Paul Puccio was not listed as absent on both; George Warner and Bruce Romanchak were not listed as absent on November 17, 2011). Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
5. Reports/Presentations:
 - a. Solar Panel Project – Robert Horan and Matthew LaClair gave a presentation of the status of the solar project at the district. Photos were shared of the types of panels the school district will be getting and where they will be placed.
 - i. There was a change in the location of the panels at the Transportation Building; the panels cannot be placed on the roof. There will be ground mount panels located in front of the building facing the Middle School. The Science and Technology classroom windows will face the panels creating an outdoor classroom effect. The inverter will be outside at the Transportation Building, students will have access to it rather than it being in our mechanical room where we wouldn't want students to go. Bruce Romanchak asked that Mr. Horan look into getting "Planetary Gear", solar panels that follow the sun, bringing in mechanical engineering and electrical engineering. Mr. Horan said he would look into getting one, but it may have to take place in stage 2.

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- Mary Yurista expressed concern about moving the kick wall so balls would not be hitting the solar panels.
- ii. There have been outside parties coming to visit the district and see where the school is going educationally with the solar panels. We have been contacted by HVCC, SCCC Albany College of Nanoscience; they will actually be coming out for a visit. They want to see the technology we are using in the high school in both the distance learning classroom and a piece of equipment that Ron Agostinoni can talk a little more about. NYSERDA has been here and gave a workshop to Middle School and High School Teachers. Elementary teachers have shown interest in the ABC's of energy a program working into the curriculum not creating new courses but working with what we already teach. A sample of the graph showing usage and what the students will see was shared by Mr. Horan. The Technology department has two solar panels they are going to be working with at the Middle School. It is hoped that the energy could be used to power a pump for the pond in the courtyard.
 - iii. A lot of research has been done into this, Matt LaClair and I have done numerous visits to locations that already have solar panels. We did visits without Monolith with us and have received positive feedback both about Monolith and the results these companies are seeing. Marshall Sign located on Route 9J has a 50 KW unit that was installed by Monolith. Matt LaClair explained there are no batteries with the units so there is no way to store the power, it is real time. It was also explained that Marshall Sign expects to supply their building and be completely off the grid with the unit they have. Mention was made as to the neatness of the installations and Monolith's completed jobs that were visited. There have been architects and structural engineer's onsite to assess and be sure we will not have any problems. The paperwork is completed and ready to go to State Ed for approval.
 - iv. Matt LaClair will be meeting with the fire departments in February to be sure they understand about the solar panels and the inverters. They will also go over the roof layouts and what equipment the fire departments might need. Monolith is willing to train the fire departments onsite.
 - v. There are other companies into solar panels; there are companies that specialize in agriculture; they put solar panels on farmland, wide open spaces. I spoke with Adirondack Solar; they are more interested in high end homes in the Adirondacks. Solar City has not returned my call so I'm not sure what their specialty is.
 - vi. The Board had previously asked that Mr. Horan find out how much Monolith would be making off the solar panels at the school district. After speaking with Mark Fobare at Monolith, he reported that Monolith was not comfortable giving that information out. It is a very competitive market and he didn't want his competitors to know that information. We can renegotiate our percentage we get from them every January if we wanted to do that. Roofers don't tell you what they are making by doing your roof, painters don't tell you either, they give you a price and do the job. He was honest with his answer; he didn't dodge the bullet or make something up. They have been very accommodating.
 - vii. Mr. Horan thanked Matt LaClair for all his legwork and time he has put into the project.

- b. Facebook Update – Robert Horan updated the Board about the District having a Facebook page. Jason McCord could not be here tonight, he was called away to another district. Our Athletic Department currently uses Twitter and it is nice to get quick updates on our athletes, cancellations, etc. It is a good tool to get information out quickly. George Warner asked the Administrators to use Twitter accounts for different things coming out of the school district. Our elementary school PTO has a Facebook site and possible the middle school PTO may be heading in that direction. Jason McCord researched the questions brought up and prepared a page of questions and answers, Mr. Horan asked that the Board look at the questions and answers they are as follows:

Q: Where are we?

A: Jason McCord has created a Facebook page for the district. But it is currently “unpublished” (essentially in development) so the community cannot view it yet. Once we’re ready to proceed, we’ll “publish” it and promote the page so community members can follow the page. We’re looking at a January launch date.

