

MINUTES

Jefferson High School Dist. 1  
Regular Meeting

June 7, 2012  
JHS Library

Board members present:

**Stan Senechal**  
**Pat Lewis**

**Sabrina Steketee**  
**Lynne Bryant (arrived during public comment)**

**Kathy Jackson**

Administrators present:

James Whealon, Superintendent      Lorie Carey, Business Manager

Visitors: Jan Anderson, Dawn Smartnick, Lisa Sonsteng, Shaun Sonsteng, Rex Sonsteng, Steve McCauley, Fritz Bieler, Sandra Rux, Judi Saarinen, Jeff Yanzick, Shawn Kremer-Yanzick, Jeff Saarinen, Brett Charlton, Butch Moran, Laura Butler, Sam Heaton, Rachel Heaton, Nita McCauley, Frank Williams, Bruce Dyer, Samantha Humphrey, Betty Charlton, Mike Charlton, Micki LeTexier, Dave Hohenthal,

**CALL BOARD TO ORDER**      Ms. Steketee called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. The pledge was said.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND  
PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment: Steve McCauley asked for clarification of opportunities for people to address the board during the meeting. He asked for the opportunity to comment on the letter submitted by James B. McCauley.

The letter from James B. McCauley was read at this time. Mr. McCauley asked why Mr. Sonsteng was not rehired. Ms. Steketee stated that the school board addressed this issue by accepting the recommendation of the superintendent. A non-tenured teacher can be non-renewed without cause.

Mr. McCauley said that he was disappointed and added that he felt that Math was one of the most difficult subjects to address. He gave the following list of items in support of Mr. Sonsteng.

1. Experienced math teacher
2. Boulder native
3. JHS graduate
4. Dedicated to improving math and the school
5. Spends lots of extra time at school
6. Generous with coaching with time and money
7. Part of Kiwanis, grade school basketball, etc.
8. Would like to have Rex as a teacher for his kids
9. Math scores are on the rise
10. Rehired as a basketball coach but not rehired as a teacher

Ms. Jackson said that the Board accepted the Superintendent's recommendation. Mr. Shawn Sonsteng asked if Mr. Whealon had evaluated Mr. Rex Sonsteng. Mr. Rex Sonsteng stated that he hadn't been evaluated like quality schools do in which goals and objectives are given to each teacher and a formal time to evaluate is scheduled.

Mr. Bieler agreed with Mr. McCauley's comments. If his child was considering engineering, etc. he would want Mr. Rex Sonsteng as a teacher.

Mr. Dyer – speaking as a math teacher 22 years. Stated that he'd like to think he's an expert in the field. He was disturbed that Mr. Rex Sonsteng wasn't rehired. Consistency and continuity looked positive since JHS has had 2 teachers here for 3 years. He felt that not renewing Mr. Sonsteng would jeopardize that.

Jan Anderson asked to make comments on the minutes. She was given permission at the time of the consent agenda to address questions.

Ms. LeTexier asked how many people were parents of students in Mr. Rex Sonsteng's classes. 3-5 were in attendance.

Mr. Williams – talked to many people in the community. What has happened concerning this non-renewal looks unethical to others. The community needs to participate in the process. He supports Mr. Sonsteng as a teacher and a dedicated member of the school and community.

Mr. Williams stated that many members of the staff do an excellent job and wished that the board members could come to see how dedicated that the staff members are.

Ms. Butler said she "loves Mr. Whealon to death." She asked for clarification of Mr. Whealon's recommendation and board's action (or non-action). Would Mr. Sonsteng be first in line for the position?

Mr. McCauley – Would Mr. Sonsteng have to reapply? (no) Do we need 2 full-time math teachers next year?

Mr. Whealon responded that according to the schedule, there are 2 positions.

Ms. Butler – one thing that works so well at JHS is that the two math teachers work so well together.

Sandy Rux asked if finances – because of his salary and placement on the matrix – were part of the non-hiring decision.

Judy Saarinen commented that it was upsetting to the community because of the way things have been handled by the board. She felt that the levy was close to not passing because of it.

She added that the quality teacher needs to be retained.

Anita McCauley asked where the money for sports comes from? Although she is a supporter of athletic programs, she felt it important to ask that question.

Mr. Whealon - Majority of the costs for athletic funds for day to day operations come from the activities funds. There is a portion that comes from the general fund for uniforms, etc. One or two of the sports gate receipts pay for many of the other sports activity budgets.

Anita McCauley indicated her preference to keep strong programs and good teachers before we keep sports programs going.

Ms. LeTexier thanked the board for being board members. She felt that the Boulder community was represented very well but didn't feel that MT City and Clancy weren't. It isn't easy to find the information on the website. It's not on the calendar; communication needs to be better. She thanked the board again for their service.

Ms. Butler asked for clarification about the former indication that if the levy passed everything would stay status quo? Keep the programs in line as they were. In the schedule of classes the programs are still there, but the teachers may not all be there.

