

NORTON BOARD OF EDUCATION – 07-06
Regular Meeting February 26, 2007

Vice President Leonti called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the High School Library.

Those present:

Mrs. Laura Leonti, Vice President
Mrs. Diane Farmer, Member
Ms. Lisa Stemple, Member
Mrs. Karen Wilson, Superintendent
Mrs. Stephanie Hagenbush, Treasurer
Mr. Ken Caldwell, Business Manager
ABSENT: Mrs. Cindy Webel, President
Mr. Scott Collins, Member

EXECUTIVE SESSION

07-37 ***Mrs. Farmer*** moved that the Board of Education enter Executive Session at 6:01 p.m. to discuss the employment of personnel.

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs. Farmer, Mrs. Leonti, Ms. Stemple
NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

Invited into Executive Session were Stephanie Hagenbush, Paul Pendleton and Maynard Bauer.

Vice President Leonti called the meeting back to public session at 7:20 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- a. Wrestling Room Presentation – Mr. Chris Williams and Mr. Rich Mehok gave an overview of the Wrestling Room project.
- b. Sue Hamilton read the following letter from NCTA

Norton Classroom Teachers Association would like to express its deep concern over the recent action of this Board. Our Association has worked so hard to overcome the US against Them mentality, to form a team. Then decisions are made with total disregard for members of that same team. These actions, while driving a wedge between NCTA and the board, have only made us stronger in our belief that it is never wrong to do the right thing.

We take particular offense to the recent written response to one of our most highly regarded members when he was told “You have been misinformed. Dave Weber was not non-renewed he resigned” Yes it is true that Mr. Weber resigned. He did so in response to a

meeting with the superintendent, the high school principal, assistant principal and the NCTA president where he was informed that “The BOARD has decided not to renew your contract as football coach” So, please do not insult our intelligence with such a blatantly false statement. It does very little to build trust in our relationship. You did it! At least take ownership for your actions.

While it would seem that the dismissal of a coach is the problem, that action is simply a result of a much deeper and more serious problem. The Ohio School Boards Association sets forth guidelines and ethics for School Boards and their members. While OSBA has no legal powers they provide leadership for what a school board and its members should and should not do in the ethical operation of a district. This board is either not aware of these guidelines or chooses to ignore them.

Some of these guidelines are as follows:

A board member should be a skilled decision-maker; however, decisions are only made by the board as a whole at a PUBLIC meeting.

It would appear that this did not happen with the football-coaching job. The coach was informed of a decision not to renew his contract. It would appear that either we were lied to or the decision took place in a closed meeting. If the case is the latter it is a clear violation of the Sunshine law and will be reported to the Ohio Department of Education.

*The board is a policy making body and members are the chief advisors to the superintendent on community attitudes. Board members **DO NOT** manage the day-to-day operations of the school.

Why does this then seem to be the rule in Norton rather than the exception?

*Board members are not education professionals. They do not evaluate staff other than the superintendent and treasurer, nor do they become involved in employment interviews other than those of the superintendent, business manager and treasurer.

There seems to be a long-standing tradition here that board members sit or run every interview committee we have. The best way to multiply power is to divide it the best way to possess it is to give it away. Let the professionals do their jobs!

*A good board member avoids administrative decisions or any attempts to second-guess the administration. The superintendent is the chief administrator and the board has NO administrative function.

Let me repeat that! NO ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION.

In closing we see a great divide not between the Membership and the Administration but between Norton City Schools and the Norton Board of Education. You have awakened a sleeping giant! We are nearly 200 strong and stand together in our resolve to do what is right do it the right way. It is our hope that the board reexamines their role, becomes the policymaking body that the community deserves and returns the day to day functions to the administration where it belongs.

Karen Wilson, Superintendent, read the following response:

There are some strong allegations in the statement that was just read and I feel that I must respond to a few of them.

