

NORTH ROSE-WOLCOTT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 5, 2013 6:30 PM AUDITORIUM OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

PRESENT: Judi Buckalew, Robert Cahoon, Kari Durham, Kelly Ferrente, Danny Snyder (6:50PM), Gary Sproul, Phil Wagner

Elena LaPlaca, Cinda Lisanto, Robert Magin, John Walker and approximately 100 guests.

ABSENT/EXCUSED John Boogaard

CALL TO ORDER President Kari Durham called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance,

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA Robert Cahoon moved and seconded the following motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. J. Buckalew, R. Cahoon, K. Durham, K. Ferrente, G. Sproul, P. Wagner voted yes.

Be it resolved that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and pursuant to Education Law, approves the agenda of December 7, 2013.

2. COMMUNITY FORUM

Each Board Member introduced themselves and provided a brief synopsis of their background and community involvement.

Kari Durham then provided a detailed synopsis of how the board came to develop the proposal being presented to voters on December 12, 2013.

Program discussions were generated in response to community concerns surrounding the housing of 5th grade students in the same educational setting as 6-8th grade students. The board charged the Curriculum director and Superintendent to gather data to make recommendations regarding instructional delivery models.

Closure of the Florentine Hendrick building in 2011 allowed for immediate savings, and the funds were redirected to augment the remaining three school buildings. This initial board action set the stage for further conversations around consolidations and long-term planning.

The 5 year building condition survey further highlighted top priority repairs needing to be completed. The data and recommendations received in conjunction with a responsibility to balance student enrollment and program with increasing maintenance and operations costs led to a charge to buildings and grounds to study housing of k-6, 7-12 program. On February 26, 2013 the board formalized the initiative and voted to change the delivery of instruction to a K – 6 / 7 – 12 program.

With this programmatic decision made, the buildings and grounds committee began deliberations on best facilities options bearing in mind taxpayer capability and instructional models. The following outlines their propositions to full board:

1. Do nothing except the repairs and maintenance to existing buildings and ignore the program change.
2. Use the existing high school for grades 7-12 and erect a new building for K-6 on a single campus.
3. Use the existing high school for grades 7-12 and add to it to house K-6 on a single campus.
4. Use the existing high school for grades 7-12 use Leavenworth to house K-2 and close North Rose - Wolcott Elementary.
5. Use the existing high school for grades 7-12, use North Rose Elementary to house K-6 and close Leavenworth.
6. Use the existing high school for grades 7-12, use Florentine Hendrick to house K - 6 and close Leavenworth and North Rose - Wolcott Elementary.
7. Use the existing high school for grades 7-12, retain both Leavenworth and North Rose - Wolcott Elementary as K-6 buildings.
8. Erect new bus and maintenance building at High School, use the existing high school for grades 7-12, erect a new K-6 building at the high school, sell remaining acreage at high school and sell all other properties.

The board had to consider the cost of each option to taxpayers and the district, both short term and long term; the program savings and educational improvements both short term and long term; projected enrollment rates for the next 10 years; long-term sustainability costs of each building. Following discussions at full board it was determined that 2 were most feasible and the committee would make a final recommendation after final cost studies.

The recommendation was to support the closing of Leavenworth and North Rose - Wolcott Elementary, to reopen the Florentine Hendrick building with renovations, and enhance the High School building. The Board stated that this decision best supports the fiscal management of the financial resources of the district and provides for the best educational system while respecting the capacity of taxpayers to support education.

Judi Buckalew read excerpts from a brochure dated 1933 where the Board of Education was seeking voter authorization to build the current Leavenworth building. She read:

“A great responsibility rests upon a Board of Education in providing proper educational facilities for its boys and girls. The future of this or any other community is largely determined by the interest and care which is given to its youth,. Somebody has truthfully said “what we are to be we are now becoming.” Indeed your Board of Education feels this great responsibility keenly and has been spending and are spending long and weary hours trying to give the pupils of this community the best educational advantages.

The responsibility now rests squarely upon the voters of this community to decide whether we will go forward or backward educationally.

