

*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."*

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

**March 31, 2011**

**Maple Hill High School Library**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING**

Present: Andrew Fleck, President, Susan Megna, Vice President (arrived at 8:15), Kenneth Flood, Paul Puccio, Christine DiGuilio, Lisa Lafferty, George Warner (arrived at 6:18), Bruce Romanchak, Michael Hiser (arrived at 8:04).

Also Present: Robert Horan, Sherri Fisher, Jason Chevrier, Michael Bennett, Ron Agostinoni, Donna Watson.

1. President Andrew Fleck called meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.
2. Approval of present agenda. Bruce Romanchak motioned, Paul Puccio seconded. All present in favor.
3. Approval of minutes of regular meeting. None.
4. Meeting open for public discussion. Robert Horan thanks Community Budget Advisory Committee members for their time and expressing their concerns and ideas. Also thanks Administrators for the hours spent revising and looking into options for the 2011-12 Budget and Board Members for their direction. He would like to extend the CBAT meetings for April before the budget is adopted, one in May before the budget vote and another in June, all to be determined.
5. Reports / Presentations:
  - a. 2011-12 Draft 3 Budget Presentation – Sherri Fisher reported. State Aid numbers were finalized and the aid is not huge, Schodack like all other districts have experienced serious cuts in State Aid. Factors increasing the budget: there are still unsettled challenges to property assessments, higher mandated contribution payments to pension systems (TRS and ERS), health insurance costs continue to rise, and economic recovers at both State and National levels are not rebounding at a desired pace. There are possible reform initiatives on the horizon: Property Tax Cap, Shared Services/Functional Consolidation, "Competitive" state aid distribution, examination of expense-based aids, additional charter schools, and mandate relief commission. The Board directive was to present a budget with a tax rate increase between 4 & 6% without effecting Art, Music, Sports and Extra-Curricular activities. Tier 1 proposes a 4.75% tax rate increase but with further reductions, Tier 2 proposes a 3.20% tax rate increase.
6. Board Discussion: Kenneth Flood questioned Boces increases and Special Education increases. Paul Puccio explains the ratio change in Teacher Aides for all Capital Boces

increasing to 6-1-2 as part of the increase. Options were researched to handle things in District instead of through Boces ex: Copiers and Printers, a RFP was done, we did cost it out, but with Boces aid it made it effective to use Boces. Research will be done to see if we can use Boces more. Jason Chevrier explained and answered questions on his proposed restructuring of schedules for K – 5. Aligning Art, Music and Physical Education to be 40 minutes across the board. Schedule would allow for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Reading and Speech help in deficient areas and enrichment and different opportunities for others. Discussion of whether or not other schools are using this type of scheduling. Discussion about Distance Learning and the number of licenses the district has. We currently have 8 seat licenses with 28 students taking advantage of it. George Warner thanks Sherri Fisher for her long hours preparing the budget. Question as to the savings if everyone took a pay freeze, the savings would be approximately \$316,000. George Warner makes point that Administrators agreed to a pay freeze last year. Discussion on utilizing monitors for lunch and recess rather than a Teacher Assistant. The skill level of a Teacher Assistant is not needed to monitor lunch and recess. They are needed in the classrooms. Michael Bennett talks about offering electives in the middle school possible foreign language program, offering Earth Science to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and teaching research skills earlier.

