

## Regular October Board Meeting

Monday, October 9, 2023 7:00 PM as published in the *Pilot-Tribune/Enterprise* and on the  
High School Media Center school's website [fortcalhounschoools.org](http://fortcalhounschoools.org)

### ROUTINE BUSINESS

-Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. There were 3 administrators and 9 visitors present.

-Note Nebraska Open Meeting Laws

-Excused Absences: There were none.

-Roll Call: Mike Bonacci-Present, Josh Christensen-Present, Cassie Kelly-Present, Amanda Schrum-Present, Kelli Shaner-Present, Ted Welchert-Present.

-Approval of Agenda: Moved that the agenda be approved as presented. This motion, made by Shaner and seconded by Kelly, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea.

### REGULAR AGENDA

-Public Participation: There were no requests to address the board.

Mr. Green explained the remaining reports will be updated after finalizing 2022-23.

-Approval of Claims: Moved that the board of education approve the claims in the amount of \$303,350.67 from the General Fund and \$153,792.97 from Savings & Depreciation. This motion, made by Christensen and seconded by Shaner, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. Mr. Green explained the bills from Baldwin Carpets, Chemsearch for routine maintenance on the elementary cooling tower, Midwest Technology for yearly supplies for the Shop; Ray Martin for the new HVAC motor at the high school; preschool field trip to Super Bee Orchard, and Apple Computer for replacement devices for staff. The 1<sup>st</sup> National bill was also explained.

-Claim from Abe's Trash Company: Moved that the claim from Abe's Trash Company be approved in the amount of \$1,565.45. This motion, made by Bonacci and seconded by Shaner, Passed. Josh Christensen: Abstain, Mike Bonacci: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea

-Consent Agenda: Moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. This motion, made by Shaner and seconded by Kelly, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea

-Standing Committee Reports: **Finance**-Josh Christensen reported the committee discussed blinds for the elementary, class capacity, and that two members are considering dropping them slightly, and adding the Unified Sports Director to the extra duty schedule by sending the request to the FCEA. There was also discussion about adding 2 special education teachers but are recommending hiring one new teacher to ease the load on staff. This hire could ease unfilled para positions and would not cost the district additional dollars. All members will attend the state convention. **American Civics**-Kelli Shaner reported on discussing and recommending Policy 5004R, 3002, 3003 and 3004 with no changes. They discussed capacity limits, adding one teacher to the special education staff and use remaining funds for paras. They then took a tour of the new track area.

### -POLICIES

•Policy 5004 R Resolution on School District Standards for Acceptance or Rejection of Option Enrollment Applications: Mr. Green explained the change in the law including evaluating students and the earlier date to close classes-it was February and is now October. The current numbers have 63 in K-3 and 66 in 4-12. President Schrum asked if the board wanted to amend the motion and it did not.

Moved by Kelli Shaner and seconded by Cassie Kelly that the board of education waive first reading and pass on second reading Policy 5004R Resolution on School District Standards for Acceptance or Rejection of Option Enrollment Applications. Josh Christensen said by lowering K-5 by just one per classroom, it would alleviate teachers' "heavy caseload and stress" and still serve all the students in the district. He recommended 1 per class or 3 per grade to have the capacities at 60 and 63 leaving room for residents who may move in with capacities still not being over. Kelli Shaner suggested trying something different and it could be adjusted in subsequent years if needed. Amanda Schrum said state aid is based on growth and if enrollment shrinks we would lose dollars. She added that districts want to make sure they're always growing at some percent. This was the cap when it was put into place 5 years ago and it works according to the principals. A drop by 3 would not change the day-to-day operation financially. Josh Christensen said the purpose is to help ease the stress on classes and the school with 18 less in the building not taking into account students who would need extra time. By lowering the numbers to 60 or 63 those moving into the district would not push us over the numbers as has happened in the past. Mike Bonacci said the board needs to be careful about limiting growth as the capacities were set to fill our schools. He cited Wrench School not acquiring area and subsequent students and eventually closing. Christensen said class sizes could be limited and still be financially sound. We have already added staff but support staff was not taken into account when these numbers were first set. We will still need all the current support staff.

Mr. Wagner said teachers would support less kids in the classroom but the broader picture is they are not saying they are overwhelmed. Shaner again said we need to try something else-how is hiring more teachers helping? Schrum said the valuations are what is driving our dollars. We need to be good stewards and with 8% inflation and our coming in with only a 3% increase in budget we are doing this. She asked Ted Welchert what he thought and he replied in his business he is trusted and he trusts the administrators and teachers and is not going to second guess it. Motion Passed: Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Nay, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Nay, Ted Welchert: Yea.

•Policy 3002 Deposits; 3003 Bidding for Construction, Remodeling, Repair or Site Improvement; 3004 General Purchasing and Procedure: Moved that the board of education waive 1st reading and pass on second reading Policy 3002 Deposits; 3003 Bidding for Construction, Remodeling, Repair or Site Improvement; and 3004 General Purchasing and Procedure. This motion, made by Christensen and seconded by Kelly, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. The American Civics committee continues to review policies and there were no changes to these three.

