

Hartland Consolidated Schools  
Special Meeting - Board of Education  
November 22, 2010

Members present: R. Perkins, K. Kaszyca, M. Hutchinson, T. Dumond, C. Sinelli, C. Aberasturi  
Members absent: E. McPherson-Brown  
Admin. Present: J. Sifferman, S. Bacon, S. VanEpps, L. Mayes, S. Livingway, C. Hughes, K. Evenson, D. Minsker, L. Smither, B. Cain, S. Usher, M. Cheney  
Guests: P. Twigg, J. Dolowy, A. Link, L. Mitchell, B. Maschke, J. Kantola, A. Roy, M. Cartier, J. Szczykowski, J. Betoski, C. Pentescu, T. Bolcer, J. Akey, J. Lutz, K. Hughes, J. Sterk, N. Bauer, R. Dilworth, D. Dilworth

President Kaszyca called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Educational Support Service Center. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVED

Motion by Aberasturi, supported by Dumond that the agenda for the November 22, 2010 special meeting be approved, and that public participation be allowed on all items. Motion carried 6-0.

11/8 MINUTES  
APPROVED

Motion by Hutchinson, supported by Sinelli that the minutes of the November 8, 2010 regular meeting be approved. Motion carried 6-0.

CALL TO PUBLIC

There was no response to Call to the Public.

SUPT. REPORT

Superintendent Sifferman introduced Jeff Dolowy and Andrea Link from Plante & Moran, who presented the district's final audit for 2009/10. Mr. Dolowy noted that again this year the district received an "unqualified opinion", which is the highest level of assurance. Ms. Link presented the highlights of the audit noting that revenues were down and expenditures were up, causing a decrease in the district's fund balance. She noted that both instances were due to circumstances outside the district's control - reduction in students and state aid and increased costs for retirement, health insurance and utilities. Mr. Dolowy noted that the district had taken proactive steps when the economy first started its downward trend, including the salary formula and privatization, which have helped the district maintain a strong financial base during current hard times. Ms. Sifferman thanked Mr. Dolowy and Ms. Link as well as Scott Bacon, Linda Mitchell and the district's business office for all of their hard work toward this successful audit report.

2009/10 AUDIT  
REPORT

COUNTYWIDE  
CONNECTIVITY

Ms. Sifferman then introduced Paul Twigg, Barton Malow, and Scott Usher regarding the district's involvement in the countywide connectivity project. Mr. Twigg explained that this project is being funded through state and federal grants and was initiated by LESA and Livingston County to provide connectivity among the five school districts, the various city, township & village offices, and county emergency services. By joining forces, all of these entities will save on fiber costs and will be joined with a high speed connection, have access to shared resources, improved support and improved disaster recovery with more locations for offsite back-up of information. Currently permits are still in the process of being obtained and Mr. Twigg is hoping to be able to bring contract awards before the Board after the first of the year. Mr. Twigg did note there was an issue with a homeowner on Taylor Road who is currently not allowing access to the poles on his property. There is a hearing this week that will determine how the project will move forward. Mr. Aberasturi asked if this would increase the cost of the project beyond what was

allocated in the  
2010 Bond. Mr.  
Twigg noted that  
the allocation was  
based on Hartland

doing this on its own. As it is now a collaboration, the final costs will be considerably less.

BOARD REPORTS

Mr. Dumond thanked Mr. Evenson and the Legacy staff for the terrific Thanksgiving feast earlier today. Mr. Aberasturi and Mr. Kaszyca congratulated the district on the positive audit report. Ms. Sinelli also thanked Mr. Bacon and the accounting department for their hard work. She also noted that she attended the Celebration of Writing in Chris Anderson's class at Farms and was amazed by how gifted the students were. Ms. Hutchinson asked Ms. Sifferman if the high school had programs in place to deal with bullying issues. Ms. Sifferman asked Principal Hughes to respond. Mr. Hughes noted that there are several programs in place including a program specifically for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, a Culture & Climate Committee, groups for both students who have been bullied and students who have participated in bullying, staff meetings to promote teacher awareness and a committee to address issues involving technology and responsible use of technology. Ms. Sifferman noted that the district also has a Student Assistance Program (SAP) and a Student Assistance Coordinator to help address these issues. We are the only district in the county to have this program in place.

DISCUSSION:  
ADAIR LAWSUIT

Superintendent Sifferman began the discussion concerning the Adair lawsuit by giving some background on the original suit. This began several years ago and includes 400 districts in Michigan. The focus of the suit is unfunded mandates. During the Engler administration the legislature initiated CEPI, which was to serve as an information warehouse for districts statewide. Districts would provide information to the state that was then to be available as a point of comparison, etc. among all districts. As the state's economy took a downturn, the information warehouse concept became too expensive to maintain, however districts were still being required to provide this information or forfeit their state aid. In July 2010 the state supreme court ruled that the state could not require districts to provide this information. The state maintains that some of this information is required by the federal government and if it is not provided then districts will lose their federal aid. The attorneys for the 400 districts have determined that while all the issues are being debated, districts should provide three of the four reports required by the state. Superintendent Sifferman will bring a motion before the Board on December 6 asking them to grant the Superintendent authority to follow the advise of legal counsel as this suit progresses.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elsie McPherson-Brown  
Secretary

Paula Waters  
Recording Secretary