The statement was made, “decisions are only made by the board as a whole at public meetings.” This is true, however, the executive session is an exception to the requirement that all meetings must be held in public. The executive session is for discussion only and no action can be taken. The session is for the sole purpose of the consideration of specific matters, one of them being, “To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.”

On November 20, 2006, prior to the regular meeting, the board went into executive session to discuss the employment of personnel for the upcoming year. The head football coach position was one of the topics discussed. From the tone of the discussion, I suspected that Mr. Weber was not likely to be re-hired. All supplemental contracts are non-renewed each year and in the spring of each school year, new contracts are placed on the Board agenda for approval.

As the winter break approached, I became concerned that I should forewarn Mr. Weber because I knew that when he returned to school in January, he would begin coming to school at 6:30 a.m. to supervise the weight room and purchasing equipment for the upcoming season. Also, there was the possibility that Mr. Weber might wish to apply for a coaching position elsewhere.

I met with Mr. Weber and the high school administrative staff on December 8th. At this meeting, I stated, “it is my belief that the Board will be looking in a different direction for the head football coach next year,” I explained why I felt I needed to share that information with him and after a very brief discussion the meeting was over. On December 11th, Mr. Weber submitted his resignation and the Board voted to accept the resignation.

The Board broke no laws by discussing employment matters in an executive session and had not yet been presented with an employment motion on which to vote. I may have caused confusion by speaking with the coach ahead of time, but I felt it was the moral thing to do.

Regarding the matter of the interview committee, it actually is only a recent occurrence to sometimes have a board member be part of an interview team. In recent years the district has not posted wide-ranging candidate searches nor full scale interview teams with several rounds of interviews. I prefer that approach and have re-established the practice. Board members have never been involved in teacher candidate interviews but I have included relevant board members on a few of the high profile positions. For example, I invited members of the Board Curriculum Committee to participate in the interview process for Curriculum Director along with teachers, a community member, and a building principal, but I made the final recommendation.

Vice President Leonti read the following letter:

The next public participation concerns the wearing of uniforms at Norton 21 School. Our community is growing and the frequency of students moving into the district during the course of the school year has intensified.

Because Cornerstone, Norton 21, and Norton Primary share the same geographic boundary our practice has been to assign students to any of these schools depending upon which one had the appropriate grade level with the smallest class size. Unfortunately, last year many of the students moving into the district did not want to wear uniforms which often resulted in classroom sizes at the Primary and Cornerstone schools being larger than classrooms at Norton 21 School.

This situation was unfair to both the students and the teachers of the larger classes. Therefore, this year it has been the practice to assign students to the grade level classroom with the smallest class size wherever that class may be. This has resulted in some students

being assigned to Norton 21 School who do not wish to wear a uniform. In fairness to all students we are attempting to resolve this issue by dropping the requirement of wearing of uniforms at any of our schools.

c. The following people spoke in favor of keeping the uniforms at Norton 21 Elementary school:

1. Jeff Beach
2. Laura Coughenour
3. Tim Longfellow
4. Matthew Housley
5. Sally Smeal
6. David Walton
7. Mary Ann Joyce
8. Mark Taylor

BOARD BUSINESS

Des Wertheimer, from Schreiner Oil & Gas Inc., gave a presentation about putting gas and oil wells on our property.

MINUTES

07-38 *Ms. Stemple* moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of January 29, 2007.

Mrs. Farmer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs. Leonti, Ms. Stemple, Mrs. Farmer

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

07-39 *Mrs. Farmer* moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Special meeting of February 5, 2007.

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Ms. Stemple, Mrs. Farmer, Mrs. Leonti

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

07-40 *Ms. Stemple* moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Special meeting of February 12, 2007.

Mrs. Farmer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs. Farmer, Mrs. Leonti, Ms. Stemple

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

WARRANTS

07-41 *Mrs. Farmer* moved that the Board of Education approve the warrants for the month of January, 2007.

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs.Leonti,Ms.Stemple,Mrs.Farmer
NAYS: None – Motion Carries -3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

07-42 *Ms. Stemple* moved that the Board of Education approve the Financial Statement for the month of January, 2007.

