

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah 84770
August 22, 2017
4:30 p.m.

Reverence offered by Member Blake.

Present: Board President David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Laura Hesson, Board Member Becky Dunn, Board Vice President Kelly Blake, Board Member LaRene Cox, Superintendent Larry Bergeson, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Richard Holmes, Assistant Superintendent Rex Wilkey, Executive Director Lyle Cox, Executive Director Craig Hammer, Executive Director Steven Dunham, Kathleen Cheshire, and Amy Barton.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

ACTION ITEMS

Intermediate School Bid

Craig Hammer reported on the bids for the intermediate school construction. The committee recommendation is to award the bid to Hughes General Contractors with the base bid of \$22,924,000, accepting schedule E for an alternate subcontractor on drywall. The also includes building four portable classrooms that will be available to move where needed. The total sum of the contract is \$23,656,224.

Member Seegmiller presented a motion to award the Intermediate School Bid to Hughes Contractors and accept the changes as noted. Member Blake seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Hearing Officer RFP

Lyle Cox reviewed the Hearing Officer RFP. With the policy changes to Policy 1450 on orderly termination, there is a need for a hearing officer. Four attorneys applied, three of which were highly qualified. The policy recommends hiring between three to five hearing officers. The committee recommendation is to award the RFP to the three attorneys Eric Olmstead, Eric Clark, and Tracy Cowdell. Travel for the RFP is limited to no more than \$350.

Member Blake presented a motion to award the Hearing Officer RFP as presented. Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION

Our Schools Now

Larry Bergeson reported on *Our Schools Now*. He said that the District applauds any group that steps forward with more money for education and sees the value of education. We recognize the effort of those involved. We should not look at this without appreciation. However, he also mentioned concern with strings and restrictions attached. He suggested that the District would prefer to get the funding on the WPU. We would also want to make sure that legislatively the funds would not affect the same WPU we have received before. Having *Our Schools Now* on the

ballot could cause problems with our bond. We don't want to be negative and unappreciative. We are behind the concept of the funding, but would prefer to receive the money in the WPU. Kelly Blake said there is a disconnect between the legislature and Our Schools Now. It could impact the control the District has on how the funds are distributed or how they govern the day-to-day operations of the District. Laura Hesson said members of the State School Board have suggested that we should not take a position. Signatures have to be gathered following the legislative session. Depending what happens in the legislative session, it could be retracted. Brent Bills explained that right now, school principals would have control over 75% of the money. The board would approve how it is spent, but can't tell them what to spend it on. Charter schools could use the money to increase salaries for teachers, making it hard for districts to recruit. It would be hard to track the budgets with all the strings. Laura Hesson said the legislators plan to attach additional strings if it passes. She said it is local control at the basic level. She feels we can't turn away money. Board members feel that the District should wait until the legislation is done before making a statement. Terry Hutchinson suggested that the Board could state that they are still talking about it and will continue to discuss it. LaRene Cox suggested having some key talking points for discussions.

School Bonds

Brent Bills shared information on bonding. We still have \$85,000,000 in bonding we can issue. George K. Baum is working on some talking points that districts can use when talking about bonds. The Board talked about concerns with Senator Stephenson's bill. The bill would only allow borrowers to take the par amount out. The bond premium has helped us complete projects. We need to educate members of the community. The District still has \$107,000,000 to spend. We owe \$70,192,461 for Legacy Elementary majestic Fields, Crimson Middle, Crimson High and the LaVerkin Site. Craig Hammer mentioned drilling for water on the Crimson site. That leaves \$37,372,000. Estimates for a new elementary and the intermediate school with portables come to \$40,093,013, which puts us over budget by 2,720,000. Building new high schools and middle schools on the same property does save money with auditoriums and fields. The amounts are still estimates. Brent Bills has been working with the energy specialists, fine arts specialist, technology, and purchasing for furnishings to get FF&E costs as close as possible. Brent Bills shared proposed bond projects for bonding.

Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned an 8th grade student was hit afterschool by Desert Hills Middle School today.

Craig Seegmiller said UHSAA is filing a lawsuit against the law that was written.

The Board discussed strategies for advertising and promoting the bond. Superintendent Larry Bergeson and Brent Bills mentioned doing a smaller bond in 2018 for four years of bond funding, then going out in 2022 for another bigger bond. We do have a dedicated communications person to help sell the bond, but Board Members will need to help sell the bond with their community groups. Superintendent Bergeson mentioned that we need the support of employees also. The Board discussed the pros and cons of doing a smaller bond, then a larger bond vs. doing a large bond upfront. Kelly Blake suggested that by going smaller first, we would have more evidence for going out for a larger bond. Terry Hutchinson pointed out that we have a favorable rating for bonding right now and may consider taking advantage of that right now. Brent Bills explained

the rules on the bonds, which requires a certain percentage to be spent in the first year. It won't help us when we sell the bonds in a few years. It is easier to help people to handle smaller chunks. Laura Hesson pointed out that the smaller bond would be a tax neutral bond. David Stirland said with a smaller bond, the perception would be that we are just taking care of our immediate needs, listing out the projects that are needed. Brent Bills said one talking point is that we really are keeping the bond costs down. Craig Hammer said part of the bond would be for deferred maintenance projects that have been put off. Kelly Blake suggested that the community should also know that we build great schools that are not too cost extravagant. Terry Hutchinson mentioned the consistent growth would be good to point out also.

Ray Cox, realtor, mentioned submitting a cash offer for quick sale on district owned property. His client is interested and capable. They are not asking for contingencies from the District. The Board replied that they had not yet discussed the offers.

WCEA Update – Amy Barton

Amy Barton, WCEA, said six teachers attended the summer leadership academy and gathered a lot of information and resources. They have met with the building reps for back-to-school. Most concerns had to do with insurance and the new wellness program. Getting employees energized with the wellness program has been approved and it is good forward momentum. They have scheduled a Thursday night event at the city swimming pool with Horace Mann to share information about the support available from WCEA and Horace Mann. She appreciates the opportunity to work with Lyle and HR to get the best outcome for employees on policies. She appreciates the Board listening to the WCEA voice. She encouraged the Board to visit the classrooms in the schools.

David Stirland encouraged WCEA to help communicate policy changes to the teachers. The Board would welcome feedback from teachers.

Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 6:00 p.m. Member Blake seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

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CLOSED SESSION

Property Items

Member Blake presented a motion to go into a working session at 6:57 p.m. Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Sale of Property

No action taken.

Board President David Stirland adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m. as there was no further business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT