

JAY/WESTFIELD JOINT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 6:00 P.M.
AT THE JAY/WESTFIELD SCHOOL

Board Members in attendance: Sally Rivard, Loren Petzoldt, Kevin Amyot, Jeff Morse, Myra Alix

Administration/School Personnel in attendance: Kristy Ellis, Principal; John Castle, Superintendent; Glenn Hanksinon, NCSU Director of Business and Finance; Tara Morse, Bookkeeper; Rebecca Velazquez, Recording Secretary

I. At 6:10 pm the J/W School Board meeting was brought to order by Sally Rivard.

II. Kevin Amyot moved to approve the Minutes of November 10, 2015. Jeff Morse seconded the motion, and the vote carried.

III. Financial Reports:

Action:

A. Myra Alix motioned to approve the November 15 Financial Statement. Jeff Morse seconded and it carried.

B. Orders were reviewed and signed. Check numbers began with # 2500 and ended with #2699. Cancelled checks were included in review.

C. Jeff Morse motioned to appoint Kristy Ellis as Announced Tuition Designee. Kevin Amyot seconded and the vote carried.

Information:

A. Bookkeeper's Report

Tara Morse announced that the 2014/2015 Audit work has been mostly completed by Pace & Hawley. She will receive a draft by mid-December. Tara reported that the process went very smoothly and that she was very happy with the firm. She expressed disappointment that Central Office is putting most district's audits out to bid, including Jay/Westfield. She hopes that this is just a formality and would like to offer Pace & Hawley a three year contract. The Board agreed.

Pace & Hawley has requested that the starting and ending check numbers on Orders signed by the Board be documented in the Jay/Westfield Board Meeting Minutes. They would also like cancelled checks included in the Review. Both requests were met at this Meeting and will be moving forward.

B. Announced Tuition

The Board gave positive feedback to Kristy Ellis on her Announced Tuition rate of \$13,266. This rate was also announced for the last two school years.

IV. Principal's Report:

Information:

A. Kristy Ellis reported that the students' Thanksgiving essays showed a lot of improvement and were very strong on average.

B. Kristy informed the Board that the school is utilizing RCT for transport to/from a hotel in Derby. The family formerly lived in Jay/Westfield and, according to the McKinney Vento Act, has the right to maintain enrollment in their home school during a period without fixed and permanent housing. This ensures educational stability for students. They are guaranteed a year and then may need to switch to the Derby school.

VI. Unfinished/New Business:

A. Community Eligibility Program

Action:

Jeff Morse motioned not to approve participation in the Community Eligibility Program. Kevin Amyot seconded the motion. Vote to not participate carried.

Information/Discussion:

The requested numbers have come in from Central Office. Participation in the CEP would cost Jay/Westfield School \$10–15,000 above what is already spent, effectively doubling the current cost of the Hot Lunch program. John Castle acknowledged that the school is currently in a tough position where the number of in-need students are high enough to qualify for the Program, but not high enough to make participation “worth it.”

Sally Rivard asked how much currently goes uncollected. Tara Morse answered \$1200 at most. Kristy Ellis expressed interest in maintaining status quo, citing the current ability to budget in other worthwhile programs. She gave the extension of Fresh Fruit & Veg as an example. Funds for this end in March, but Kristy allows Helen Before to continue through the end of the school year at a cost of \$2000.

B. Cafeteria Tables

Action:

Loren Petzoldt moved to approve the purchase of new Cafeteria Tables given town approval to apply 2015 surplus funds.

Myra Alix seconded. Vote carried.

Information:

The purchase will be made using a portion of the surplus before the end of this fiscal year. It will be on the warning for both Jay and Westfield town meetings.

C. UV Water Testing

Information:

Kristy Ellis expressed hesitation about moving forward with UV compatibility testing during Christmas break. She does not think that the school has ever had a hit during the winter months and thinks it may be best to do the next testing during a more high-risk time of year (i.e. the rainy season). Kristy would like to speak to Simons about this concern. The Board gave Kristy approval to make a decision on timing after speaking with Simons.

D. Budget for FY 2017

Information:

Kristy Ellis presented a First Draft. In the context of cost containment, she was careful where possible. The budget from 2015-2016 was \$1,345,536. The first draft for FY 2017 has an increase of \$14,890.72 or a little over 1%. Glenn Hankinson and John Castle said that it would be very close to the cost containment threshold. At this time, there is no way to know if it will be over or under.

There are no significant changes to the SWP. Likewise, there are no significant changes to the Special Ed cost, though it will present itself differently on the budget. John Castle confirmed that the Executive Committee chose an aggregated model. The cost assessment will appear as a single line item on each town’s budget. Kristy Ellis said that it might be worth explaining this change to voters.

Tuition remains unchanged, though salaries have increased 2.5%.

The placeholder salary increase of 3% for paraprofessionals may be a little higher than necessary.

Technology spending has been reduced by \$5,000. Kristy Ellis has been unhappy with the refurbished IBMs and will not choose them again. She plans to move to Chromebooks, expressing a desire to use any potential surplus on Chromebooks for the 5/6 classroom.

The UV filtration system placeholder has been removed from the budget.

The Transportation amount may be affected by two incoming kindergarteners living in Alpine Haven.

The After School Program line item has been increased by \$2600.

Kristy anticipates some revenue from the Pre-K program – 3 tuitioned students.

