

Date: 12/3/98
To: Members, Board of Education
From: Chris Manaseri
Subject: Backup for First December meeting

It's time to get ready to get together once again for an informative evening about your school and its governance. Here's some of what you need to know to make the evening most profitable.

NON AGENDA ITEMS:

1.0 Charter Schools bill was passed in the Senate along with a 38% pay increase. No word yet on the actions of the Assembly on the charter schools piece, although they also passed the pay increase. Now the Governor gets to veto the pay increase if he doesn't get what he wants. Isn't politics wonderful? Some articles from the recent press on this are included in case you missed them. You are to be commended for being among the active participants among BOE's in at least trying to throw yourselves in front of the tanks. I did see Paul Kirsch and Clay Bishop wrote letters to the editor as well. I've always said I'd rather be right than be in the majority. Thanks for taking the stand.

2.0 Interesting visit this morning from **Dom Paradise**, our Director of PE visiting Kate, Roger and Craig today. Dom always stops in and talks politics a little before he heads down to the gym. As a local town supervisor in Seneca Falls he is very active in county affairs. The interesting thing he had to add today was that he felt we were within inches of hearing about a prison at the Depot. He also felt that we will hear more very soon about the Kidspace organization at the north end and the sale of land at the lake. All of these bode well for us if they mean increased economic activity in the area and some taxable land values added to the rolls. Time will tell how much Dom knows that he's not saying.

3.0 OSHA will be back for what we hope will be a final visit on Monday.

4.0 I met with Ernie Rookey and Paul Yeager this morning about our phase two energy performance work yet to be done. This is the installation of motion sensors in all of our classrooms, so that lights automatically turn off when the room is not in use. We expect work on this to begin December 14 and to be completed within the first weeks of January. BOCES got the contract again as low bidder - so watch out for Mr. Piccolo. Mr. Piccolo had contacted Mike Karslen already as soon as the capital project vote passed, wanting to make some sort of presentation to the Board. He has not called to get on the agenda, but who knows? Your new school law books have reference on pages 413 and 502 regarding bidding. With regard to the EPC, Ernie Rookey is our primary contractor and he may award work to subs as he sees fit - but he does have to make sure that they receive the prevailing wage rate (as per DOL and phase one and Mr. Piccolo's complaint.) All this FYI and in case.

5.0 Friends of the MacDougall Schoolhouse meet on Tuesday night as well - at 7:00. They had requested a school employee or two help them design an educational program to highlight the restoration and use the building. Barb will be at that meeting with some friends from the Seneca Falls Historical Society, and both Bob Ike and Larry Gambee have expressed interest in helping, along with Dave Hubman. We'll see what comes of it. The Friends group is trying to play by all the rules, and is applying for tax-free status and a taxpayer id number for any interest earnings they may have, etc.. Bruce Fullem, the Sampson State Park Superintendent, used to work for the Office of Historic Preservation and knows a lot about this stuff. He is heading the group which includes the Sorensens, Jim Hicks, Charm Dinsmore, and Dionne Carey. Note that Terry has hooked up some outside flood lights for the schoolhouse, and I hope somebody will be hanging a wreath on the front door for Christmas (though NOT paid for with taxpayer dollars). Still seems to be some concern out there that we used tax dollars to fund the schoolhouse project - some misconceptions linger a long time.

6.0 RCS@60 video update. Pete has had some problems which have prevented him from completing our project to date. I had been told October 1, then November, then Thanksgiving and Christmas. I was running an article in the Holiday Bulletin about their availability as last minute Christmas gifts, but I've pulled it because I've come to trust only what I have in hand from Pete at this point. I HOPE they will be ready by Xmas, and you've all got one coming, but I won't hold my breath.

7.0 Regional Instructional Council got a look at our curriculum at a glance efforts last Monday when Barb got asked to help Jack McCabe out when he hadn't done his homework. The assistant superintendent from Newark emailed me the next day with a request to come down and visit to see how we're using it. (That's the second request I've gotten of that nature. Mike Ford, now at Wayne Central, has asked if I would be willing to meet with their administrative team to talk them through applying Docushare).

8.0 Mrs. McNally's response from Mike is enclosed for everyone. She called here to get the Commissioner's phone number the day she received the letter. Apparently she is still not satisfied with the result of our actions.