Q: What about comments?

A: The district’s Facebook page is set up to allow comments as this is the standard practice for school district Facebook pages. The school districts Jason has talked with have reported little to no problem with inappropriate comments. By allowing comments, we’re telling our community that we want to hear from you.

Q: What about inappropriate comments?

A: Facebook has settings that prevent profanity from being posted to our page. The district’s Facebook page is set up to use the strongest level of profanity blocking. If someone posts inappropriate comments, they can be deleted. Anyone posting inappropriate comments can be blocked from posting comments in the future.

Q: How will folks know what comments are considered inappropriate?

A: The district’s Facebook page has a page titled “Rules for Commenting” which spells out expectations for comments. Primarily, comments are to be respectful, polite, relevant and factual. It also explains how comments will be removed if they violate these rules. Critical comments will be allowed but not if they violate the privacy and rights of our students and staff.

Q: Who will maintain the district’s Facebook page?

A: Jason McCord will maintain the Facebook page. However, we can give administrator rights to others (such as the Superintendent and principals) so they can immediately delete any inappropriate comments we may get. But similar to the district website, Jason will be

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the only one posting to the Facebook page. It is important to have consistency in how posts are written, particularly as Facebook posts have their own style (short, to the point and somewhat conversational in tone).

- This Q&A prepared by Communications Specialist Jason McCord. If Board members have additional questions, please let Superintendent Horan know.

Robert Horan encouraged the board members to look at other school's Facebook pages and see not only what they look like but what information is on them and the comments being left by their community members. We have been communicating through our ENews, our webpage and through our newsletters, meeting with PTO's and faculty meetings letting people know what's going on with the merger, and that it is not a done deal and that is still what people are saying. We need to communicate in a number of different ways to let people know what's going on in our district, not just merger but student accomplishments and more. Mary Yurista expressed concern that there is not enough paper information going out. The older citizens of the district are not tied into technology. We need to be clear to them. Mr. Horan expressed that there is a newsletter going out this month. The district mails four (4) newsletters a year. He also mentioned that we have cut back on paper calendars and mailing them to every resident. The District Office does print out calendars and mails them to anyone requesting one. Andrew Fleck expressed that electronic communications will not replace paper but a lot of people now like the instant notification. It is a very fast way to answer questions.

- c. Budget Update – Monica Kim presented a one page tax cap calculation that she proposed using to communicate with the community. There were additional concerns about the terms being used: ex: PILOT, Levy, Rate, ORPS, etc. Not all residents are going to know what a PILOT is or how the levy plays into the tax rate. Monica Kim also made mention to an additional 800 million dollars the Governor is talking about adding to education for next year. The first 350 million would go to expense driven aid like building aid and transportation aid, aids you have to spend to get reimbursed, 90 million dollars is earmarked for grants that they are offering, there are efficiency grants and other grants we are going to look into and the remaining 360 million will be for schools in New York State. The Board of Regents has proposed changes to how the aid is going to be distributed. They are asking that the poorer schools get more money. Trying to recognize that the poorer school districts took a bigger brunt of the gap elimination adjustments and giving it back. Also recognizing that the schools on Long Island can raise so much more revenue under the 2% tax cap than schools in the Capital District. Mary Yurista expressed concern that the levy calculation sheet does not show the impact of change in assessments. Monica Kim expressed concern in talking about tax levy and tax rate at the same time and that there is really no way to know what the tax rate will be until next summer when we are told what the values are in Schodack. A request was made to use a pie chart, that was in a previous presentation, showing how assessment changes effect individual tax bills. Robert Horan responded that the chart will be used during budget talks to show the effect of changes in assessments. Michael Hiser expressed that the bottom line for people is the tax rate. Paul Puccio asked that she use more common

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language. Most community members are not going to understand the calculations the way there are.