-Blinds for the Elementary School: Moved that the board of education move forward with blinds for the elementary in the original bid amount of \$15,228.00. This motion, made by Shaner and seconded by Bonacci, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. There have been request for shades in the elementary classrooms that have large windows for several years and it is a good bid. They will cover 9 classrooms. A date for installation will be when there are no kids in the building.

-Special Education Staff Update: Moved that the Board of Education approve the administration to begin the process of hiring an additional special education teacher for the 2024-25 school year. This motion, made by Christensen and seconded by Bonacci, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. The committees and administrators have been discussing this to ease caseloads for the current special education teachers. The source of the overload is the unavailability of paras to hire. If one teacher could be hired they could ease the load, and do the necessary paperwork. It won't solve the 1-1, 1-2 etc. that a para can do but would help as we are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of not enough paras. The monies for this would come from paras not hired over the last 2 years and the administration would like permission to start the process to ensure a quality candidate. The competition will be strong in the

coming months and the motion is just to start the process. Bonacci asked if the budget would afford this now with the unknowns of monies for next year and having to be good stewards with the taxpayers. Mr. Green explained that we need quality employees and with attrition of paras a teacher could be added. Depending on salary and benefits for this person, the difference could support paras' salaries. This would be for 2024-25 but need to start the process now. If we receive para applications for 23-24 we would hire them. Another way would be for part time paras to be moved to full time. Mindy Otte asked since there is a budget for 5 and not used, would this move to subsequent years and Mr. Green said it would only work for one year. Our SPED reimbursement for this year is currently 80% but could change with any new federal legislation and the Unicameral. Amy Wilson asked who would decide where the teacher would be placed and was told the administration and SPED director would decide. Sara Gross asked about the process of advertising for hiring and Mr. Green noted attending career fairs, talking to students at colleges, sending flyers to colleges, colleagues, schools with student teachers, and pipelines to graduates to name a few. He said it is very difficult to hire as student teachers are more scarce going into metro schools.

Board Member Reports: Cassie Kelly thanked the special education teachers for coming and for their letters regarding their request regarding staff; Mike Bonacci commented on the activities around the campuses, a great Homecoming week, the band at the Lynx competition and a great softball season. He thanked all the teachers and staff for all they are doing for the district. Kelli Shaner thanked the special education staff for coming and loved the "hometown parade" at Homecoming; Josh Christensen thanked the staff for coming and their feedback and commended whoever was in the dunk tank Friday saying it was fun. Ted Welchert has been working on the building. Amanda Schrum appreciates the feedback and knows that a lot of things need to be balanced-on both ends. She appointed Kelli Shaner, Cassie Kelly and Josh Christensen to the negotiations committee; and Mr. Green's evaluation will be in November to be approved in December. The first negotiations meeting will be set up on or before November 1<sup>st</sup>, and she appreciates the support during this busy month. In concluding, she suggested that the board discuss the Foundation to see where's it going and if we need to do anything. She also asked if any board members want to be on their board as Kelli Shaner is transitioning off it.

#### Administrator Reports:

Dr. Wemhoff: Reported on attending training to prepare for our accreditation review and that we are already doing a lot of what they are asking; the upcoming reunification drill; upcoming surveys for students with grant monies available for mental health; Parent-Teacher Conference dates being shifted to accommodate the change in football; having Dr. Adler speak to students during the day and parents in the evening of 10/18; Bulling Awareness Month; 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Seminar students sending care boxes to Nebraska troops deployed overseas with Jackie Fischer taking the lead, Jason Thomas explaining how welcome these are to the troops, and donations received from Dollar Tree/Family Dollar; and upcoming activities.

Mr. Wagner reported on the successful Walk-a-Thon run by Chris Roberts, health screens, picture day and Homecoming festivities with the elementary kids being able to be on the new field. There will be a universal screener to see the need for mental health support in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades; professional development focusing on the new Math curriculum with trainers coming to the school; and upcoming events. Our school improvement program has again been renamed to Nebraska Continuous Improvement Model and we are in a good place for the 24-25 visit. He thanked the board for their support and said he appreciates their passion.

Mr. Schleifer was supervising an activity and his report was noted.

-Superintendent Report: Mr. Green reported on goals, the track and field project with the shed being completed in a few weeks and the grass is now coming in. Nemaha will start striping this weekend and should be done. He called attention to the project funding sheet and it will be all "wrapped up" at or under bid price. The enrollment update showed 4 grade levels at or above capacity and the number of

seniors includes students at the PLC. He has reached out to the FCEA to begin negotiations on or before November 1<sup>st</sup>, and all board members are signed up for the State Convention.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Green announced that Cross Country is now on Wednesday because of incoming weather. There being no further business, the president declared the meeting adjourned at 8:08PM.