Mrs. Farmer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Ms.Stemple,Mrs.Farmer,Mrs.Leonti,
NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

PERSONNEL

07-43 *Mrs. Farmer* moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following:

1. Pat Santelli, High School/Middle/Intermediate School Teacher, retirement effective July 1, 2007.

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs.Farmer,Mrs.Leonti,Ms.Stemple
NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

SUBSTITUTE PERSONNEL –Certified (Pending background & certification check)

07-44 *Mrs. Farmer* moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following:

1. Vincent Colotto
2. Shannon Creed
3. Kimberly Gross
4. Mary Ellen Indre
5. Elizabeth Smelser

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs.Leonti,Ms.Stemple,Mrs.Farmer,
NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

SUBSTITUTE PERSONNEL –Classified (Pending background check)

07-45 *Ms. Stemple* moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following:

1. Kelly Blair

Mrs. Farmer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Ms.Stemple,Mrs.Farmer,Mrs.Leonti,

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRACTS (Pending background check & permit)

07-46 *Mrs. Farmer* moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following:

1. Dan Staats, High School Wrestling, Volunteer
2. Dave Mattle, High School Baseball Assistant
3. Matt Weber, High School Baseball Assistant

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs.Farmer,Mrs.Leonti,Ms.Stemple,

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

FRESHMAN SOFTBALL COACH

07-47 *Ms. Stemple* moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the addition of a Freshman Softball coaching position for the spring of 2007 and the following coach and volunteer:

1. Chani Cowling, Freshman Softball, Coach
2. Teri Burnette Freshman Softball, Volunteer

Mrs. Farmer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs.Leonti,Ms.Stemple,Mrs.Farmer,

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

ACT PREP

07-48 *Mrs. Farmer* moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the employment of the following teachers to provide instruction on ACT Prep, 7 hrs. at \$18.91 (tutor rate) to be paid from the general fund:

07-48 cont.

1. Rodney Rowell
2. Lisa Bowen

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL: AYES: Ms. Stemple, Mrs. Farmer, Mrs. Leonti,
NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel**

CONSENT AGENDA

07-49

Ms. Stemple moved that the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following Consent Agenda:

Service Agreement

Approve the Service Agreement with Summit County Education Service Center.

Resolution

A resolution has been passed on this date by the Norton City Schools supporting the District Waiver Request for Professional Development for April 4, 2008. This day will be used to provide training for the district's professional staff in the following area:

-explore aspects of both grading and reporting literature as well as formative and summative reporting forms. Dr. Thomas Guskey of the University of Kentucky will be the keynote speaker.

Donation

Approve the following donations:

1. Overhead projector and spare bulbs from BWXT Technologies, Inc. to Norton Primary School.
2. Monetary donation of \$100 from the Women of the Barberton Moose for any child in need of hats and gloves.

Bus Sale

Approve the recommendation to sell two busses to Barberton City Schools.

Handbook

Approve the Elementary Schools' Student/Parent Handbook

Trip

Approve the proposed trip for the Norton High School Business Professionals of America students to participate in state competition March 8 & 9, 2007.

OHSSA State Wrestling Competition

Approve participation in OHSSA State Wrestling Competition on March 1, 2 & 3, 2007.

Mrs. Farmer seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs. Farmer, Mrs. Leonti, Ms. Stemple,
NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2
ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel**

ADJOURNMENT

07-50 **Mrs. Farmer** moved that the Board of Education adjourn the Regular meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Ms. Stemple seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Mrs. Leonti, Ms. Stemple, Mrs. Farmer

NAYS: None – Motion Carries – 3-0-2

ABSENT: Mr. Collins, Mrs. Webel

“Notice of this meeting was given in accordance with the provisions of Policy and Regulations of the Board of Education which was adopted in accordance with §121.11 of the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Administrative Procedures Act.”

Laura Leonti, Vice President

Stephanie Hagenbush, Treasurer