

BALDWIN CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 348
P.O. Box 67
Baldwin City, KS 66006
District Office
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of a Public Hearing Meeting

DISTRICT OFFICE
708 CHAPEL STREET
BALDWIN CITY, KS. 66006

Thursday
November 11, 2010
7:00 PM

- A. President Alison Bauer called the Board of Education meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Board Members Alison Bauer, Ruth Barkley, Blaine Cone, Ande Parks, Scott Lauridsen, Ruth Barkley and Bill Busby. Joshua Mihesuah was absent. Also attending were Superintendent Paul Dorathy and Clerk of the Board, Laura Morford, Deputy Clerk of the Board, Rexanna Sanders. See attached attendance sheet.

Call to Order by
Board President

- B. Blaine Cone moved and Ande Parks seconded to approve agenda.
Motion carried with a vote of 6 yes and 0 no.

Approval of
Agenda

- C. Mr. Dorathy shared an informational powerpoint which outlined the budgets from 2008-2011, budget cuts, proposal to close buildings and the basic plan.

Board
Representative

- D. Kim Bielfuss provided material for the board to review. She read from the documents she provided. Kim voiced her concerns about closing the outlying schools with several concerns explaining why. She stated she also never heard a district reopen a building after it has been closed. She asked the board to please explore all options.

Public Input

Amy Carlson talked about conditions of facilities in our district. Amy reminded board members of the pictures submitted several board meetings ago. She thanked the board for some of those issues being addressed. She stated her hope was that additional custodial staff could be added so facility needs could be maintained.

Amy also addressed the possible declining enrollment and the effects it would have on our district. She said it is time to consolidate.

Cary Barth stated she has been to every board meeting since the Spring and

said she was very passionate about our district. Cary stated the financial situation is only going to get worse as Mr. Dorathy showed us. She thanked the board for all they have done.

Robin Bayer spoke of the inter modal project and the potential growth from it. Robin is on the planning commission and has considerable interest in this project because of the possible growth from this project. Robin said construction should begin in 2011 and will be a multi year build out. Robin thought the upper management might relocate in our City over time. Robin said we know growth will happen and would appreciate the board taking a close look at that possibility.

Chad Christie said he was born and raised in Baldwin City and graduated BHS in 1989. He has two children in school now. He stated concerns that have been brought up about fear of kids not being welcomed in town, he said he does not see that as an issue. We have great teachers in our district across the board. He reiterated what Mr. Dorathy said was coming down the road and we need to prepare. He stated closing the schools was one step towards that process.

Jeff Flory stated he has 2 children in MSES and BJHS. He also graduated BHS. Jeff shared information he gathered from the state public records. He reminded the board of their strong support to smaller classrooms that make our district stand out. He asked the board to make closing schools the last resort option.

Ed Kite thanked the board for this evening. He stated that it is unfortunate that we are still discussing this topic. The studies have been done, public comment has been in abundance, the numbers have been examined over and over again. Each Board member was elected to be financial responsibility for those resources. We need to manage our physical resource to an optimum.

JoAnn Kite said in recent months it has been said the outlying schools have higher resources and stronger performance. JoAnn said the BESIC has also reached high levels of academic accomplishment.

Brian Kraus thanked the board for the opportunity to speak. Brian spoke about the cuts that have occurred from the State already and what is to come. Brian commented on the accuracy of Dale Dennis and his vision with numbers in finance. Brian supported the closing of the two outlying schools, but also to consider the additional cuts that have been discussed. Patrons should be reminded the contingency weighting money will go away after next year. He asked the board to continue to look closely at the budget issues.

Tony Wedel gave a handout to board members. Tony shared information from the handout regarding the Tennessee Student Teacher Achievement Ratio. He said the information is supported on the handout.

Toni Evangelista thanked the board for the opportunity to speak. His daughter attends MSES and he has been thinking about whether it is best to close schools or not. He stated it is about the education of our kids. He said it really isn't a savings, you are just reallocating those monies. He asked what is going

to happen when those budgets come along again? He has not heard anything from the board or administration of a plan of what we are going to do. Until you can up with on how we are going to solve this long term, don't come with a short term idea. We need to look at all the options.

Jack Hofman thanked the board and Mr. Dorathy for all their work as it has been very challenging. Closing of schools is a major decision and without a systematic study that isn't incongruous and the board has not done that. Full details need to be researched. Jack read from a list of items on how closing schools would affect students and the district. Jack said he has been teaching for 25 years and knows class sizes is important and also knows no raises is no fun.

Closing the neighborhood schools will have a major impact on not only the students but also the community. The board should consider the following information before making a decision:

break down of the savings, cost of maintenance, details for the use of savings needs to be in hand and how that savings will enhance quality education...*his time expired.*

Colin Thomas stated he is a senior at BHS. He attended VES and enjoyed every minute of it. He stated he understands the need to look at ways to make cuts. Closing VES should be the last thing on the chopping block. He talked about Vinland history and noted items that should not be discounted. The school is inner woven into the Vinland community. He spoke about attending school with Kindergarten through fifth graders and the experience gained by that. He talked about his goals and those goals were instilled from attending Vinland. He spoke of individuals that attended Vinland and the high accomplishments of those individuals. Colin asked the board to reconsider this option of closing schools.

Liz Crist said most of the items have been addressed this evening but had a few items to address. She said she has heard many times to not let your emotions guide you, but you can't not let that occur. Liz chose to send her children to MSES. She is concerned with the "us vs. them". The debt load is a concern and is afraid is not going away. Liz would like the board to wait and see if the state cuts us and if they do, then make that decision to close schools. She pointed out that 45% of property tax comes from outside the property lines, so she feels like we are equitable. The schools should only be closed if it improves the whole school system. Liz said don't vote to close, if you do have to, just do it for one year if we have to make the budget work.

Alice Rockhold said she is here on behalf of the Vinland alumni. She stated there is a lot of history and deep roots. She said her father was on the school board when the schools were consolidated. She said you will find in the records that Vinland would remain open and thinks someone should look into that.

Sandy Chapman stated the board has a really tough decision in front of them. Listening to all the comments tonight, you have two areas to consider. I always come back to the financial side of it. Sometimes you have to make decisions short term to make the budget work. If this needs to happen, it should be explained and I believe everyone would understand.

Sheryl Barnes stated she just moved here. The reason they moved here was because of the level of education in this district. Sheryl said if you up the class sizes you will no longer have that level. She asked if the students education is disposable? We need to look out for them, right?

Jerry Kaufman stated this was her 4th meeting. She lives on the outside edge of the district. Jerry said she is an educator and knows what it is like to see the different sizes of the classroom and has a great concern. She knows what it is like when you have 25 children vs 15 or 16 and the board needs to understand what impact that will have on student learning. Jerry stated she felt that the board or system has not really brought people together. She said she felt like there are board members that have not been in the classroom, yet are making decisions to close buildings.

Tamara Lamb stated she is a product of the school district. She said she moved away and now has moved back. She stated she believes everyone in the district is good. She questions when you make classrooms that were not meant to be a classroom. She stated concern of the crowded classrooms. She also said she would like to hear the board discuss insurance that all kids are succeeding. Tamara also would like to hear discussion of what it would cost to bring those closed building back up to code if we have to reopen them.

Dan Wilcox thanked Mr. Dorothy for coming out to VES. He was surprised that some of the questions Mr. McFarland asked could not be answered. Was also concerned that there were no board members in attendance.

Charlie Sansom has serious concerns about the way the savings report was developed. How it was audited, how current the information really is. Those numbers have not been properly weighted in your discussions. Another concern is additional transportation cost. Concern about putting additional kids in existing classrooms and not have additional cost involved. I don't have sufficient details to understand. Charlie referred to the fact finding report on the website. He said perhaps some of these issue have already been brought to light and was not aware, but wanted to state them just in case they were not.

Beth Crump lives out of district and has the experience of being in both MSES and BESPC. She has experienced a consolidated school system and it has failed. Beth said she drives her children to Baldwin and MSES everyday, because she wants them to attend the Baldwin school district. She would rather take them to MSES or Vinland rather than the BESPC because of the difference in the atmosphere. If you close these buildings, she said she will take her children elsewhere. She stated the board has not thought of the students you will lose if you close buildings. We are all having a hard time. She said she would rather take a risk of losing money, then lose the quality education.

Shawn Nelson said he has 3 children at VES. He spoke on behalf of a group of parents in favor to not close buildings. Shawn stated several concerns about the reasons from the closing buildings report. He stated it is all speculation. He also stated the board will change the fabric of the district now and years

from now. It is not only schools you will be closing, but communities. He spoke strongly about community. He stated there is a way to not close the schools. He asked the board to put as much energy in keeping the buildings open as was put into keeping them open. Indeed the rural communities have a unique setting and hopes the board does not squander these communities. He stated he hoped the board would consider the humanity of this decision.

Bob Franklin reiterated Shawn Nelson's comments. He asked the board to look at both sides, the negative impact as well. Look at what this community is all about.

Julie Davidson said she was not here to state her opinion on whether to close or not to close buildings. She stated concerns of the purpose of using them as storage. If you are going close a building you need to close a building, not use it as storage purpose. She said that defeats the purpose.

- E. Blaine Cone moved and Ruth Barkley seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion carried with a vote of 6 yes and 0 no. Time: 8:43 p.m.

Adjournment

Approved:

Attest:

Alison Bauer, President
Board of Education

Laura Morford
Clerk of the Board