
North Boone Community Unit School District No. 200

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
Board of Education**

District Office

6248 North Boone School Road, Poplar Grove, Illinois 61065

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Ed Mulholland.

Present: Ed Mulholland, Brian Haselhorst, Joe Haverly (via phone), Mary Maxey and Nan Schilling.

Absent: Judy Hutchinson and Becky Self.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mrs. Maxey and seconded by Mr. Haselhorst to approve the Agenda as presented.

The motion was carried by unanimous roll call.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Mr. Mulholland started the meeting stating that the Board has a consensus on a lot of needs for the District including projects both inside and outside of the buildings, and is asking for feedback on how to move forward with these items and how to prioritize them as well. The floor is open to Audience to Visitors with our regular policy of allowing each speaker 5 minutes to speak. Mr. Haselhorst will be keeping time.

Mrs. Schilling mentioned that this meeting is to get input from the community about what they want and see for our District.

Mr. Mulholland did have two emails that were sent to him to be read at the meeting. The first is from Sarah Kint who is a first-grade teacher at Capron Elementary School. Ms. Kint wrote about being taken back by a meeting for the athletic fields that she had heard about only a few days prior to the meeting. She has many questions such as how much will this cost, how will it be funded, what are the plans? She would like more information before giving any feedback either way and feels that this was a rushed meeting.

The second email was from Holly Houk, a paraprofessional from Capron Elementary and the President of NBESS. Ms. Houk wrote that she is very confused on why feedback is wanted without there being any communication given or a proposal shown to the community. She does agree that the District needs upgraded facilities but how much will it cost, how will it be funded, can we just upgrade what we currently have and will this go to a referendum? Other questions that she had included will the academic needs of all of the students still be met, will the needs of the existing buildings still be taken care of and will the staff be supported with a livable wage?

Jeff Schilling was the first to speak. Mr. Schilling stated that there is a lot of talk about numbers that are not available but feels that at this point, there really should be more plans and numbers available to discuss. He stated that he has been to many meetings over the last several years and is disappointed that the planning is not further along. However, looking forward, he feels that we need to think about the community's kids and start with a clean slate. He feels that we are behind the times. There is plenty of room behind the high school to construct a proper athletic field. This would include a proper track and updated ball fields while looking at the best that we can surface wise. There is also a need for new concession stands, restrooms and storage. Mr. Schilling feels we should not settle and that we need to set the bar high.

Donnie Livdahl, who currently runs NBJT/NBYS stated that we really are in need of updates to all of our sports areas. There is a need to take care of all of it and be equal to all. We need to offer whatever we can for the kids.

Liz Saveley, a teacher at Capron Elementary who has been with the District for over 20 years, does understand the need for updated athletic facilities for our students as the current fields that we have are not sufficient and also understands how important athletics can be in a student's life for character development and learning past high school. Because of athletics, many students receive scholarships to help with their future education. Mrs. Saveley has experienced this within her own family. Students that excel in athletics, should be allowed to perform in a space that they are proud of. With that being said, our job as a school district is to plan the education for future generations. She is nervous about the cost of how this would affect other students with taking on a project of the scale on which she has seen some of the plans and ideas. She is worried about where these funds will come from. NBESS is currently renegotiating their contract and she fears that our support staff will not be granted a livable wage. Several staff members asked her to present the following questions: Is there a plan already in place? Is this just for a football field and track? Is this for all athletic fields? Where are we getting the money from? Have we looked into upgrading what we currently have? Mrs. Saveley is not against creating new and more usable spaces for our athletes, however we do need to be transparent on how this process will be done. Moving forward, we need to have balance with this project along with the other projects that our school district is trying to address.

Carrie Morelock is a North Boone graduate, has two children in the district, does substitute teach and tutor as well as she is the Track and the Cross-Country Coach at the high school. Mrs. Morelock is at the high school a lot and is very impressed with the staff and students. However, our district is missing a lot of amenities. We are an Ag school without a greenhouse. We do not have a theater. We do not have technical equipment or tools. We do not have a shop. We have a very small weight room. There is no trainer on staff for athletics. The trainer is there only for meets and games, not for practices. Despite everything that the District does not have, our students are taking advantage of the things that we do have. They are making it work. We have students that are in sports that join multiple clubs. We have students that are interested in trade or engineering and they are having to go to other schools to utilize those programs. Our students and our small community are doing more with less. There is a lot of compassion from the students for North Boone. Mrs. Morelock spoke about seeing all of the new amenities for the track team at Hononegah High School. While they were amazing, that is a very different type of community with a higher tax bracket. She agrees that the District does need a track. We have taken students to State for Track every year for the last five years by using what we have available to us. During 9th grade orientation, Mr. Eckmann stressed

that we need more positive adults for our students. We have that but we need to consider all of the kids in all of the activities in the District.

Tom Kinser, a parent of North Boone graduates and former school board member, began by stating that for future events he would like to see more advertising for the meeting as well as a larger facility to hold it in. He noted that there should be a fairness to all sports and other activities. Budget-wise, for facilities, everything comes from the same “bucket”. Be it for sports, building repair, grounds, etc. Mr. Kinser feels that unity is very important. Everything should start with a unified board and continue on throughout the community. He would love to see a compromise. He would like to see the entire Board and community all come together. He asked that the Board be sensitive to the tax payers. Keep in mind not only the younger families but also the retirees. He feels that a “pay as you go” venture is the way to go and see what can be done over the years. He would like to see it both ways, referendum or a pay as you go.

Ron Maxey, parent of North Boone graduates, does believe that there needs to be improvements but thinks that the football field is in great shape. He asked that the Board keep in mind all of the costs which include not only construction but upkeep. There are also the other needs in the District that need to be addressed such as a greenhouse for the Ag classes. Our population is decreasing, which means less money coming in. He urges us to take a good look at everything, all buildings, staff and supplies before moving forward on a new athletic facility.

The final speaker is Amanda Smith, a North Boone graduate, parent of North Boone students as well as a paraprofessional in the District. Mrs. Smith thanked the entire Board for donating their time to the District. Both she and her husband would like to see improvements to all of the athletic facilities as it would be an asset to the District and the kids. That being said, they both have concerns about the current planning, maintenance and upkeep on all of the facilities in the District, not just the athletic facilities. There are several of other items that need attention as well including parking lots, phone systems, ADA accessibility. Not all of our schools are ADA accessible. These concerns have been brought to light, but have not yet been fixed. How can we be sure that all of these concerns will not be pushed aside or not prioritized for an athletic field? Can we upgrade our current fields? Will this affect our current funds for our existing facility projects? Will this increase taxes? Will the community have any input on which plan is selected? Will this project be brought to a referendum to the voters? An in-depth community Q&A would be beneficial for these answers.

Mr. Mulholland opened up the floor to any questions or additional comments.

How much does Chrysler closing affect our District? It could affect it, but is still being determined by how much and in what aspect. Not sure what the impact will be.

In regards to State Funding, how are those allocated? It all depends on the project and what is being funded.

How did we get here today for this meeting from it being “leaked” on-line on Friday? It all generated from our Facility Meetings from conversations that were held during those meetings looking for community input. It did take some time to get some dates together. We have done some initial work and are not close to putting anything solid together.

Mrs. Smith did say that while she has not been present at every meeting, in the last two days, she has gone online and viewed all of the past meetings in regards to the facilities. They are all on the website as well as the minutes. She stated that all of the information is there.

As far as budgeting goes, there is a building budget yearly for upkeep. There has been a 10-year plan that was enacted in 2015. There is a list of items that need to be taken care of. We have replaced roofs, tuck pointing and are currently working on updating HVAC on the older building.

What is the relationship between staffing and facilities? How will one affect the other? We are currently in the midst of negotiations and in regards to money, any that we use, affects everything.

It was reiterated that we want to continue to hear input from the community on everything that needs to be done in all aspects of the District.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. Maxey and seconded by Mr. Haselhorst to adjourn at 7:12 p.m. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

PRESIDENT _____

SECRETARY _____

APPROVED: