

Memo

To: Members, Board of Education

From: Chris Manasari

CC: Administrative Team

Date: 11/22/2022

Re: Meeting of October 26

This missive and your packet need to go out a day early this week (Thursday), as Leanne and I will be playing Norm and Cornelia and Anne all day tomorrow in Syracuse. Despite that, I think we can construct an agenda for the evening that will accomplish our needs and still get us home in time for the third inning...

NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.0 **Capital project** update involves bid opening this afternoon. Now comes the time to see if our estimates are anywhere near what the market will bear. As we will also be trying to get this in the mail this afternoon, we cannot wait for the results to see if there are any we might need to reject and rebid. Also expect that Allen Kosoff will bring us down a colored rendering of the entryway to see if we want white or bronze window and doorframes. We did receive the certificate of aid we had been promised, so all is in order for the 1.3 million in State money to help pay for the work.
- 2.0 **RAITN room** should be fully functional tomorrow. The T1 line was installed yesterday on site - at long last, Tburg Tel has been short staffed and has not been able to handle the extra work this involved in a short turn around time despite our pressure to do so. Ron Baker from RAITN is due in today to take care of the final connections and tests. While our kids and staff have been patient and wonderful about using the video swap system we worked out, it will be very nice to be up to speed as we should be. Also on this topic- the consortium with which we are involved for grant funding on RAITN has decided that since Clyde Savannah pulled out, we will spend their share of the money to put laptops in each of our RAITN rooms (instead of giving it back to the feds). Not sure how or when we will pull this off, but the conversation is around 20 laptops per district and wireless connections to the Internet within the RAITN rooms.

- 3.0 **Rural Schools** program is gearing up for its legislative position paper. I attended a planning session yesterday in Cortland for this. I include a couple copies of paperwork for your reference about where the money went last year, how much actually came and how little came to us. We will use this sort of data when speaking to our legislators at lobbying time, and you may wish to do the same. These charts show that when you take out transportation and building aid - money that we need to spend to get aid back on - all of Seneca County got only a 1.48% state aid increase last year - \$477,000 to be split (unevenly) between four districts. Certainly not enough to even cover the pay raises we owe our employees. Nothing new - but the question becomes how long can this continue? Also note where our AOE (Approved Operating expense per Pupil) of \$5,072 falls on Mike's chart and where our tax rate of \$16.17 per thousand falls.
- 4.0 **DocuShare** training was provided to Dr. Marinelli and other members of the Seneca County Partners for Children Collaborative here at RCS last Thursday. We closed the upstairs lab for the morning and hosted a dozen or so dignitaries from other schools (Doug Chappell and Randy Bos among them) along with county department heads, etc. BOCES is making the software available to the group, and what better place to train for technology than Romulus? It was nice to be in that position.
- 5.0 **Labor Management Committee** had its fall meeting on Monday, and Mike can attest that we danced around prenegotiations issues for an hour and half. We know that we won the last negotiations - 4 years at less than 3%. We also know that we need to bump our starting pay up for non-teaching positions and that we are hurting ourselves by not offering partial payment for retiree health benefits. (Both Karen Gaul and Beth MacPherson came to see me about the last incentive only to discover that their benefits would not cover half the cost of their insurance). So we think we need to get copies of the contracts and the salaries for Geneva, Waterloo, Seneca Falls and South Seneca, run an average and bring our folks up to par. It may seem excessive, but it would only be fair. I will prepare that material for what we anticipate to be an opening session in February.
- 6.0 **School Boards Conference** is in Syracuse tomorrow and Saturday. Norm, Cornelia and Anne may want to fill us in on their impressions.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1.0 I have us starting early this week (note 7:00 start time) so our consultant and guest presenter can get home to Oswego at a decent hour. I have asked **Ed Lisk** to come speak with you directly to review the report he submitted to me on Tuesday of this week - a copy of which is included for your close perusal please. In a nutshell, Ed suggests we hire a third music teacher ASAP, that that person be an instrumental person with some experience (preferably tenured elsewhere) and that we then move Pete to the elementary and let the new person "take off" with the high school program. Ed's report is much more detailed than that thumbnail sketch, and includes quotas we should use as targets for participation in the music program at all levels. He sees us realistically doubling the size of the band in three years if we follow his recommendations. One of his recommendations is also to let the marching program die if it must rather than make it mandatory, and that we consider not allowing elementary students to march at all, especially if what we want is a return to the glory

days of competition. Well - that's a mouthful and maybe a little hard to swallow. How do we afford this if we want to do it? A reminder that I told you we had salary savings from retirements which are still in the budget. Here's how it would work:

Marge Larrabee to Sue Schrader	Bobbi Nelson to Jim Mason to Kate Essom
\$55,000 - \$32,000	\$55,000 to \$17,000 - wash- 8,000 to 17,000
\$23,000	\$38,000 minus 9,000 = \$29,000
Net salary budget available = \$52,000	

Given the fact that if we did hire for the second semester, we'd only need half a year's salary, we would likely need about \$20,000 of that, still leaving us money for supplies, equipment and even carry-over into next year.

SO - You can afford it, the outside consultant (whom I've never met before in my entire life, *believe me*) recommends it, the administration recommends it, the teachers on staff recommend it, and it is close to the same plan that we asked you to consider in July. Is this a really hard decision?

Please review Ed Lisk's report carefully - note that he tells the administration to solve the scheduling problems which he sees, that he tells us to hold everyone accountable to the percentage of participation quotas even and most importantly at the elementary level, and that he tells the music teachers themselves what level of play is expected and that NYSMA participation is a must. I think he spreads the blame and responsibility around pretty well. While I had never heard of him before, he certainly comes highly recommended and certainly has a list of credentials, including other consultant and instructional arrangements, which make it hard to believe he found time to say yes to our little old request for assistance. Ed is relatively local - having worked in Red Creek before Oswego, has experience in exactly what we're looking for - building programs, and would be available to come back and help us monitor our progress toward the goals he thinks are achievable for us. He isn't somebody I knew, or our music teachers recommended, he's very anonymously selected thanks to the power of the Internet and email and the state music teachers organization. Objective, outside point of view is what you asked for...I think it's what you got. PLEASE pick Ed's brain while he's here with you, ask questions of him (not me afterward), and please don't be shy. If we didn't want the opportunity for interaction, we could have just had him send in his report and recommendations.

- 2.0 After Ed's presentation, we'll deal with the routine before asking you to return to the issue and actually create a third music position in the district. We might as well get moving if we're gonna and know about it if we're not. My recommendation is that we do this now, test the market, and back off if necessary to wait for the next budget cycle if we don't find who we're looking for. Ed thinks we can, even at mid-year.
- 3.0 Approval of bids for work on the capital project is listed with blanks at this point. Bid opening is this afternoon and there's no telling how smoothly or how thoroughly it may go ahead of time. If we're lucky we'll have people we know doing work for us within the price ranges we established. If we're not lucky we may need to rebid and try again.

- 4.0 Barb and Mike will concentrate on the 4th and 8th grade Math and English Language Arts results which we just received in yesterday's mail. We know what our kids did, and in general they look pretty good, but we don't yet have any regional or state comparison data. Why that is I'm not exactly certain, but we are dealing with New York State here, folks.... Maybe by Tuesday there will be some greater clarification around cut off scores and remediation requirements and comparative data.
- 5.0 We hope to have a personnel appointment for the cleaner position you created two meetings ago. Final interviews are occurring as I type.
- 6.0 We do have some substitute appointments and CSE minutes to round out the evening.

There we go, folks. Short and simple. Let's see if it really is.