

SPECIAL MEETING  
JT SCHOOL DISTRICT #342  
CULDESAC, ID 83524

The Board of Trustees called a special meeting on Wednesday, May 18, 2011 at 8:00 p.m. in the School Library to discuss Supplemental Levy results and budget as posted. Those in attendance were Chairman Cecil Martin, Vice-chairman Lori Zenner, Trustees Richard Grant and Kathryn Bomar, Superintendent Darrell Olson, Principal Jon Hussman, Clerk/Treasurer Loretta Hammond-Nichols, eight staff members, 15 patrons and six guests. (Trustee Zone #4-vacant)

ORDER

Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTAL LEVY RESULTS

Chairman Martin stated that the Supplemental Levy has failed.

Trustee Kathy Bomar commented that it was sad that even with cut programs we needed the \$350,000.00 to operate and now the school has to cut even more.

Trustee Lori Zenner expressed her disappointment as well.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patron concerns covered: staffing of administration, lost enrollment, lost of sports, loosing families who sent students to other schools, shame on those voting no and not supporting the school, Culdesac levy request lower than surrounding school requests, community throwing up hands and not know what direction the school is going, school is the community center of small towns, cost to educate so few students is not effective, consolidation of Junior/Senior High with other area schools not bus to Lewiston, want to keep students in small school not put into a large school, patrons not willing to pay local tax dollars for school will find themselves paying other school taxes for students to attend elsewhere, don't want to give up on the Junior/Senior High School students without a fight and try to run another levy, reduce administration and hire staff that live here, consolidation does not necessarily save money but may be a better education option, and some students who do attend other schools have been successful.

Superintendent Olson presented the Board a Northwest Accreditation Commission Award Plaque for 75 years of meeting required standards since 1934 for K-12 public schools.

Superintendent reported that the Board needs to consider the option of another levy for the August election date on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Since the budget needs adopted before the levy, a baseline budget will be developed on what the state pays for next year. The Junior/Senior High School only has about 33 students for next year. We need to look at our options to pursue sending these secondary students to another school.

Chairman noted that the next election date available for the levy is August 30 after school has started in the fall. We will be starting the school year with \$350,000.00 less to educate the students.

Trustee Lori Zenner asked how we start school before the levy and what happens if the levy fails again.

Superintendent replied that the budget will reflect just the basic funds from the state which means reducing staff and cutting programs.

Chairman explained that if the levy passes that money needs to be put back into the cut programs.

Lori Zenner commented that the Board needs to pass the levy at a lower amount which is better than nothing. Bare bones budget is providing what quality of education and is that fair to our kids to prepare them for college.

Kathy Bomar was concerned with the \$350,000.00 cuts that were made. Now programs will need to be cut even more and at the state funding level what type of education is the student getting. When the public says no to the levy and we needed even a higher levy than requested, how do students receive a quality education and be successful as citizens in our community or how can our staff be proud of the quality of service they provide to the students.

Chairman explained that Highland and Nezperce Schools requested similar levy amounts and were successful. They have a higher tax base which provides more funding with less tax dollars per market value. We want to be a good school not just one who has their doors open. We need to prepare these students for the next step in their life.

Lori Zenner noted that we can't cut anymore to the staff benefits or we won't get any staff to sign contracts. The staff are not happy now with their contracts and benefits.

Superintendent commented that cuts will need to be made to staffing to use FTE allotment to cover Special Education and Title I program needs due to the high number of students that need service.

Clerk commented that the County runs the elections and covers the cost of publication for which they received funding from the state when the consolidation of election law was implemented.

Richard Grant moved to run a supplemental levy for \$250,000.00 for one year. Seconded by Lori Zenner/Motion passed.

#### BUDGET DISCUSSION

Superintendent reported that a preliminary budget for publication will be presented at the Budget Hearing for the Board to review. The Board at that time will need to make decisions on how to reduce the levy request by \$100,000.00.

Lori Zenner moved to authorize the administration to reduce the budget less the \$250,000.00 levy request. Seconded by Richard Grant/Motion passed.

The Superintendent noted that a decision will need to be made regarding the 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to attend here or another school. A discussion of a coop with another school needs to take place to allow adjustments to the budget. We are looking at a four day school week which other schools are not all operating on.

