



Board Meeting

April 9, 2001

David H. Galbreath, *President*
Eugene C. Chandler, *Vice President*
Thomas D. Hess
Robert S. Magee
Robert B. Thomas, Jr.
Terry R. Troy
Karen L. Wolf
Daniel E. Purcell,
Student Representative
Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Board President **David H. Galbreath** issued a personal apology for "any embarrassment" which he may have caused to the Board or the school system involving the cleanup of a property he co-owns by students from North Harford High School's Environmental Science classes. The agenda was adopted as printed and Mr. Galbreath led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Jonathan Jackson

Bob Thon addressed the Board on the possibility of making bowling a varsity sport. He said, like golf, it would be a non-contact sport which "would not break the bank" and that would not require practice facilities. He added that, beyond transportation and t-shirts, there would be no cost to the Board and that bowling is "America's most popular participation sport that can be participated in by those of any age, gender, or physical strength."

Charles Peacher of Abingdon said he was concerned "as a taxpayer" about the proposal to award a "no-bid" performance contracting program to the Johnson Controls organization. He told the Board that similar cost savings could be

realized through a variety of energy programs and that a number of companies offer such services. Mr. Peacher added that once the Board is locked into a ten-year contract, there is no way it can reverse course.

Henry Himpler of Bel Air told the Board that he felt an incident at Bel Air Elementary School involving a fourth grader bringing a device to a Family Fun Night was not handled properly by the school and the central office. He said the Board policy requires a ten-day suspension for a student who brings a weapon or a look-alike weapon to school and that the student involved was not suspended for that amount of time. He said the rules must be followed absolutely in a zero tolerance atmosphere.

PRESENTATIONS

STUDENT PRESENTATION ON SMOB REPRESENTATION

Members of the Harford County Regional Association of Student Councils including President **Jonathan Jackson**, Vice President **Ian Hull**, **Cevina Epps**, **Adam Berry**, and **Elizabeth Perry** made a presentation to the Board in which they built the case for the Student Representative to the Board to be changed to a Student Member on the Board with partial voting rights. The student leaders said that the representative attends all Board functions providing a student viewpoint, but has only a “preferential vote” which does not impact on Board decisions. “Extending voting rights to the SMOB would strengthen the ability of students to voice their opinions,” the students said.

The student leaders pointed out that 22 school districts in the state have a student representative on the Board and that three have partial voting rights while one school district has a student member with full voting rights. And, they said, the student member of the State Board of Education has partial voting rights. They concluded by saying “effective representation cannot exist without an official student vote.”

UPDATE ON REDISTRICTING

Joseph Licata, assistant superintendent for operations, updated the Board on the status of the redistricting effort. He said the school system had sponsored six meetings during which the public had provided input on the kinds of items which should be included in Board Policies which would govern the circumstances under which redistricting should occur, currently being developed for Board consideration in May. Mr. Licata said a “stakeholder” meeting had been held on March 6th, a series of four regional meetings had been held on March 26 and 27 at the various high school attendance areas in the county, and the superintendent had sponsored a public hearing on April 10th.

Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** said the enrollment at C. Milton Wright High School and Southampton Middle School is currently significantly over capacity and is projected to be even more over capacity in the near future. She said members of her staff have gone to the schools to view concerns created by the over capacity situation and to make recommendations to ease the problem pending any redistricting or other major changes in attendance areas. Board Member **Karen L. Wolf** said she is hopeful that there will be more options to the problem than redistricting. Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** said he is “100 percent opposed” to the placement of any more portables at either building and that the system should begin “to funnel students to other schools immediately” pointing to the possibility of grade levels or classes being sited at feeder schools. Mr. Thomas added that the “timing could not be worse” for possible redistricting which would occur during the late winter and spring of 2002 in time for the beginning of school in September 2002. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the process would occur in the midst of the local political campaign for the November 2002 election. However, Board Member **Robert S. Magee** said the Board had told the public about the need for redistricting and had established a timeline that should be adhered to. “It is our duty” to complete the process, Mr. Magee said, adding that piecemeal redistricting is not in the best interest of the school system. Board Member **Thomas D. Hess** said calling “redistricting” by the name of “enrollment balancing” is just using another name and that it is now too late to make enrollment changes for the 2001-02 school year.

NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted 7 to 0 to approve items on the Consent Agenda, including the Approval of Minutes of the March 12 and 19, 2001 Business Meetings; Approval of the Monthly Report on Personnel; Affirmation of Monthly Report of Contracts; and Award of Contract – Mechanical Equipment Services.

AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR LEASED RELOCATABLE CLASSROOMS FOR ABERDEEN HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Magee, the Board voted 7 to 0 to award a contract to place five leased relocatable classrooms at Aberdeen Middle and High schools at a cost of \$242,303 to EMH Environmental, Inc. The classrooms, the leased cost for which will be phased over three fiscal years, will be put in place to provide space for Aberdeen High School students during the replacement of that school, which will begin this summer.

DISCUSSION

NEW BUSINESS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Thomas said that 163 bills related to public education in Maryland had been introduced during the legislative session which was to conclude at midnight that evening, and that the majority of those bills had failed. In particular, he said the “Negotiations Bill” – HB 518/SB 378 – had been tied up in the Senate Finance Committee by Senator Bromwell and that the action was “good news” for all Boards of Education in the state. He said that HB 29, the Charter School bill, had not moved in the Senate, though SB 604, the least favorable of the charter school bills, had been passed by the Senate. HB 67, the Portable Communications bill, had passed and would take effect on October 1, though it would be up to the local Boards of Education to implement. Mr. Thomas said SB124 Fire and Safety Act passed. School systems will be mandated to teach firearms curriculum in grades K-8. This is an unfunded mandate; HB557 - died; HB251 - died; and SB171 will be studied over the summer. He added the majority of the bills passed were those with local effects, i.e. specific county, state.

Mr. Thomas said he would present the Board with a final report on actions taken by the General Assembly on bills impacting education at the April 23rd Board meeting. Mr. Hess said that Board Policy 02.08.33 prohibiting pagers and other portable communication devices is now against state law and changes will have to be made. Mr. Thomas said the issue may be brought to the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) for consideration. Mrs. Wolf said the student report earlier in the evening on providing a vote for the Student Representative to the Board will require legislative action by the General Assembly, and moved that a subcommittee of the Board be formed to develop a proposal for legislation that would provide partial voting rights for the student on the Harford Board. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Troy and Mr. Magee.

Student Representative **Daniel E. Purcell** said the action would represent a “giant step forward” for students in the county. However, Mr. Hess said the motion pre-supposes that the Board would be in favor of such an action. He added that three districts out of 22 does “not represent a wave” toward providing students the right to vote on Boards. The motion passed 4 to 3 with Mr. Thomas, Mr. Hess and Lt. Col. Chandler dissenting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Haas mentioned the Leadership Academy forum to be held from July 9 through 21 and Mrs. Wolf reminded her that she, Mrs. Wolf, had been assigned to represent the Board at that forum. Mrs. Haas told the Board that the Harford County Health Department is exploring the possibility of using funds derived from the Tobacco Cessation settlement to enforce the 24-hour/365-day ban on tobacco products on school property by issuing citations to those using tobacco products on school property during nonschool time. Mrs. Haas said there is also a proposal which has been received by the school system to place reception/transmission

facilities on light towers at school athletic fields. The commercial providers would extend a light tower at the schools, place the units on the towers, and pay the school system a rental fee. The proposal will be considered by the school system. Mrs. Haas said she wanted to correct a statement made in an "Aegis" article that schools are left to provide for security at after school events from their own budgets.

Mrs. Haas said there is a line item which provides funds to schools for such security. Acting on the motion of Mr. Hess and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and Mrs. Wolf that the firm of Wooden and Benson be commissioned to provide auditing services for the school system's 2000-01 funds. The Board voted unanimously to support the motion. Mr. Thomas said the Board needs to consider whether it will follow its own rules of introducing a topic at a meeting and laying it over for 30 days for public comment before voting on the issue. Mrs. Wolf issued her thanks to the Harford County Permanent Nominating Caucus for its support during the candidates forum held the previous week. Mr. Thomas said he objects to the public meeting involving a presentation by the Sheriff's Office on heroin and the 2001-02 operating budget at the Higher Education Applied Technology (HEAT) Center. He said the room at that location is not large enough to provide for a substantial number of the public to attend (the meeting was subsequently changed to Southampton Middle School). Mr. Galbreath thanked North Harford High School Principal Thomas Gibson and his staff for hosting the Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Magee, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

In addition to the April 17 meeting at Southampton Middle School, the next regular meeting of the Board will be held at North Harford High School on April 23. All regular Board meetings during the April through June quarter will be held at North Harford High.

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.

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