7. Kenneth Flood moved to open the meeting for public discussion. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor. Community member questions how much we are using from the fund balance, answer \$50,000. Community member questions whether our Special Education costs are going over the mandated requirements. Donna Watson answers that by law we have a committee to determine need and provide what is needed, we don't offer what is not needed. Community member addresses the concern for senior citizens; fixed incomes cannot withstand the tax increases. People are moving out of the area because they cannot afford it. Everything trickles down to the taxpayers. Andrew Fleck answers; we understand the concerns and are doing what we can to cut spending. State Aid cuts make it difficult to deep the tax rate down. Community member questions whether or not we have asked SAA and CSEA to agree to a pay freeze, Andrew Fleck answers, we have set up a meeting to talk. Community member questions whether teachers have been asked, Andrew Fleck answers, we are currently under negotiations with the teachers. Community member points out that we have put a lot of demands on Staff and Faculty and have taken a lot out of the budget affecting them. The community has fought businesses coming into the district at the town level, residents need to start going to Town Board meetings and fight to get businesses into the town. Community member questions whether the district can offer pay to play to keep sports / activities. Sherri Fisher answers, by law we cannot. Clarification is requested that if there was a true wage freeze does the \$316,000 in savings not include step or salary increase, correct, and if the teachers union agreed to a 0% increase, what would the savings be, answer it would be approximately \$172,000. Questions as to if there is a deadline for negotiations, answer we always hope to settle but do not have a contract in place. Question as to the increase in legal services, answer over a 10 year trend, the costs are never the same. There was an increase in rates, we have active litigation, preparation of bonds, collective bargaining and tax certioraris that are unsettled, these all play a part in the increase in legal costs. Community member questions what cuts there may be to sports, Mark Bubniak answers that soccer goals and Uniforms would be cut in Tier 2 and that the middle school and high school would have to meet to discuss what sort of program cuts there may be. Question as to what the community can do. Community can set up Academic Foundation, Athletic Foundation, write grants, be an advisor to a club as a volunteer. Volunteers must be fingerprinted. Laura Cook acknowledges the tremendous hard work that has gone into the budget process and thanks everyone's efforts. She also comments

that Music, Art and Sports all contribute to academics and that the Teacher Assistant reduction has an impact on teaching, one support group cannot be valued more than the other.

8. Move to Board Discussion. Bruce Romanchak asks for a sense of the impact from the School Psychologist and Social Worker reduction would have. Social Workers are important to kids and parents as well with issues outside school. Christine DiGuilio asks if there is a concern of outside placement with our district resources being pulled back. Donna Watson assures that two years ago support was lower than what is being proposed. Susan Megna expresses that none of this is ideal but she has great faith in the group of administrators. Robert Horan express he has great confidence in this team; they research and look at facts. He also has full confidence that the faculty can handle larger class sizes. Volunteerism is good but be cautious, it has to be long term. It is difficult when a club starts then that person disappears, it leaves a bad taste in kid's mouths. The Board gives Draft 4 direction to Sherri Fisher and Robert Horan for the April 14<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.
9. Policies: None
10. Consent Agenda:
  - a. Susan Megna moved for approval of a class trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for Class of 2015 (8<sup>th</sup> grade) on June 8-11, 2011. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - b. Susan Megna moved for approval of class trip to Nature's Classroom in Becket, Massachusetts, for Class of 2018 (5<sup>th</sup> grade) on October 25 – 28, 2011. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - c. Susan Megna moved for approval of agreement for special education services under IDEA with Story Place Preschool, Inc. for the 2010-11 school year, as required to sub-allocate 2010-11 IDEA grant funds. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - d. Susan Megna moved for approval of agreement for special education services under IDEA with Capital District Beginnings, Inc. for the 2010-11 school year, as required to sub-allocate 2010-11 IDEA grant funds. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - e. Susan Megna moved for approval of agreement for special education services under IDEA with Neil Hellman School – Parsons Child and Family Center for the 2010-11 school year, as required to sub-allocate 2010-11 IDEA grant funds. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - f. Susan Megna moved for approval of agreement for special education services under IDEA with Crossroads Center for Children, Inc. for the 2010-11 school year, as required to sub-allocate 2010-11 IDEA grant funds. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - g. Susan Megna moved for approval of an in-kind donation and waiver of the fees outlined in Board Policy 3-208, Use of School Buildings and Athletic Facilities, for Schodack Castleton Community Partnership (SCCP) relative to the use of one classroom at the Maple Hill Middle School. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
  - h. Susan Megna moved for acknowledgement of a donation from Sacred Heart CYO in the

amount of \$200.00 in memory of Kyle Koch to support the High School Equal Opportunity Fund. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.

