

Date: 1/7/99
To: Members, Board of Education
From: Chris Manaseri
Subject: First meeting of 1999

Well, this is for Tuesday night's meeting, so I guess technically it's be the SECOND meeting of the year. Most of you I trust will be in Seneca Falls at 8 p.m. on Monday night to talk with Larry Driscoll and two other Boards about the potential of actually sharing a service (and not just talking about doing so). This meeting will give us a chance to follow-up on that discussion and either take the lead or hedge...

NON - AGENDA ITEMS:

1.0 EPC work continues with some delay. Motion sensors are now installed in the original building upstairs and down, and we are waiting for a series of replacement parts in order to do the rest of the building which has univents. Wrong relays were specked to begin with. Hallways cannot be done yet for a similar reason - wrong sensors were ordered. But - in the Board room and our secondary classrooms, the lights go on and off automatically when you enter a room now, or off if you don't move around enough. New parts should be here next week and we look to finish the job by end of month.

2.0 Charter Schools follow-up: I asked for a clarification of how many non-resident students we now have and which schools they come from as a precursor to a new idea. Since we can't fight the charter school movement, why not try to take advantage of it? **IF YOU WISH** me to do so, I will investigate and keep track of the emerging picture of charter school conversions. There would be dangers (a charter is only good for five years and then they can close you down), there would be hassles (which programs would we choose to keep and which would we dump if given the chance for real?), and there would be benefits (mostly financial in tax moneys from our neighbors and in reduced costs made by program cuts of no-longer mandated items). We have on January 4, 1999 some 63 students going to Romulus who do not reside here. We ARE a school of choice already for these people. What we don't get is the local tax money from the school where they should be going - and under the new legislation that could mean a lot of money with these numbers. If we weren't getting any attendance aid on any of these kids now (claiming them as residents) we could earn as much as \$315,000 on these kids! Some of that we are already getting - but far less than half.

FYI - The breakdown is: Geneva- 7 (4 staff); Seneca Falls -3; Waterloo -2; South Seneca - 48 (14 staff); and Other - 3 (all staff). By grade level the number of non-residents attending RCS is: Kind.-5; 1st- 6; 2nd- 3; 3rd -10; 4th -5; 5th - 0; 6th - 6; 7th -4; 8th -6; 9th - 4; 10th - 4; 11th- 5; 12th- 5. As you can see the preponderance of kids coming here are from South Seneca, they are not mostly staff kids as often thought, and, with the exception of third grade and fifth, they are fairly evenly distributed across grade levels. Our argument of no-big deal in terms of cost probably still holds true, and in the old days we would probably lose a bunch of these if we did charge tuition, BUT with NEW rules coming out, it might be worth a look. Let me know your thoughts. It would be a very interesting exercise in local politics and decision-making.

Also on Charter School topic - see Commissioner's newsletter and the "strong" stance he takes in it.... Not the level of leadership I would hope for on so potentially costly a piece of legislation, enacted in so cowardly a fashion.

3.0 Prison Update. The FL Times article over Xmas about the public hearing on the environmental impact of the proposed prison wasn't kidding! As we discussed I would last time, I attended an initial meeting of a Community Planning Task Force on Monday night this week, along with Tom Reilly. We were both somewhat surprised by the sure-footedness of this project at this point as the attached copy of my paycheck memo to staff indicates. This is a done deal

and we can expect trucks rolling in with building supplies by April! Tom and I will be able to keep you up to speed on things as they develop here, as well. But it looks like develop they will and QUICKLY!

4.0 Kidspace: No further word from Roland Smiley inviting me to any meetings about this development - yet. We can expect that to take off soon, however, and I did speak with Glenn Cooke about getting a representative to a Board meeting as soon as things are officially announced. That seems to me to make the most sense. Let them come to talk to ALL of us, rather than one or two of us get in the middle.

5.0 Lakefront: Glenn Cooke tells me also that we may not have a contract in place with a developer for the lakefront housing at the Depot in time for March 1, the normal taxable status deadline. He says, however, that negotiations are continuing and look promising. The IDA is trying to get some agreement that low-income housing would not be part of the redevelopment there or at Elliott Acres. That is particularly important in light of the prison development. Cheap rental property and low-income housing could contribute to a certain amount of following the prisoner syndrome for our community. That was pooh-poohed by the Department of Corrections people on Monday night, BUT we don't need to pave the way to invite the problem either.

6.0 Speaking of Paving: the recently approved capital project work is still all planning development by the architect for submission to Albany. Survey of lot and landscaping needs has been done, test borings authorized at our last meeting have not been done yet, and I called this morning for a status report. Should be able to tell you a little more about timeframes, etc., by Tuesday. Bottom line is that I won't promise anybody anything will be done by next school year except the RAITN room (that because we've got a grant, too). Other items will be contingent upon SED approval of plans and they are being inundated. Add to that delay the prison construction and bids should be very interesting by the time we get there. (Late spring at best?)

7.0 4TCC program starts here on Thursday afternoon next week. I've referred coordination of this effort and the teen leadership effort (8 of our kids who wanted among other things to start something new for kids afterschool) to Dave Hubman. See enclosed copy of Untied Way newsletter with some of our kids conspicuously in the thick of things. Volunteer chaperones are sought - if any of you are interested. The program from four-towns is meant to be a drug diversion kind of thing, and is run on grant money one industrious and perseverant parent secured last year. Program is a "mobile rec center" meeting one day per week in Ovid, Lodi, Interlaken and Romulus. My hope is that our kids interest will dovetail well into this effort. Copy of flier was distributed at last meeting.

