

Date: 4/22/99
To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Chris Manaseri
Subject: Backup for April 28, 1999

It's a rainy Thursday morning here at school during vacation week and time to get this memo and the Board Packet off my mind. Here goes...

1.0 School Safety issues are in the news again, unfortunately. Ironically, last Thursday, Brett Carruthers the risk management guy who works with NYSIR our insurers was here to visit on this topic. He found our elementary door with the sign on it saying it is locked after 9:30 wide open, and has some concerns for our three entryway plan anyway. He particularly likes the move of transportation closer to the north entry and the office proximity of Barb to the small lot, but remains concerned about the gym entrance being unguarded. I spoke with him Tuesday. He responded fairly well to the video-surveillance idea, but would prefer that we route all visitors to the north end and badge them. Barb and Mike and I will discuss his recommendations. Unfortunately these are legitimate concerns nowadays, even in Romulus.

2.0 Building Work is underway on the office moves. Mike Barry and company have been busy preparing the new transportation office in the old tax / wellness room. Terry says we may be able to move Mary before the school year is out. Also Terry informs us that the BOCES wiring crew plans to begin our stringing new cable for ethernet connections this coming Monday. They will work after hours and unobtrusively so that we can get the new computers hooked up as early in the summer as BOCES will allow us. Target date for Windows 95 and Office 97 is now August 1. Bill for this did show up on the last BOCES bill, and the word is almost all of the equipment is sitting in Newark now, so things should progress nicely. White building is being emptied this week as well, so we are now technically remediated for OSHA compliance.

3.0 Visited Leanne yesterday and she is making very slow progress. Her headaches are coming back and she's still struggling with vertigo of varying degrees. She sees the ENT guy again on Wednesday, and needs to start planning now to be well enough to attend Kevin's graduation from Clarkson in May. Also some concerns about scheduling some surgery which needs to wait until she's off the current medication. It's likely to be a while. Still muddling by in the office at this point, but may look for some part time help as things get busier around the vote and all. Madeline Preston has agreed to honcho the vote itself and I will be meeting with her on that in the next few days.

4.0 CBO is all quiet at this point. News about John Baker is now public as an ad appeared in the D&C last weekend looking for a business manager to share between Waterloo and Romulus. I took a call from Kay Huntone yesterday with some interest. Nothing yet on anyone else. Timing will be important on this as we'll want to get our share established soon after the new budget year begins. Liaison with CBO and State Ed on monetary items will be high on my list for this person for Romulus's needs.

5.0 Phelps folks do want to give me one more chance (I think probably just to see what I'll look like this time). I go back as one of three on Thursday May 6. The names of Mike Ford, John Cooper and I will likely be made public to the staff at PCS on Monday, and I will make a small note of it as routinely as possible here in next week's paycheck memo. This FYI and out of courtesy to you in advance. Thanks for keeping it relatively quiet.

6.0 Foundation Group meets again on Monday night the 26th at 7PM in Jim Delia's room, to discuss the McCormick Group proposal and any other options they might want to consider.

7.0 Drug Survey Response Group plans to meet May 4 at 7 in the Board Room.

8.0 4 County Board Association is planning a **RAITN** awareness presentation in May that we may want to attend. Our room plan is still on for a September opening, and Dave Hubman tells me we have 9 kids signed up for sign language at 7:45 AM - BEFORE school even starts! That's encouraging....

9.0 Graduation participation: You will note a little extra verbiage at the beginning of the agenda for Wednesday night about public to be heard. I'm not certain if they will choose to do so, but Josh Cooley's parents may wish to come to the meeting to ask the Board to consider a quick change in your policy about participating in Graduation Ceremonies. Josh has failed economics and has failed the make up class we arranged for he and three others who also failed the half-year course in the Fall. (One passed, three did not). His parents seem to understand that he will not earn his diploma by June, and that he will need to attend summer school to do that. What they don't understand or appreciate is our policy that states very specifically that students who do not earn the diploma do not participate in commencement exercises. They met with Mike about this. The met with me about this. Now they would like to meet with you about this. The Board makes the policy, the administration enforces it, and we have passed the buck to you.

Both Mike and I support the current policy. For over 15 years now, I have had to make unpleasant phone calls as late as the day before graduation to let parents know that their child did not make it and would not be wearing a cap and gown on stage with his/her classmates. I am used to it and support the decision to maintain that standard. To do anything less would make those 15 years worth of phone calls a joke.

Romulus has history with this issue. Apparently in 1991, a young man failed to make the grade by one credit. Steve Frey denied him participation in graduation. Mike Zona, a Board member took a call from the parent and intervened finding in print in the School District Calendar that students within a credit would be allowed to participate but receive an empty folder, not a diploma. That happened at the last minute, and Steve was forced to recant. The young man participated and there was disruption of some sort about it. Thereafter the policy was changed in writing and on purpose to avoid any ambiguity.

If you don't draw the line at the total number of credits necessary, where do you draw it? One credit shy? A member of the senior class in September? 12 years worth of time no matter what the grades earned?

I mention that the Cooleys may or may not come, as Mike has clarified two things for them since I visited with them last Thursday. One: Josh can participate in grad night, class pictures, and other social accouterments of graduation, including attending it as a spectator - just not the ceremony itself as a graduate. Two: Josh failed to turn in a major research paper assignment for English by its Friday before vacation deadline, and that may jeopardize his candidacy by an additional unearned credit. If they do come, and wish to talk about their son's situation, we may want to call an executive session to protect their interests and his. Certainly you should listen. Certainly you should sympathize. What isn't certain is that you should change your policy because you'd like things to be different for this family and this young man.

Should you choose to change policy, in order to let this young man graduate with his class, you need to act quickly, either doing so at the meeting, or referring it to committee ASAP, as you require yourself to allow a 30 day notice of any change to policy before it becomes new policy. That is also a wisdom of experience meant to avoid shooting from the hip and having long lasting implications.

I am uncertain of how much time this will take of our evening, if any, but wanted you to have a fairly thorough understanding of the issues before you're hit over the head out of the blue. You may have already received phone calls, as I did give the Cooleys your names and numbers so

they might approach you ahead of the meeting individually. They know however, that you can only act as a Board, not as individual members.

My advice? Refer it to committee away from the heat of the parental presence and give it a week or two to clear up. Then listen to the committee recommendation. That avoids the knee-jerk reaction either way.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1.0 Public to be heard in case.

2.0 Routine Items

3.0 BOCES Board seats. We have a race! Three seats and four candidates. We were apparently heard last year when we complained about not having any information, as this year they've started a new bio sheet. I enclose the background material forwarded to me for your perusal, as well as any campaign letters received. We do need to do a roll call vote on the three you select, so please give it some thought.

4.0 BOCES Administrative budget should be approved. My rule of thumb for you is what I would hope our community would live by as well. If you don't come to any of the meetings about the budget, don't vote no on it. You have always been supportive of our efforts to utilize BOCES services and to maximize aid to RCS in the process. This BOCES administrative budget includes the rental of the CBO in Seneca County, so you have even more politically correct motivation to approve it.

5.0 Approval of our Budget Resolution for inclusion in the voting booth on May 18 should be given without much question at this point. Three months of planning three drafts and nine reviews, we should be where we want to be. And under the 3% tax impact you asked for last July!

6.0 Cindy Meckley is willing to come in as long-term sub for Bea Bennett who had a baby boy last night! Please approve her so doing.

7.0 CSE should be routine acknowledgment only.

There. Depending on the visitors we may or may not have, we could have a very short meeting! See you Wednesday!

CM/CM

Attachments