



Board Meeting

March 10, 2003

Terry R. Troy, *President*
Robert S. Magee, *Vice President*
Eugene C. Chandler
Ruth R. "Robin" Rich
Robert B. Thomas, Jr.
Karen L. Wolf
Mark M. Wolkow
Molly P. Harris,
Student Representative
Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER – Board of Education of Harford County President Terry R. Troy called the regular business meeting of the Board to order at 7:10 p.m. in the cafeteria of Edgewood High School. Mrs. Troy directed that a quorum call be conducted which revealed all Board Members to be present. She then led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Board Member Karen L. Wolf moved and Board Past President Eugene C. Chandler seconded that the printed agenda be amended with the addition of a New Business item: Appointing a Board Member and an alternate to the County's Adequate Public Facilities Task Force. The motion passed unanimously and Mrs. Wolf moved and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler seconded that the amended agenda be adopted. That motion also passed unanimously.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry English of Forest Hill said that the third grade class at Forest Lakes Elementary School in which his daughter is a member has had a long term substitute teacher for the entire school year when the regular teacher assigned to that classroom chose not to return after originally announcing her intent to return to the school in November. Mr. English said the school has decided not to offer the long term substitute a contract, instead planning to bring in another contracted teacher on March 17. He said the action is not fair to the long term substitute nor to the students who had "formed a bond" with the teacher. He urged the school system to "lookout for the welfare" of the students by continuing the long term

substitute for the remainder of the school year.

OLD BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Member Robin R. Rich and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to approve items on the Consent Agenda including Affirmation of Monthly Contract Awards and Amendment to the 2004-05 Calendar Committee, substituting Elementary Supervisor Martha Davis for the elementary supervisor originally listed on the roster.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION

The Board took action on several bills pending before the Maryland State Legislature after an update by school system Legislative Liaison Kathy Carmello. Mrs. Carmello told the Board that 760 Senate Bills and 11 Senate Resolutions; and 1,174 House Bills and 18 House Resolutions had been introduced to that point in the 2003 Session. She said, of those introduced, 48 Senate Bills and one Senate Resolution; and 69 House Bills and one House Resolution for a total of 119 Bills would impact education. Mrs. Carmello said those totals do not include bills which would impact local school systems. She said the legislature has rejected a move which would have taken 50 percent of the state's contribution of \$14.6 million from the teachers' retirement system.

Mrs. Carmello gave the Board an update on Senate Bill 295 which would establish a State program of salary grants for principals, vice-principals, and assistant principals. The Board voted 7 to 0 to support the motion of its member Robert B. Thomas, Jr. and second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler to support the bill. The Board then voted unanimously to endorse the motion of Mr. Thomas and second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and Mrs. Wolf to oppose SB 396, the "Children's Nutrition and Health in Schools Act," which would direct each county board to develop and adopt a policy regarding vending machines that includes prohibiting students access to vending machines containing foods of minimal nutritional value. Mrs. Carmello pointed out that the Harford County Public School System already has those guidelines and the bill would be an infringement on local boards' ability to control local policy. The Board also voted unanimously to support the motion of Mr. Thomas and the seconds of Mrs. Wolf and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler to support SB 703 which would establish a study panel on the availability of audiology and speech and language services for children in public schools. Mr. Thomas introduced a discussion on House Bill 1055 which would extend the deadline by which local school systems would have to accumulate certain data as required by the US Department of Education. He said SB 900 in 2000 had provided an original extension and HB 1055 in 2003 would extend that move since the ability to collect such data still does not exist. The Board voted unanimously to support Mr. Thomas' motion and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler to support HB 1055.

NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENTS TO APF TASK FORCE

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Mr. Thomas, the Board voted unanimously to appoint its member Mark M. Wolkow to be on the County government's Adequate Public Facilities Task Force. The Board also voted unanimously to endorse the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Wolkow that Mrs. Wolf act as the Board's alternate on the APF Task Force. Mr. Thomas said "this task force will be critical" in looking at legislation proposed by County Council Member Dion Guthrie which would lower the threshold at which the granting of development permits would be halted in that attendance area when a school's enrollment to capacity reaches 100 percent. The current regulation cuts off the granting of development rights when school enrollment is 120 percent of state rated capacity.