Ms. LeTexier asked about ANB numbers, whether they were up or down. Mr. Whealon responded that we are currently operating on a straight fall/spring average rather than the three year average. This indicates that our numbers have increased at least slightly.

Mr. Hohenthal concurred with Mr. McCauley, Mr. Dyer, Frank Williams, and Mr. Bieler. He said the board needed to put Rex back in the classroom where he belongs. He added that they shouldn't turn this into a position to be filled by someone else. Don't hide behind the legal answer to non-renewal of a staff member.

Ms. Humphrey added that the public's concerns need to be addressed. She didn't get the impression from Mr. Whealon that Mr. Sonsteng wasn't a valuable staff member in many ways.

Mr. McCauley asked if the policy of the grievance procedure was just suggested procedure. If that procedure is followed versus not followed there is the difference between night and day. The choice of the board to not follow that procedure lead us to where we are today. He added that he felt the board works hard. He also teaches his kids to stand up for what they believe is right and that was why he was commenting now.

Mr. Williams voiced his opinion that Clancy and MT City have the same opportunity to be part of the school. He felt that the staff wants the school to be a better place as much as the board members do.

Ms. LeTexier asked if the school had received their CRT scores.

Mr. Whealon said the scores hadn't been received.

Mr. Rex Sonsteng stated that JHS's scores on the CRT went from 40% to 75% then to 66%. Brett Charlton from Jefferson City said that stability is important. His kids will have the choice to go to Helena or JHS. Fewer kids from Clancy and MT City have been coming here.

Ms. LeTexier - Kids go to Helena for many reasons - music, sports, personal, etc.

Enrollment from Mt. City has increased the past year or two.

Brett Charlton added that instability in staffing and coaching would make him consider sending his kids to Helena.

Shawn Kremer-Yanzick said that Rex has offered to help her children (in grade school). When talking to people about why they send their kids to Helena, they say to her that academics are important.

Ms. LeTexier stated that 5 of 8 kids belonging to a traveling team out of MT City are going to Helena. Their reasons are sports related.

Stan Senechal asked how many evaluations are done for each staff member each year.

Mr. Whealon doesn't do traditional, scheduled evaluations. An important aspect of teacher education is how to manage your classroom. He added that many opinions are perceptions, right or wrong.

Rex stated that an evaluation, full observation process hasn't happened. Personal vendetta started in December that needs to be ended.

Ms. Humphrey - Observations don't always occur as assumed. Many times they are unobtrusive.

Mr. Sonsteng - reiterated his position that he wasn't evaluated properly.

Jeff Saarinen - Rex is good for people, good for kids

Betty Charlton is in support of any action taken to rehire Rex.

Mr. Williams felt his daughter's accomplishments in math could be attributed to Mr. Sonsteng and Ms. Collins

REORGANIZATION OF  
BOARD

Mr. Tim Lloyd's letter was submitted for consideration for the Clancy Representative to the JHS Board of Trustees. Ms. Jackson moved to appoint Mr. Lloyd to the Clancy position. Mr. Senechal seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Committee appointments were tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

**Policies.** Ms. Jackson moved to approve policies 3226, 3225F, and 8225 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and final reading. Mr. Senechal seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Annual review of district policies** – addressed throughout the year

**Board evaluation** – Pat asked that concerns of the board members need to be expressed and addressed. Ms. LeTexier asked if MtSBA still provided the service for policies. All policy recommended changes from MtSBA are still sent to JHS. Micki stated that the copy of the board evaluation she had was retrieved from the District Office. This item will be added to the June 19th meeting agenda.

**Review of Accreditation Standards.** Mr. Whealon reviewed a few of the changes in section 55

**Flex Plan** Ms. Jackson moved to approve the 3 necessary resolutions with American Fidelity to switch from Boulder Administration. Stan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Budget Discussion** – Mr. Whealon and Ms. Carey reviewed the amounts presented as estimated projections.

Ms. Jackson asked if the transportation committee had contacted the bus contractor to reaffirm that the district wished to continue the current contract for 1 more year.

Ms. Steketee questioned the amount for non-salary expenditures. Ms. Carey had used the 3 year average from 2008/9 to 2010/11. The current expenditures aren't quite that high. Committee will meet Monday at noon. Mr. Senechal asked that Ms. Steketee be there. She has a flight out but will see if she can make it.

**Health insurance increase 4.95%** - Mr. Senechal is an advocate for paying full-single health insurance coverage. This increase is reasonable but also feels that it will come to the point that the board can't cover the increase every year. Ms. Steketee agreed that to cover it now and address the possibility of a change is the year that the full negotiations is up for renewal. Ms. Lewis moved to approve the \$7321.80 for each person for insurance. Ms. Bryant seconded the motion which passed unanimously. \* Later in meeting Ms. Carey discovered an error in the number given for insurance. Ms. Lewis moved to approve \$7,684.20 in insurance for each employee. Ms. Jackson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Dyer asked about the non-renewal of Mr. Sonsteng vs. the renewal of Ms. Collins. Did we look at this as a reduction in force or a non-renewal. Is the board willing to give Mr. Sonsteng a due process hearing? Not sure he has been treated fairly.