9.0 Student passing a school bus. Sandy Steele's elementary bus run was stopped with it's lights flashing at the top of the hill near Eliotto's trailer park yesterday when she was passed by one of our high school students. When asked if I wanted to direct the officer in how to respond, I bowed out, suggesting that everyone knows the law and I wouldn't want to ask a favor for a kid that I wouldn't ask for any adult. Consequently I expect there will be one unhappy child issued a ticket with a mandatory fine and a loss of license soon. Just in case you hear about it from an angry parent at or before our meeting.

10.0 Non-resident Tuition Worksheet. SED sent me something new this year - the actual calculations used to compute the tuition we could legally charge to non-resident students if our policy required it. I include for you the last page only - that showing the bottom line numbers. I include it, not because I advocate for charging tuition, but to highlight for you the cost differences between elementary and secondary and special education students. IF you were to charge tuition, these are the figures you would have to use to stand up to any legal challenge. These are calculated on what is called the "Seneca Falls Formula" which is the accepted standard for all schools.

I also mention this to you because class size issues are something we always look at when we begin the budget process. I would think before you hired teachers (without additional money to do so) in order to lower class size, you might want to know how many non-resident kids we have (53 total K-12) and what we could be charging for them.

11.0 Student Teachers: We have three lined up for Spring though Ithaca College. One with Joy Terry, one with Nancy Bauder, and one with Sheridan Davenport. Getting new young faces into our classrooms can be a good experience for our kids and for the supervising teachers as well. We've had good experiences recently through Cortland State and it's nice to have another source looking to us for placements.

12.0 Standards Operating Aid Plan: The legislature (those friends of ours in Albany) came up with a special category of aid last year, to help make sure that everybody got something when the basic formula didn't accomplish that goal. Their solution? Create a new category and give everybody something in it! The catch? We have to submit a plan for how we will spend all \$24,000 in order to improve our student's ability to reach the standards. Originally we were told about the requirement of a plan at our November CSO meeting (on the 20th), and you were to act on approval of such by December 15. Seeing the consternation on many superintendents' faces when this was announced, the powers that be have put the BOE deadline back to the end of January for this year. I tell you this now, so that when you see a plan on the docket for a vote next month, you won't be as surprised as I was to hear about it.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.0 Special Presentation on special education and technology. Ann Sepe will show us the voice recognition software she is using very successfully with some of her disgraphic students. This was a special purchase we made at her request out of end-of -year funds last summer. Ray Fox and Barb Quinn worked with Ann on selecting a machine and software which would meet the needs she saw. It's pretty amazing stuff and Ann will walk us through the positive impact it has made on several of her students in the first quarter of this school year. We'll even let one of you don the headphones, do some reading into the computer and see how it works! Volunteers should be here early. We'll be going down to Ann's room for the demonstration.

2.0 Another Special Presentation will be an 8 -minute video promoting XEROX's Docushare product and the use to which we among all the schools in the BOCES have put it. You may recall that Xerox had contracted with a film producer from New Jersey and that we were to be the featured school for background footage. It came out very nicely. You will see our kids using computers and teachers Mike Pane and even Marge Larrabee at work on a terminal! This was premiered at the New York State Conference on Computers and Technology in Education Conference held last week in Albany. We looked good as a District - and that's something we're glad to share with others.

3.0 Routine will be. You will not have a warrant in this packet but will see one at the table. Gloria has been at conference this week and comes back tomorrow.

4.0 Discussion of CBO and authorization of special meeting in January. Last time out I gave you the report from Larry Driscoll hot off the press. As I look at it and the numbers, I become more and more convinced that it is a smart move. Please look over the report and let's take a few minutes to clarify those concerns you may have which we can talk about openly, before we get into a joint meeting. Maybe we should generate a list of questions we want to take to that session - just to help liven it up. Please mark your calendars for Monday January 11, 1999 and plan to attend in Seneca Falls.

5.0 Budget calendar. I'm getting older and more cynical, I think. We talked about limiting the Saturday session to once, and eliminating the fire hall fieldtrips. The calendar enclosed reflects that and the State-wide vote date. That alone may be excuse enough when added to our low turn out in recent years. Everyone in the State will know it's vote day and the papers will be filled with comparative data on budget and tax levy increases.

6.0 Barb and Mike will give you brief updates if they are back from their conflicting meeting and ball game, respectively.

7.0 The latest Christians have been selected for the **cafeteria**....

8.0 And we have some **CSE** minutes to sanction.

Looks like a short night to me. 9 O'clock tops? See you at 7:30 ready to be wowed by technology once again.

CM/CM