

From the EAWR #14 Board ...

1st Regular Board Meeting February 5, 2019

What follows is an unofficial summary of the East Alton - Wood River Community High School District #14 Board of Education 1st Regular Meeting of February 5, 2019.

Approval Proposal from GRP Mechanical for Boiler Repair Project

Dr. Pearson described the need for a boiler replacement project. This proposed project is aimed at getting all six of the small boilers that provide heat to the Main and South Buildings operational again. Currently, only three of the six boilers are on-line, due to the burner assemblies one tank failing. The proposal would 1) Replace one leaking boiler section; 2) Replace 12 insulated boiler section bases; 3) Replace two pilot assemblies, 4) Replace one HP pump motor, and 5) Provide associated pipe and fittings. GRP would provide one-year parts warranty and a 90-day labor warranty. Total cost would be \$34,983.

Since we still have some cold weather / heating days left and because we are uncertain that the remaining boilers can keep up with increased work load, GRP and Maintenance Director Jeff Foxall are recommending this solution. Dr. Pearson reminded the Board that the current boilers were installed in 2001-02 school year and are out of warranty.

The Board approved the proposal from GRP for the boiler repair project at the proposed sum of \$34,983.

Review of Agenda Items for the February 12, 2019 Regular Meeting

Conduct Biennial Review of Bullying Policy (7.180). Supt. Pearson reminded the Board of its obligation to review its policy regarding bullying. He pointed out that this year's review actually was to adopt a change in the policy from the one approved during the last review. Namely, the new Policy 7.180 reflects a legislation change that broadens the number of employees eligible to receive a report from a student that he/she was being bullied.

Previously, the policy called for the student bringing the allegation to report it either to the school's "Non-Discrimination Coordinator" (Mrs. Robinson), or one of the two complaint managers (Dr. Pearson and Mrs. Robinson). The new policy now allows

that student to make the report to any of the staff, with whom they feel comfortable in sharing that allegation.

The superintendent recommended that the Board consider this the “first reading” of this policy change and then formally adopt at next Tuesday’s Board meeting (Feb. 12, 2019).

School Calendar for 2019-20. The three superintendents from the “Tri-Districts” recently met to review the 2019-20 proposed school calendar, which had been tentatively set last year. The reason for looking at the 2019-20 calendar again, is that the legislature adopted new rules on the number of days on the school year and how those days could be used for a full year of school attendance, as well as the removal of the long-standing “five clock-hour” minimum daily requirement.

Upon reviewing the previous version of the school calendar for 2019-20, it was since discovered by Mrs. Robinson that the proposed Spring Break would have occurred on SAT testing day in April 2020 (That SAT date was set by ISBE after the original Tri-District cooperative calendar was set last year.).

Therefore, the three superintendents amended their earlier draft to make Spring Break once again taking off only three school days off (the Thursday-Friday before Easter and the Monday immediately after Easter). Also, the first day of school is pushed back one day to Wed., Aug. 14, 2019 (following a one-day Teacher Institute, which is also a change). Christmas Break remains the same (Dec. 21, 2019 thru Jan. 5th, 2020). As noted, there will be three Institute Days instead of four, which is another wrinkle caused by the legislative change.

Dr. Pearson was quick to remind the Board that this calendar may not ultimately be the “final” version, since there are rumblings in the General Assembly that the “5 clock-hour” requirement may be brought back for 2019-20, as well as some possible changes in the Institute Days allowed (perhaps a reversion back to the previous school calendar rules).

Policy Revision: 4.175. In reviewing policies concerning background checks and convicted child sex offenders, Dr. Pearson noted a copy of the PRESS service’s recommended 4.175, which was not in the Policy Manual, and for which he could not find any record of adoption in the minutes.

Despite the fact that District already does the criminal background screenings specified in the draft policy (4.175) and has some redundant language in other policies, he is recommending to the Board that it go ahead and adopt this stand-alone policy regarding this subject. He recommended that the revision be adopted at the March Regular Meeting.

Property Tax Relief Grant. EAWR was notified this past week that it did not receive the Property Tax Relief Grant for which it applied. Had EAWR received the full amount of the relief in the grant formula (\$515,250) it could have given that amount back to the taxpayers in the form of an abatement. That abatement would be reflected in a tax rate reduction and would have amounted to a reduction of about 30 cents / per \$100 EAV. For the \$100,000 homeowner, that reduction of 30 cents on the tax rate would have saved him/her about \$100 on next year's tax bill.

Only 28 of the 373 districts that applied for the grant received it, with almost all being in the "collar counties," and 22 of the 28 school districts being high school districts like EAWR. The ranking was done on a tax rate formula basis, with the higher the District's "unit district conversion" tax rate the principal means of ranking them. The closest Metro-East school district (ranked 78) to receive the grant was E. St. Louis # 189. EAWR was ranked at #136.

Dr. Pearson noted that no one is sure if that \$50 Million will be appropriated again. This grant was a part of the overall budget compromise bill that passed at the end of the last session and was a favorite bill of Governor Rauner. It's unknown whether Governor Pritzker and the new General Assembly will include such a bill again for next fiscal year.

IASB Bargaining Workshop. The superintendent informed the Board that he was invited by Chad Watkins and Shane Jones – attorneys that represented the Board in its last negotiation sessions - to assist them in their presentation concerning collective bargaining trends at an IASB-sponsored workshop in Mt. Vernon. School board members and superintendents have been invited to this three-hour workshop, which will be held on Saturday, February 23, 2019. Dr. Pearson has been asked to comment in a Q&A portion of the workshop regarding some of the new issues facing school boards and superintendents in upcoming bargaining.

Following Executive Session

The Board employed Mrs. Misty Floyd of Bethalto as its new 9 ½ month Secretary. She will replace Lela Hawkins, who is retiring in late February. Mrs. Floyd currently works part-time in the Wood River – Hartford School District as an assistant to the Business Manager and working in the junior high and elementary school offices – also part-time. She will begin her duties on February 21, 2019.