Lori Zenner was concerned that the 7-12<sup>th</sup> students would experience culture shock at Lewiston due to the size. Highland was slow and unable to commit so we needed to see what other options were available.

Patron concern was that Lewiston does not have enough gym to provide PE for their own students and charge a fee for kids to attend Adcope in town.

Chairman reminded the Board that the Highland Coop was difficult as they were not really interested in academics, but wanted us to help them with sports when they were short on kids for a team. The staff that traveled back and forth were not happy driving that grade. I was disappointed when the coop with Highland did not work out that third year when they would not renew the agreement. Lapwai is not interested in working with us, as we have sent out an invitation to discuss an option and no response was returned. A coop with Lewiston would mean tuition for the 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade to attend. Consolidation is when schools merge that have a boundary in common. Coop is an agreement for services between two schools.

Superintendent explained that a decision is needed by July for other district to work out their budget needs. We are finding that keeping up with accreditation standards has been a problem the last two years with funding cutbacks.

Richard Grant agreed that the kids need the best education and if that isn't what we can deliver then Lewiston would provide a better opportunity with excellent shop, music, and other programs even though I don't like taking the kids to another school.

Principal Hussman reported that students who do not attend accredited schools find themselves taking bone head classes that cost additional expense when these classes don't apply to their graduation requirements. They have to take the bone head classes before they are admitted to regular classes. It would be the same as home schooled students who would need to pass college entrance exams for placement.

Lori Zenner remarked that college credit classes can be taken while students are still in high school This saves parents money when students enter college with some of the credits already done.

Principal noted that the actual amount originally discussed for the levy started at \$512,000.00. \$250,000.00 levy is only going to meet half the needs of the students. Some programs are still going to be cut at that level. The new reporting requirements for the WISE tool in conjunction with accreditation requires the Principal to spend half of their time in the classroom observing for evaluations and program support. That means if the Principal is part time with 2 days a week at school that one of those days is spent in the classroom observing staff.

Superintendent explained that declining enrollment is happening in all the area rural schools not just Culdesac.

Chairman commented that the bottom line is meeting accreditation. If the original amount of \$500,000.00 was needed to operate all programs then the levy fails with cutbacks at \$350,000.00, that leaves us with programs operating under half the funds they need to maintain.

Kathy Bomar remarked that the level of cutbacks is breaking the programs down so that full time staffing is not possible.

Chairman noted that these past few years with cutbacks created the concern if our students received the education they needed. Another \$100,000.00 less means the kids are missing out even more. This is a difficult to consider sending the 7-12<sup>th</sup> to Lewiston on a tuition basis next fall.

Kathy Bomar moved to authorize the administration to explore options for 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade to go to Lewiston for a better education than what is provided at Culdesac. Seconded by Richard Grant/Motion passed.

Discussion covered: estimated tuition cost about \$33,000.00/\$1,000.00 per student per month at about \$330,000.00 for the year, financial obligation with the coop needs to be looked at, special ed services available at Lewiston for those students on IEPs, this coop different that Highland when staff traveled versus busing students.

Kathy Bomar didn't believe that we could afford the tuition to send them to Lewiston at that rate. Mrs. Bomar did not want to send the students to Lewiston.

Lori Zenner wanted to know the tuition rate before sending the students.

Richard Grant would like to know if tuition is cheaper than keeping the students here.

Superintendent was asked to report back at the June meeting the cost of tuition for Lewiston.

Mr. Olson informed the Board that due to loss of the levy the 7-12<sup>th</sup> staff will need to be noticed with RIF letters until the actual needs for the secondary is determined by funding.

Lori Zenner moved to institute RIF notices for the 7-12<sup>th</sup> staff for contracts until determination of actual staff needs are done. Seconded by Kathy Bomar/Motion passed.

Superintendent Olson recommended three staff for elementary contracts to be issued. The current needs are for 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade staffing. Kindergarten screening takes place tomorrow with the Child Find and screening process. Usually about five to eight children attend Kindergarten which is not enough to fund a half time teacher for that position.

