

West Geauga Board of Education
Monday, November 17, 2014
7:00 p.m.
West Geauga Middle School Cafeteria

Roll Call

Board President Mr. Thoreson called the meeting at to order at 6:58 pm with the following members present:

Mrs. Dottore, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Kotowski, Dr. Phelps and Mr. Thoreson.

Mr. Thoreson led the Board in the pledge of allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2014-166

A motion was made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mrs. Dottore to approve the agenda.

Roll call: Yes: Mr. Kotowski, Dr. Phelps, Mr. Thoreson, Mrs. Dottore, and Mr. Douglas
Motion carried

VoIP Phone System Discussion (Presentation Attached)

Mr. Russo presented a proposal to replace the District's current phone system with a new Voice Over Internet Protocol system. He introduced Mr. Larry Bailey, Bailey Communications, who surveyed our current phone system and provided the District with a proposal. The telephone upgrade proposed would cost \$451,250 with an annual maintenance cost of \$37,150. If the District signed a five year agreement, the annual maintenance cost would be \$31,750 per year. The District could also lease the phone system over a five year lease with a bargain purchase option of \$1 at the end of the lease. Prices were determined using the State Term Contracts. The proposal includes a new Cisco VoIP phone system and would replacement all the phones in the District.

Several Board members were concerned about the cost of the phone system and had several questions regarding the proposal.

Mrs. Dottore asked who would host the telephone system. Mr. Russo indicated Bailey Communications would house the phone system and use remote access to identify and correct problems.

Mr. Kotowski asked what the difference was between the VoIP phones and our current phones. Mr. Bailey discussed the phones were similar to computers with internet capabilities allowing phone calls to be made over the internet instead of a traditional phone line.

Mrs. Dottore commented that several secretaries had mentioned the aging phone system and how many calls were dropped. She asked Mr. Russo where the money would come to purchase a phone system.

Mr. Russo explained the Permanent Improvement – 9000 account would be used. As part of the PI campaign to raise money for the roofing projects, any funds leftover could be used for technology, security, safety, energy, efficiency or transportation needs. Given the favorable bids over the last two years, he estimated a \$1.2 million carryover. This money could be used to purchase the phone system.

Mrs. Dottore stated that PI funds could only be used for capital projects and not for operations. Capital projects are those assets with a five year life or longer. She asked what other capital projects were identified when the original PI levy was passed.

Mr. Russo indicated approximately \$888,500 of capital projects were identified at that time, but some of these were already completed. He also stated the roofing project to date was under budget and he anticipated the final phases to come in well under budget. He told the Board he would come back with an update three year capital needs plans after the roofing bids this summer.

Mr. Douglas asked if the phone system would be categorized as technology and security.

Mr. Russo agreed the types of expenditures would fall under the categories approved in the levy.

Dr. Phelps asked how long the phone system would last.

Mr. Russo indicated the system would last a minimum of 10 years. He reiterated the potential of leasing the equipment with a bargain purchase option. The financing charges would be approximately \$34,000.

Mr. Kotowski asked if there was an early payment penalty. He said we could finance the purchase and then when the roofing project was completed, we could pay off the note.

Mr. Russo indicated the phone system would not require additional cabling and could increase our bandwidth.

Mrs. Dottore asked where we currently buy our phones.

Mr. Russo stated our phones are outdated and are about 20 years old. It is very expensive to repair them through AT&T. The voice mail system broke last week and required a \$700 repair. He stated the voice mail system is vulnerable and will breakdown at some time.

Dr. Phelps wanted to know how long it would take to get a new system up and running.

Mr. Russo said if we used the State Term contract, it could be relatively soon with little interruption in operations.

No decision was made to move forward at this time.

Common Core Discussion

Nancy Benincasa – Curriculum Director presented materials on the Common Core. Ms. Benincasa discussed how the state selected the Common Core and its implementation over the last several years. Currently, 45 states have adopted the Common Core Standards while Indiana opted out of the standards and Michigan halted funding of the state’s initiative. In Ohio, legislation to repeal the adopted standards and PARCC testing, HB 597, was introduced by Andrew Thompson, R – Marietta and moved from committee.

Ms. Benincasa went over the pros and cons of the Common Core debate in her presentation. She stated advocates for the Common Core believe it sets rigorous academic standards and expectations, it moves to better prepare students for college and career, and students shift from rote memorization to analytical and reasoning skills. Those opposed to the Common Core standards believe there is a loss of local and state controls over curriculum, it is a source of data mining and share personal information, and requires too much testing.

Mrs. Dottore asked if HB 597 passes shouldn’t we be prepared. Can we get rid of it?

Mrs. Benincasa said we are required to give the standardized tests and these are based upon the common core standards.

Mr. Nutter said “we talked about both sides but we need to continue to look at this issue but we have moved forward. We need to consider the impact on the report card”.

Mr. Kotowski asked what happens if HB 597 passes.

Mrs. Benincasa stated the District would go back to the Massachusetts state standards for three years and wait until the state rewrites new standards. If HB 597 fails, we could continue with the common core or opt out. Our students would still be tested on the common core and graduating seniors may be hurt the new end of year assessments required to graduate.

Mrs. Dottore asked Mr. Nutter to gather more information for a future board meeting.

Mr. Kotowski said it isn’t all about standards, it’s about the curriculum and we control the curriculum. I don’t see moving away from the common core since it may be damaging to our kids.

Grade Level Buildings

Mr. Nutter stated there was an interest in moving towards grade level buildings long before he came to the District. The buildings could be separated into a K-2 building and a 3-5 building. He said there are advantages to vertical and horizontal planning. He asked the Board if they like the administration to look at this issue.

Mr. Kotowski thought there was overwhelming support by the teachers and administrators to move to grade level buildings citing academic gains. The only negative he heard was that parents would need to drop off students at two buildings. He agreed the District should move forward in investigating grade level buildings.

Mrs. Dottore supported moving forward with grade level buildings. She stated people would “have no argument if this was in the best interest of teaching our kids”.

Mr. Thoreson thought this would help move away from community schools.

Mr. Kotowski said “principals could be experts at the K-2 and 3-5 grade levels.” There wouldn’t be two schools, Lindsey and Westwood, students would be just one group.

Mr. Nutter agreed there were advantages to grade level buildings but wanted to know how it would be perceived in the community. He said, “There must be community support.”

Mrs. Dottore asked about transportation and the possibility of a three tier busing schedule to reduce time on the bus.

Mr. Nutter said transportation would need to be considered along with a number of other items. The administration would need to be a great deal of planning before moving forward with grade level buildings.

Mrs. Dottore asked Mr. Nutter to bring back administrators and principals to discuss with the board. She wanted to have an educational discussion on why this made sense.

Mr. Douglas asked how the teacher’s association felt. Are they in favor?

Mr. Nutter indicated he thought they would support it but there would need to bring them to the table to discuss the issue.

Executive Session

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A motion was made by Mr. Kotowski and seconded by Mr. Douglas at 8:11 pm to move into executive session to consider the employment of a Superintendent. Ms. Ryan of OSBA, Mr. Nutter, Superintendent and Ms. Penler, Treasurer were asked to join the Board in executive session.

**Roll Call: Yes: Dr. Phelps, Mr. Thoreson, Mrs. Dottore, Mr. Douglas and Mr. Douglas
Motion carried.**

Executive session ended at 9:35 pm
Regular session reconvened at 9:35 pm

Mr. Thoreson announced the next Board meeting on November 20, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the Community Room at the Middle School.

Adjournment

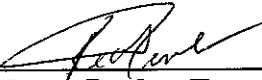
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A motion was made by Mr. Kotowski and seconded by Mrs. Dottore to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 pm.

Roll Call: Yes: Dr. Phelps, Mr. Thoreson, Mrs. Dottore, Mr. Douglas and Mr. Kotowski
Motion carried.



Dan Thoreson, President



Karen Penler, Treasurer