PRESENTATIONS POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING SCHOOL FACILITIES USE

School System Assistant Superintendent for Operations Joseph P. Licata presented the Board with a first reading of a proposed policy which would change the fee structure and other areas for outside user groups who employ school space to conduct their activities. Mr. Licata said school facilities are used extensively by outside groups for various activities, pointing to 2,500 activities sponsored by outside groups during the 2002-03 school year. He said, as the volume of requests has increased dramatically over the past several years, issues have arisen regarding the priority of use by various groups, the application of reasonable fees for the use of public school facilities, the management of the program, and the development of appropriate procedures to reflect changes in the school and community environment. As a result, he said, the Board had directed the Superintendent to revise the current Board of Education policy and to revise current procedures for the use of public school facilities by outside groups. Mr. Licata told the Board that the fee structure has not been revised in several years and the money collected does not nearly equal the cost to the school system for the use of its facilities by groups which used the buildings from early in the morning, often until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. and on weekends. He said there was no intent with the new policy of curtailing the use of the facilities by legitimate outside groups, but to establish a more uniform procedures of priorities and a more realistic ability to recoup the true cost of that use. Mr. Licata said the top priority for use of buildings would go to those directly related to school activities such as retired teachers groups or PTAs, followed by County government agencies such as Parks and Recreation and civic groups, with commercial organizations at the low end of the priority list. In addition, the fee structure would be on a graduating scale with commercial and religious groups paying relatively more than school-related groups. After extensive discussion on the issue, Board President Troy directed that the proposal be placed on the school system web site and that information be gathered from the public on possible impacts of the new policy. In addition, Mrs. Wolf was empowered to work with Mr. Licata to work in setting up "focus groups" to look at the proposal, which would be brought back to the Board at some point in the future.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS

Supervisor of Planning and Construction Kathleen Sanner addressed the Board on current capital projects underway or planned by her office. She updated the Board on the proposed middle/high school in the greater Abingdon area, currently ticketed to be located on County-owned land off Rt. 924 and Patterson Mill Road. She said the 79-acre site is “near perfect” in that it contains little wetlands and those that exist are at the lower end of the property, offering an ideal spot for a sediment control pond. She said the project has gone through a “clearinghouse” and the next step is for a land use analysis involving a civil engineer. She revealed that the County has reserved a portion (four acres) near the Rt. 924 section of the property as a two-bay fire service substation. She said, before the project can proceed, the land needs to be deeded to the Board of Education. She said there is a need for about 50 acres to site a secondary school (grades six through 12) for about 1400 students. Mrs. Sanner said the system can justify at this point either one building or two separate buildings to house about 900 to 1,000 secondary students over capacity at neighboring schools. Mr. Thomas said the Harkins Commission last year had recommended one middle/high school building for the site. Superintendent Jacqueline C. Haas said, right now, the thought is there would be one middle/high building on the site, but that proposal could change. Mrs. Sanner said the site could support two buildings with 50 acres needed for a high school and 30 for a middle school, but, in sharing the same site, economies could be realized that would not require that full complement of land.

Mrs. Sanner said there is a positive to the sluggish economy in that the bid prices for the scheduled improvements to C. Milton Wright High and Southampton Middle schools came in below estimates.

She said the Aberdeen High School project is proceeding on its revised schedule despite the difficult winter. Mrs. Sanner said that \$700,000 is due from the Federal government to help pay for equipment in the proposed third floor math/science magnet and that the flow of questions coming from the State Interagency Committee for School Construction (IAC) is a good sign that funding from the State to match a \$600,000 County grant to pay for the addition could be forthcoming. She said the building is on target to be finished in time for the opening of the 2004-05 school year – with or without the third floor addition. She added that a meeting is due with the architect on the project to finalize plans in raising the height of the gymnasium ceiling and that a positive result is anticipated.

Mrs. Sanner reviewed other projects, pointing to a very positive session at North Harford High School the previous week with parents and others during which the scope of the modernization project was reviewed. She said similar meetings will be held in the fall and next spring as the construction phase of the project gets set to begin in the spring of 2004 with a three-year completion schedule aimed at having it completed by the 2007-08 school year. She added the Bel Air High School modernization effort is in its beginning discussion phase.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

UPDATE ON HCC/HCPS MATH PILOT PROGRAM

Supervisor of Mathematics Sarah Morris and Director of Secondary Education David Volrath provided the Board with an update on the Transitional Math Pilot classes being held at Bel Air and Edgewood high schools this year. Mrs. Morris explained that Harford Community College has been working with the Harford County Public School System to devise and implement the pilot which is aimed at decreasing the number of HCPS graduates who come to the college unable to qualify to take college level mathematics, requiring that they take remedial courses at their expense before entering credit-level courses. Mrs. Morris and Mr. Volrath reviewed the progress of the courses which were begun this past August at the two schools. The school administrators provided the Board with a series of recommendations from Superintendent Haas that the pilot be continued for a second year at the two schools provided certain criteria was met. Chief among the parameters is that the college continue the waiving of tuition for those high school students taking the course and that it be sensitive to the need to maintain consistency in the texts required for the course.

Mr. Volrath said the school system and the college “needs an added year’s data” in order to determine if the program, which offers a course reviewing the levels of math – fundamentals of math, introductory algebra, intermediate algebra – in which students would need to be proficient in order to enroll directly in credit-bearing college courses.