Kathy Bomar moved to contract with three elementary teachers for the 2011-12 school year. Seconded by Lori Zenner/Motion passed.

Superintendent explained that he would look at the secondary level for staffing needs before July and would get the RIF notice out as soon as possible.

Clerk asked the Board if they would be interested in looking at a preliminary budget before the adoption at the June meeting. The soonest possible date would be on Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at 8:00 p.m. in the Library. This will give Mr. Olson time to review what cuts need adjusted without the levy and the level of budget that state funds can provide.

Richard Grant moved to hold a special meeting to discuss a preliminary budget on May 31<sup>st</sup> at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Lori Zenner/Motion passed.

Lori Zenner asked if the lower grades are single digit classes in population.

Chairman thought yes with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade having about 10 students as the biggest class.

#### CHAIRMAN OPENED THE FLOOR TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patron concerns – check with other surrounding schools who would be interested in taking the secondary students not just Lewiston, if you can't afford to have a high school without the levy how do you afford to send them and pay tuition, levy election on August 30<sup>th</sup> is after school starts and how do you staff for the secondary if you wait until you run the levy, Orofino, Kendrick, Lapwai and Highland all border our school we should check out those options before sending students to Lewiston, our students are used to small classes with more teacher individual attention than what they would receive at Lewiston they would just be lost and not successful, if the levy passes a plan C for students to attend here if we can't afford tuition at another school, need to explore other options not just make an agreement with Lewiston, our students have made friends with Highland in the sports coop and would do better in a small school, the parents should have a say in what school students are sent to not the Administration or the Board, when the athlete died the whole Highland school closed to attend her funeral in support and you won't find that loyalty in a large school, why make Tuesday – Friday four day week when area schools on four day week attend Monday – Thursday as it creates a mess when trying to work out a schedule for sports, Highland did invite students to continue to participate as Huskies next year since the sports coop was dissolved, it will be parents problem to work out details for practice and games, the kids should get consideration what school they would be interested in attending, parents are frustrated with hearing that their students are being sent to another school when we have choose to live in a small community so our student can attend a small school, big schools just heard kids through like cattle and our students will be lost in the crowd, going into executive session to discuss staffing issues that affect decisions where you are sending the kids is not appreciated, larger schools are not going to provide the caring education that our kids get here with our current staff, Highland is getting new administration next year and this would be a good time to try a coop again as the problem was with the two different administration of the schools, parent upset as her student applied at Lewiston and was denied because she needed special services that is why she is attending Culdesac, open enrollment students are being asked to pay tuition to attend Culdesac next year and then you will turn around and send them to Lewiston doesn't make sense, the kids would be riding the bus half hour to Culdesac to get back on the bus to ride to Lewiston and then again the same to get them home how does that save money, our oldest son loves Lewiston and is doing well but our other children like Culdesac, each family has a separate circumstance to consider before sending their children to Lewiston, a four day week will not work with Lewiston schedule of a full week as that presents a problem to bus the kids the extra day when school is not open on Monday, Lewiston has a different funding ability that Culdesac does not with a higher tax base, it maybe cheaper to send students to a small school versus Lewiston, Tuesday – Friday school week is a bad decision, obviously the Board is not willing to listen to the parents before making decisions, if you sacrifice the high school students to another school then what do our elementary students have to look forward to, will elementary lose their electives since only three elementary staff will be back next year, why have you not contacted parents to find out why students are going to other schools, students will not have the same opportunity to participate in sports, our students will not fit into the clicks at Lewiston, why do employees keep quitting and why the large staff turnover every year, you need to check out why administration is not working out by calling your local patrons and find out what is really going on

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in your school, what staff is receiving a \$45,000.00 raise next year when others are being cut, why wasn't a survey given out to get input before making decisions to send the students to another school, 35 students have left to attend other schools and several families in town are sending their students to Lapwai instead of Culdesac.

Superintendent replied that no staff is receiving a \$45,000.00 raise next year.

Chairman commented that a survey has not been sent out and that is a good idea.

Lori Zenner commented that she was not aware that many students had left the school other than those that were out of district students.

Adjourned: 10:00 P.M.

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Chairman

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Clerk