- i. Susan Megna moved for acknowledgement of a donation from Stewarts in the amount of \$750.00 in support of the Community Charities Account, to be used toward Camp Scully Camperships. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
- j. Susan Megna moved for acknowledgement of a donation from South Schodack Volunteer Fire Company in the amount of \$100.00 in support of the Community Charities Account. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
- k. Susan Megna moved for acknowledgement of a donation from Stewart's in the amount of \$500.00 in support of the Maple Hill Middle School work study program. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
- l. Susan Megna moved for acknowledgement of an anonymous donation in the amount of \$250.00 in support of the Community Charities Account to be used for Camp Scully. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
- m. Susan Megna moved for approval of a resolution to retain SES Study Team, LLC as the consultant for the merger feasibility study and to authorize Robert Horan, Superintendent, or his designee, to accept the RFP submitted and to enter into a contract with SES Study Team, LLC for the merger feasibility study. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
- n. Susan Megna moved for acceptance of an RFP from SES Study Team, LLC, for consulting services in the amount of \$54,500.00, all inclusive; containing all direct and indirect costs including all out-of-pocket expenses; in connection with the Department of State efficiency planning grant for the purposes of conducting a merger feasibility study for the Schodack Central School District and the Ichabod Crane Central School District, \$49,500.00 awarded through Department of State Grant, \$2,750.00 local share from each School District. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.
- o. Susan Megna moved for approval of a Revised Memorandum of Agreement with the Schodack Central School Faculty Association relative to a 2010-11 Retirement Incentive, effective April 1, 2011 through April 15, 2011. Christine DiGuilio seconded. All present in favor.

#### 11. Appointments / Resignations:

- a. Paul Puccio moved for approval of Extracurricular Coach(s) / Advisor(s):
  - i. Tim Ryan – Boys JV Baseball. Kenneth Flood seconded. All present in favor.
- b. Paul Puccio moved for approval of Volunteer Assistant Coach(s): None.
- c. Paul Puccio moved for approval of substitute Teacher(s): Rebecca R. Stewart, James T. Foody, Joseph W. Pulver, Amanda M. Hammill. Kenneth Flood seconded. All present in favor.

- d. Paul Puccio moved for approval of substitute non-instructional staff : None
- e. Paul Puccio moved for approval of substitute Teacher Assistant(s): Amanda M. Hammill. Kenneth Flood seconded. All present in favor.
- f. Paul Puccio moved for approval of tutor(s): None

NOTE: All personnel appointments are subject to fingerprint clearance by the NYS Education Department and verification of Permanent or Pending Certification by NYS.

- 12. Meeting open for public discussion. Community member asks for savings on Health Insurance. Sherri Fisher answers without the new rate figures it can only be estimated to be \$50,000 - \$75,000. Community member expresses concern that cutting too much this year leaves nothing for next year. Community member asks if the district can get separate agreement to do a freeze because the contract is under negotiations. Community member comments that there aren't a lot of unknowns. Andrew Fleck responds, we can only educate about the budget, we cannot advocate, the community has to be the one to advocate. There are a lot of people who are eligible to vote that do not vote. Community member would like to acknowledge that 4 high school students will be graduating from the Rotary program at Skidmore college. Community member questions if there is any idea of the number of years before we reach the population number of less than 1,000 students, answer, the merger study will provide us with information to better answer.
- 13. Action items: Draft 4 Budget; April 26, 2011 Special Meeting
- 14. Paul Puccio motions to enter Executive Session: work history of specific employees and litigation . Chris DiGuilio seconded. Enter executive session at 10:42 pm.
- 15. Adjournment: Having no other business before the board, meeting adjourned at 12:15 am.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Michele A. Reickert*  
Michele Reickert  
Substitute District Clerk