UPDATE ON FALLSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS

Mr. Licata provided the Board with a status report on the enrollment to capacity situation at Fallston Middle School which has seen the school’s student body rise to 130 percent of its capacity. Mrs. Licata said a review by the Superintendent’s Technical Advisory Committee has resulted in no recommendations to immediately revise the attendance area at Fallston Middle or make other major adjustments. He said the committee has recommended that an Operations Intervention Team (OIT) be assigned to the school in a similar manner that occurred at C. Milton Wright High and Southampton Middle schools last year which resulted in the recommendations for interim changes that would help the school deal with its over-enrollment. Mr. Licata said the team has already visited Fallston Middle (February 4) and has looked at operational issues including the use of the nine relocatable classroom buildings now on site and ways to alleviate the poor circulation that exists at the school. He said a major part of the problem is attributable to cuts in the original construction budget which eliminated an auditorium and swimming pool that would have connected the building in a better traffic flow pattern. He said the two wings of the building would have thus been connected instead of students having to retrace their steps to one central lobby as they move from one wing to the other. He said such proposals as alternative scheduling that would not have all students being dismissed at one time from class, the adding of a stairwell at the southern end of “D” wing, and the addition of an outdoor walkway connecting the main school lobby with the physical education wing are among the early plans. He added that Director of Transportation Norman Seidel is looking into issues caused by the Fallston Middle School’s only ingress/egress sharing access to Carr’s Mill Road with Fallston High School, causing issues during morning/afternoon arrival/dismissal. And, Mr. Licata said, Supervisor of Food Service Karen Sarno is looking into ways of easing congestion during

lunchtime. Mrs. Haas said the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee will provide an advisory to the Board in late April on Fallston Middle and the placement of programs at Darlington Elementary School.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON FALLSTON MIDDLE

DeLane Lewis of Baldwin, a parent of a student at Fallston Middle with two other children due to attend the school, said she is "very upset" at conditions at the school resulting from 175 new students having been redistricted from Southampton Middle School and 110 new enrollees over the summer. She said lunches start at 10:25 a.m. and physical education classes are being conducted in the hallways, adding there is insufficient custodial support.

Mrs. Lewis said the suggestions expressed by Mr. Licata were "insufficient" and the improvements should have been instituted last April.

Ken Mayhew of Fallston said he felt as though the school system was being unfairly criticized and that the real culprit is the County government in not restricting growth. He said the school system needs to keep parents informed so they can ally with the school leadership in advocating for children at Fallston Middle School and elsewhere.

Don Evans of Fallston said the Board of Education had simply passed its problems at Southampton on to Fallston Middle and that the proposed adjustments will not be sufficient to address the current problem as well as those that will be created as the population in the area continues to grow. He said school system projections that the enrollment at Fallston Middle will gradually decrease over the next several years will not come to pass. Mr. Evans said this Board has inherited problems from past Boards which did not stand firm in advocacy for children and urged that the current group "be firm" in its dealings with County officials on growth and other issues.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Troy noted that Maryland's First Lady, Kendel Ehrlich, had visited Prospect Mill Elementary School for the school's Fifth Grade Patriots program the previous week. She added that, contrary to published reports, she has filed with the Harford County Permanent Nominating Caucus for a second term on the Board of Education.

Mr. Thomas, in speaking to those who had come to comment on the Fallston Middle School and overall growth situation, said "every member of this Board of Education shares your frustrations," but, he added "growth drives the economy." He said growth is not only a Board of Education issue but one facing the County Executive, County Council, and Legislative Delegation to Annapolis. He connected redistricting to "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic" and said the issue of growth will be a dominant issue for some time to come.

Mr. Wolkow said he looked forward to serving on the Adequate Public Facilities Task Force and mentioned the Edgewood High School production of "Carousel" coming up at the

school.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Rich, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will hold its last regular business meeting at Edgewood High School on Monday, March 24 (auditorium, 6:30 p.m.) before moving to Havre de Grace Middle School for the final quarter of its meetings during the 2002-03 school year, beginning on April 14.

MORE INFORMATION

The school system is attempting to prevent duplications and reduce production/mailing costs of the printed versions of B-Line. Those who are able to access B-Line on line and who would like their copy of the printed version of the document discontinued should e-mail the Director of Public Information: drmorrison.gs@hcps.k12.md.us; Or call the HCPS Customer Relations Action Line (24-hours-a-day) at 410-638-0022.

In addition, for those who would like to receive emergency or other important school announcements automatically at their e-mail address(es), check the schools-out.com initiative on the home page of the HCPS web site.

For more information on Board meetings or other matters affecting the Harford County Public Schools, contact the system's Director of Public Information, 410-588-5203; or call the HCPS Customer Relations Action Line (24-hours-a-day) at 410-638-0022.

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