This is without doubt the most important civic question that has come before this community in many, many years, and the way in which you

decide it will have much to do with the future of Wolcott and vicinity. We cherish for this community the highest in education..."

We, the Board of Education, bespeak your full and loyal support,
Ralph Paddock
Howard B. Palmer
L. Early Henry
Alfred Lander
Arthur Eynor

Mrs. Buckalew noted that the Board of Education of 1933 had the insight and vision to advocate for what they felt was the best education that the community could afford. They also stated their belief that a good education is the lifeblood of the community. As we all know, this bond proposition resulted in the completion of the Leavenworth school building.

At this time Mrs. Durham opened the meeting to questions.

Frank D'Aurizio asked about architects, building plans and final design.

Tom Johnson commented on the cost of renovations compared to renovations taking place in other school districts. He referred to a ranking of NYS schools and where North Rose - Wolcott fell in that ranking.

Laurie Crane commented on the legal wording of the proposition language and questioned state aid payments if buildings were closed. Additionally she asked how much money was in district capital reserve funds as well as the total amount of all reserve funds.

Jason Wanek commented on district plans for buildings if no buildings are closed.

Don Camp asked about asbestos in the buildings and the likelihood that a K-6/7-12 instructional program would be feasible in 3 buildings.

Laurinda Collins voiced concerns about teachers not having enough help in classrooms if positions are eliminated.

Lois Wafler commented on the lack of data available to justify changing the instructional model and eliminating middle school. She also asked about the status of current district bond payments.

David VanFleet had concerns with 7th grade students being educated with high school students.

Nicki Henner voiced concerns about the projected tax levy savings after a 15 year bond would be paid off. She also voiced concerns that there would be no education presence in the Village of Wolcott or in North Rose if the project were approved.

After questioning the projected savings from closing the Florentine Hendrick building, Bob Magin responded that initial projections were roughly \$227,000 per year. The first year the district saved \$227,000; the second year it was \$413,000 and this year the projection is \$426,000.

Concerns were spoken about the board not having concrete plans for building use after closure. Because the capital project has not been voted upon by the community, it is not proper for the board to spend district funds to find a buyer or for repurposing the buildings. Should taxpayer approval be given, the board would form a committee, which includes community members and County organizations to examine the repurposing of school buildings. Buildings would not be demolished.

Board Member, Kelly Ferrente left the meeting at 8:00 PM.

William Denk questioned the cost of maintaining both buildings vs. closing them. Kari Durham responded that Priority One repairs from the most recent Building Condition Survey total approximately \$20,000,000. There will always be repairs and she guaranteed that there will always be capital projects to fund the cost of repairs. The State Education Department does not set parameters on whether or not a building is maintained if closed. The district would continue to receive aid on the facilities, which would cover the cost of maintenance. The board does not wish to see vacant buildings go to ruin.

Mark Humbert stated that he estimates that major repairs could be done for \$7,000,000. He disagrees that a k-6/7-12 program is the best model to deliver educational services to students. He also stated that it is his opinion that the board should have formulated plans for the repurposing of facilities. He questioned the stated amount of \$3,500,000 annually to maintain both the Middle School and North Rose Elementary buildings as fully functioning schools.

Mary Anjo asked if there was truth to the rumor that the Middle School building could be used only for educational purposes. There are no legal documents or Leavenworth family members that can be found to support the claim.

Jennifer Murphy asked if the board would consider allowing the community to vote on three different options rather than just one. Phil Wagner responded that the board has discussed all options repeatedly in open session of meetings for at least two and a half years. The board made this decision as the most fiscally responsible way to sustain education in the community.

Kari Durham thanked everyone for participating in the forum. This task has been difficult for all board members, residents of the community who are dedicated to the duties of ensuring fiscally responsible education now and the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Gary Sproul moved and Philip Wagner seconded the following motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. J. Buckalew, R. Cahoon, K. Durham, D. Snyder, G. Sproul, P. Wagner voted yes.

Be it resolved that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and pursuant to Education Law, approves the adjournment of the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Clerk of the Board of Education