8.0 School Board of Tomorrow: Democracy of the Net article is enclosed for the bravest of you. See how political the Board of Education is in some communities? Anybody got that kind of time to spare? (YOU are the most technologically savvy BOE in the area in your use of Docushare).

9.0 Superintendent Evaluations: It's that time again for semi-annual evaluation. If you can do these and return same by 1/15, I'll tabulate for an exec at our January 26th meeting. See enclosed.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.0 Routine is not all included in your packet. Gloria is out ill toady and has a vacation day scheduled for tomorrow. She will not be able to run warrant therefore and include in your packet. It will be on the table on Tuesday. Sorry.

2.0 Conferences are approved by the supervisors as appropriate and we ask you to do the same.

3.0 BOCES Computer upgrade: This is a major move and I want you to go into it with your eyes open. This is the replacement of our computer lab machines (originally installed in July and August 1993). This is also the conversion of our network from a token-ring system to an ethernet system capable of running streaming video and other applications which will be coming down the pike and for which we are ill-prepared with token-ring networking. This is also an upgrade to Windows '95 and full Y2K compliance for all our machines except the ones we are replacing and reusing. The technology changes and we were following the 1993 standards when we put the system in place. Year 2000 standards are different from those, as you understand if you've got a 1993 computer in your home still (like I do).

We discussed this back in November. The plan would be to use the \$147,000 we are currently underspending in our BOCES special ed costs to fund the bulk of this work. We are now half-way through the school year and the BOCES special ed numbers are holding (so far). I believe that the combination of staff salary savings from the incentive (over 100K), the Tom Cummings money we expect to receive (over 60K), and this underexpenditure of BOCES special ed services will allow us to make this major upgrade to our technology framework all within the confines of our budget and without an amendment to it (or an increase in overall expenditures). Given that, I believe it is the right thing for you to do at this time and strongly recommend it.

By signing the SAA now, we can be well assured of a summer install. We will likely run the cabling ourselves to save money and avoid BOCES wiring crew scheduling and delays, although I am expecting a bid from them on the cost of doing that for us as well. I have already taken the step of modifying our proposed aidable expenditures at BOCES to include an additional \$150,000 so that our aid on this lease-purchase would arrive next year. (Read - by spending the money this way, we up our BOCES aid by \$100,000 for next year - helping our revenue side of the new budget considerably). NB- If we don't spend it the projections will be wrong, but we won't actually see any aid on what we don't spend. The state aid projections likely to flow from the governor's office soon should show this plan in place and will likely show, therefore, an increase in aid to RCS that we are manufacturing in this way.

We would plan to take the BOCES tags off the old machines and install them in two places: one- in the current Mac lab, which will become Nancy Bauder's classroom as she does much with word-processing and research now; and two- in the reference section of the library where we have only six machines currently. All of these older machines will be fine for internet searches and word-processing until they break down at which point we will need to evaluate the wisdom of repairing versus replacing them. The best of the current Macs would go to Bob Kohler's room to provide additional mech drawing stations and to actually flesh out the design of that room from the 1993 project. We would double our available lab space for kids, provide a new classroom for added staff in the secondary in replacing the Mac lab, and increase next year's state aid by spending this year's money differently than we had planned, all while upgrading our whole system to Windows '95 and Office '97. See enclosed unofficial SAA - FYI.

4.0 Transfer allows me to show you -and the public- where the bulk of the money to pay the bill for this upgrade will come from. Additional moneys would be transferred from salary items later this year as we close out accounts.

5.0 Discussion of CBO: This part is yours to run with. I have put my fingerprints all over this process from the start, and while I believe it can and will work, YOU are the ones who will have to live with the repercussions of this change either way. If you can say to the taxpayers that you looked at a way to save \$60,000 or more (3% of the levy last year) and chose NOT to do that for whatever the reasons, so be it. But that's the argument I'm most concerned with. We have done three efficiency studies in the six years I've been here and the only one we've done much with is the one that was ours and ours alone. Otherwise, we talk about sharing a whole lot, but we don't end up doing much of it. I'll be interested to sit back and listen to you folks share your thoughts.

6.0 Resolution to Participate in a CBO: you can approve it, you can veto it or you can table it. Your call. And you're the first ones who will be able to act so quickly after Monday night's meeting.

7.0 Barb and Mike will update you on the post-Holiday edition of their areas.

8.0 Home schooled children and participation in extracurricular activities. Mike tells us that this is a growing concern among the AD's. Our stance has historically been, if you want to participate in our extracurricular offerings, you have to participate in our curricular ones, and if you participate in our curricular offerings we want you to participate in extras as well. Most of our home-schoolers (about a dozen kids from five families) don't want anything at all from us except our blessing on their project. I do not think we want to open the door to more than that.

9.0 Family Medical Leave request for Amy Perry (tiny Amy Perry) is requested from March forward and should be approved without question.

10.0 We want to **shift some folks** around in the teacher aid department. Kelly Kaufman has been subbing long-term here and we want to give her the newly created probationary slot, while bringing newcomer Lori Fort in as a long-term sub. Barb can explain more at the table if you need it, but basically we're trying to reward the people that already work for us and bring new folks in into temporary positions when available.

11.0 We close with an appointment of Michelle George-Mason to produce another one of her marvelous elementary dramas, and approval of CSE and CPSE recommendations for recent actions by those committees.

This should make for a very entertaining evening with some very important decisions on the table. CBO and a major computer system upgrade are not just business as usual items. Getting both of those off the table before we get into budget discussions next time out will be helpful.

Hope to see you all Tuesday.

CM/CM

Attachments