Discussion:

In regards to Special Ed, Tara Morse expressed a preference for the assessments to come to Jay/Westfield instead of each town, just as all salaries are currently handled. Glenn Hankinson confirmed that the assessments can be made how the school prefers. Loren Petzoldt wondered how the Laraway School costs will be assigned, now that one has opened in Westfield. Special Ed costs related to these students will be centralized. John Castle noted that State-placed student costs are reimbursed by the State.

The Board discussed options for transporting students to/from Alpine Haven. A cost-free option would be to place the students on the NCHS bus that serves that area. There have been Jay/Westfield students who commute this way. The NCHS does not currently assess any cost to Jay/Westfield for the service.

Kevin Amyot and Kristy Ellis expressed concern with putting kindergarteners on a bus that is outside of Jay/Westfield Elementary's control. They both had a preference for running the route with J/W buses, aware that this would incur a fee. Tara Morse noted that the amount for Transportation on the drafted budget more than covers the current bus contracts. Tara feels very strongly that there is enough money in the budget to cover an Alpine Haven stop. The Board tentatively agreed to run the route themselves and leave the Transportation budget item unchanged.

John Castle remarked that the discussion, covering all the nuances of building bus routes through Jay and Westfield, affirms his belief that the State's desire to centralize transportation is terrible. The SU has submitted a waiver to keep transportation decentralized and to allow districts to handle bus contracts themselves.

Kristy expressed a strong desire to go forward with the After School Program increase. Glenn and John stressed the need to cut where possible. Tara Morse suggested the use of an old fund that had been earmarked for this purpose. She stated that it has about \$4300. John recommended using entitled money first, before cleaning out a rainy-day fund.

The Board thanked Kristy for her work on the first draft, citing the unusual difficulty of working with so many unknowns. John Castle and Glenn Hankinson expressed a strong belief that the cost-containment threshold will not be around in the same way by next school year. However, there is no way to know what the alternative will be.

E. Financial impact of creating a Jay/Westfield Unified District
Information:

Glenn Hankinson reported what the impact would have been on FY 2016 if Jay/Westfield were a PreK-6 Unified District. Westfield would have saved 6 cents on their tax rate and Jay would have saved 2 cents. Glenn also offered an overview of the process by which a Unified District is formed. The Board would first create a Study Committee, preferably made up of non-Board member citizens of Jay and Westfield. The Study Committee would then draft a proposal to submit to the State, which then has to approve the creation of the Unified District. Voter approval in March 2016 would be for FY18.

Discussion:

In a broader discussion of how things would change if a Unified District is formed, the matter of Transportation cost allocation came up. Westfield currently has all Junior High students picked up from a single location, The Westfield General Store. Jay currently picks up students at their homes. The Board sees the potential for disagreement between voters of each town.

John Castle thinks that unification is a good idea, as Jay and Westfield already function this way. However, he understands that there is no compelling argument to do this right now. The Jay/Westfield Unified District is not even an option unless/until Westfield becomes a member of the North Country Junior High Union. The Board agreed that they would take the process one step at a time, consulting with members of the community first.

F. NCUJHS District Membership

Information:

Glenn Hankinson projected that a 2016 membership in the NCUJHS District would have reduced Westfield's tax rate by 8 cents, bringing it from \$1.5148 to \$1.4327. Membership would lower education spending and lower equalized pupils. A more in-depth discussion of these numbers will take place at the Westfield Board Meeting.

G. Community Forum on January 6, 2016

Information:

Kristy Ellis and John Castle will work on a structure for the meeting. Topics to be addressed are: Act 46, the FY2017 Budget, a Jay/Westfield Unified District and NCUJHS District Membership for Westfield. John Castle will be present at the meeting and strongly recommended a direct mailing to all voters.

Discussion:

Loren Petzoldt wondered if Westfield should warn its own meeting to discuss the NCUJHS membership. All agreed that there is no need to hold a Westfield Community Forum at a different time. The NCUJHS discussion will simply take place before the Unified Union District is addressed. A separate warning, for a Westfield Community Forum, will be made to be safe and to encourage attendance.

VI. Future Agenda Items/Date for Next Board Meeting:

- A. The Board confirmed Wednesday, January 6 2016 at 6pm as the date of the Community Forum. A Westfield Community Forum, taking place concurrently, will also be warned.
- B. The Board confirmed Tuesday January 12, 2016 at 6pm as the date of the next Board Meeting.

VII. Executive Session: Sally Rivard moved to enter executive session at 8:15pm and invited Kristy Ellis and John Castle to stay. Kevin Amyot seconded the motion,

and the vote carried. **Sally Rivard moved to exit executive session at 8:20 pm.**
Kevin Amyot seconded the motion and the vote carried.

Action:

No action was necessary after the executive session.

XI. Adjourn : **Myra Alix motioned to adjourn the meeting at pm.** Loren Petzoldt seconded the motion. Vote carried.

<u>Meetings:</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	Decmeber17	5:30 p.m.	NCSU A213
NCSU Full Board	Thursday	December 17	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
J/W Community Forum	Wednesday	January 6	6:00 p.m.	Jay/Westfield School
Westfield Community Forum	Wednesday	January 6	6:00 p.m.	Jay/Westfield School
Jay/Westfield Board	Tuesday	January 12	6:00 p.m.	Jay/Westfield School

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Velazquez
Recording Secretary