6. Board Discussion. Bruce Romanchak talked about the recent Merger Feasibility Meeting he attended. He felt it was very informative and he was glad he went. He asked how many of the original Schodack members that were on the committee have stopped going to meetings. Robert Horan answered: none. There are times when there is full attendance, even over the summer 80/90 degree days, and times when we are missing a few from each district. Bruce Romanchak mentioned that he has heard complaints about the facilitators. Robert Horan answered that there are some personality conflicts and they were addressed right away. They are three different individuals with different personalities, one is very animated and excited and we have asked him to slow down and he has. They are doing a good job. Mike Hiser asked Bruce Romanchak his impression at the meeting, overall? Bruce Romanchak answered that he was amazed at how engaged everyone was and how it is a mission for them. It looked like everyone thinks it is the right thing to do, but the chances of it passing are a snowball in. It seems like the roadblocks of actually going ahead with this are huge. Paul Puccio commented on the amount of time that has been put into this and their level of caution and carefulness; they ask themselves how do we going to share and communicate all this information. Mike Hiser asked what the topics were. Bruce Romanchak answered that it was mostly reconfiguration of the grades. There was conversation of separating 9-10 in one building and 11-12 in another and I think the consensus was that they wanted to put all four in one building. Our kids will stay in Schodack until the end of 8th grade and their kids will start coming to Schodack middle school in 5th or 6th. Paul Puccio made mention that it was undecided on the 5th/6th combo, their committee did not consider that and ours did. What was trying to be done at the meeting was to get the committees to agree on the configuration of grade level by building because that then drives all the other financial analysis that they can do with regard to staffing, building utilization, buses and a whole series of things. Until there is an agreement on what the configurations will be it is hard to project. They need to determine where the vacant space is, is it Schodack or Ichabod. Bruce Romanchak commented that people are going to want to see where we are saving money. Paul Puccio asked Robert Horan to have a conversation with both Doug and Sam, two of the consultants, and it really has to do with the merging of two cultures. They have been through a consolidation, how did they handle the merger of cultures? How do you deal with the fact that people have a sense of who Schodack is? Go into the gymnasium and look at the banners on the wall, they represent a history and a feeling of what it means to be a part of the school district, to go to Maple Hill. That culture thing is a very strong bond, especially parents who are looking at their kid's education and experience. People are not going to want this to feel like a hostile takeover. If everyone goes to high school in Ichabod, how is it not Ichabod Crane, Schodack is gone, Maple Hill is gone. Ron Agostinoni commented that a lot of times it is the little things that people notice, we are talking merging programs and all the big things, but the people notice the little things (why is this on the wall here). We were talking earlier about the gymnasium, you have an entrance, you have banners, you don't want to lose any of them. We don't want to lose ours and they don't want to lose theirs. We would need to have them in some sort of direction that they merge together. Two coming together to make one, it is symbolic. Bruce Romanchak commented that a lot of the people he has talked to feel we are marrying down. While Schodack is a smaller district, we feel we are more cohesive district and that we have a clearer vision and we have a longer history. Robert Horan

expressed that if we merge, they will have to be brought up to our standards. Bruce Romanchak questioned how many board members will there be and how many will be from Schodack and how many from Ichabod Crane. Robert Horan stated that that will all be up to the Commissioner of Education, they will make a recommendation. Robert Horan continued that there are no answers right now. The long range plan may look something like this: the draft report comes out, the board looks at it the same time that the state is looking at it, end of February; March, April and May will be spent doing community forums; and then there will be a straw vote (after getting feedback from your community) in June. George Warner talked about a recent meeting he attended; where it was announced what regions received money from the State. He expressed that the speakers all seemed to agree that the two major things to do in the state are create jobs for the future and prepare kids for their future. He expressed disappointment in the state that they are getting it on one side and not the education side, and education is 60% of the local property tax. Saying there has to be mergers, is going to do nothing for the education process. He expressed that he does not see any benefit from the Race to the Top after all the costs and time that has been spent on it. We have an excellent staff exhausting themselves trying to keep up with the insanity out of Albany. Andrew Fleck passed around a Thank You card from a 6th grader at Maple Hill Middle School about going on the Nature's Classroom trip. Paul Puccio talked about outside conversations of changes that could be made to Questar classes to save on transportation. He also spoke about the thought of utilizing Community College programs to consolidate career and technology classes. Mary Yurista stated that some colleges will not accept AP courses as credit in their school. They prefer the students take the class in their curriculum with their professors for it to count to GPA. Are kids taking AP overlapping or are they in a better position for a better grade by taking it again at a college level. Jason Chevrier explained about the LEAP, a local company that teaches elementary language lessons at a cost to the families. Currently, there Spanish and possibly Chinese will be offered at CES. Michael Hiser asked Robert Horan if there was anything the Board could do to help him. Robert Horan asked that the board members stay updated and focused on the Merger Feasibility Study and the budget process and that they attend the community budget advisory meetings, merger committee meetings, community forums and other meetings; and that they express that the merger is not a done deal.

7. Meeting open for public discussion: None.
8. Policies: None.
9. Consent agenda:
 - a. Christine DiGiulio moved for acceptance of Treasurer's Reports for the month of November 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - b. Christine DiGiulio moved for acceptance of Revenue and Budget Status Reports for the month of November 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - c. Christine DiGiulio moved for acceptance of Extra-Classroom Activity Report for the month of November 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.

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- d. Christine DiGiulio moved for acceptance of Claims Auditor Report for the month of November 2011. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - e. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Special Education regarding 2011-2012 students: #000113503, 000113424, and 000113535. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - f. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Preschool Special Education regarding 2011-2012 special education services for students: 000114049, 000113829, and 000114021. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - g. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of an International Club nine (9) day trip to France (Paris) and Italy (Milan, Florence and Rome) in April 2013. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - h. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of an International Club overnight trip to Quebec City, Quebec Canada, May 18, 2012 – May 19, 2012. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - i. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of contract for special education services under IDEA with Wildwood School for the 2011-12 school year. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - j. Christine DiGiulio moved for acceptance of Tax Collector's Report for tax year 2011 and discharge of the Tax Collector for the 2011-12 school year. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - k. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of the installation of solar panels on the roofs of Castleton Elementary School, Maple Hill Middle School and Maple Hill High School and a ground mount system at the transportation building contingent upon final approval from SED and NYSERDA. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - l. Christine DiGiulio moved for approval of an eight (8th) grade overnight field trip to Philadelphia, PA, June 6 – 8, 2012. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
 - m. Christine DiGiulio moved for acknowledgement of an anonymous donation in the amount of \$300.00 in support of the Community Charities Account. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
10. Resignations/Appointments
- a. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of Theresa Hovish (certification: Visual Arts) as extended term substitute teacher (.5 FTE overall for 2011-12 school year at Maple Hill High School) for Janel Gregoire, effective September 7, 2011. Salary for the position is MA Step 1. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.

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- b. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of Lisa Beerle (certification: Visual Arts) as extended term substitute teacher (.5 FTE overall for 2011-12 school year at Maple Hill Middle School) for Janel Gregoire, effective September 16, 2011. Salary for the position is BA Step 1. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- c. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the resignation of Janel Gregoire as Art club Advisor and Dramatics Advisor effective immediately. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- d. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the resignation of Jacqueline Hill as SADD co-advisor, effective immediately. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.

Revision: Bruce Romanchak moved to pull out items e and f and vote on them separately. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.

- ~~e. Acceptance of the resignation of Arthur J. VanDeWal for the purpose of retirement effective January 25, 2012.~~
- ~~f. Acceptance of the resignation of Cynthia Tomko for the purpose of retirement effective December 30, 2011.~~
- g. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of coach/Advisor(es):
 - i. National Junior Honor Society – Kenneth Malloy
 - ii. 7th/8th grade Softball – Jillian Post. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- h. Approval of volunteer assistant coach(es): None.
- i. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of non instructional substitute(s): Glen Berner (substitute school bus driver). Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- j. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of substitute teacher(s): Jessica L. Madden. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- k. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the resignation of Arthur J. VanDeWal for the purpose of retirement, with regret and appreciation for long service, effective January 25, 2012. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- l. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the resignation of Dorothy J. VanDeWal for the purpose of retirement, with regret and appreciation for long service, effective February 11, 2012. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
- m. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the resignation of Cyn Tomko for the purpose of retirement, effective February 11, 2012, revocable until December 28, 2011, with regret and appreciation for long service, attention at Board of Education Meetings, and hosting

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many meals, we will miss her input. Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.

11. Meeting open for public discussion.
12. Action items. Bruce Romanchak asked Mr. Horan to look into Planetary Gear for the solar project.
13. Adjournment. Having no further business before the board, meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.