Timing doesn't appear to be appropriate for the board to offer a due process hearing but the association or the employee can request one.

Mr. Charlton we don't need 2 administrators.

Contract of superintendent – hung up on what Rex is.  
Board has to be open to his management of the district.

Ms. Humphrey stated that the board needs to support Mr. Whealon  
Betty – boards have laypeople on them.

Ms. Bryant said that she has a lot of faith in Mr. Whealon and the decisions he makes. It's an overwhelming position to be in.

Ms. Lewis stated that Mr. Whealon has her total support. and encouraged members to remember that in supporting his recommendation concerning teachers.

Ms. Jackson added that Mr. Whealon has her total support.  
Ms. Jackson moved to offer Mr. Whealon the superintendent position for the 12/13 year. Mr. Senechal seconded the motion. Mr. Whealon is willing to take the position at the current rate \$92,925.00 for superintendent/principal. Ms. Steketee asked if there are any concerns in the contract. A new 1-year contract will be issued. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrative structure – deferred to the budget meeting.

Volleyball – Mr. Sturdevant recommended Ashley Mathis for the Head Coach position in volleyball. He added that the board needed to support the coach and also to follow the chain that is established for proper procedures. Natasha Mathis is recommended as an assistant volleyball coach. Ms. Lewis asked if he thought there would be any problems. Ms. Bryant mentioned that these coaches were very young and Dan will have to work with them to establish boundaries. The board may hear some complaints because of that. Betty Charlton added that support of the coaches was vital for a developing program. Ms. LeTexier asked if the head coach had a say in the assistant. Usually so but not in this case. Ms. Jackson moved to accept the recommendation of Mr. Sturdevant for Volleyball. Lynne seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Tennis coach(s) evaluation – Mr. Sturdevant is hoping Ms. Heaton will come back. Joe may plan to go to school in Bozeman. Ms. Lewis moved to approve the rehire of these two employees for tennis. Lynne seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Track and golf – will be ready at next meeting. Mr. Sturdevant has concerns with track coach.

**Classified contracts** – Ms. Jackson moved to offer contracts to classified employees Linda Allen, Cathy Carey, Laura butler, Frank Williams, Joe Sandoval, Paul Petroff, Matthew Kosola, Lance Peeler, and Heather Rykal. Ms. Lewis seconded motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Jackson moved to offer contracts to Mr. Lutkehus and Ms. Carey. Ms. Bryant seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Certified contracts** - Mr. Senechal moved offer contracts to Matt Allen, Becky Bruce, Samantha Humphrey, Dave Ramey, Fritz Bieler, Jessie Collins, Fictoria Foster, Charles Garnaas, Michael Hesford, Dave Hohenthal, Mark Kelly, Steve McCauley, Mary Williams, Linda Piccolo, Dave Ternes, and Tanya Getten. Ms. Jackson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Clerk evaluation** – Mr. Whealon stated that the business manager/clerk combination works for the board so the evaluation would be done by all board members and Mr. Whealon. Mr. Whealon will get the tool to the board members. July board meeting agenda item.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Policy cost of public information requests** – asked MtSBA to review the state outline Mr. Lloyd submitted. Not returned yet.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Negotiations/Personnel - Haven't met  
Policy. Agenda text being worked upon. 1310P for July meeting 1<sup>st</sup> reading.  
Budget - didn't meet.  
Building/grounds - didn't meet  
Teaching Learning - Didn't meet

COMMENDATIONS

Ms. Jackson commended Mr. Whealon and Ms. Carey – for putting up with the board for so long.

CONSENT AGENDA

**Consent agenda** – Jan asked to comment on the May 15 minutes. She said that “no reasons given as per state law” was not stated at the meeting. She added that the board indicated that they might hire a principal with a math endorsement. The board asked for a transcription of that portion of the meeting.

May 22 minutes Jan asked for clarification of quorum before pledge was said. Changes were made.

Sabrina stated that she was in contact with the county attorney and there is some question concerning the quorum question. The county attorney can request an attorney general's opinion. The board can go through their policies to clarify them as well. June 19th agenda item – request attorney general's opinion

Ms. Lewis moved to approve the consent agenda with the minutes' corrections. Mr. Senechal seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

CLERK REPORT

Audit report will be submitted when the last page is corrected to state proper school name.

SUPERINTENDENT  
REPORT and AD REPORT

**Mr. Whealon gave a projection on enrollment** – possibly that a couple years could be 230 students.

**Metal mines money** – reviewed by Mr. Whealon.

Mr. Senechal felt all the potential jobs should be bid and then the decision made on which projects to complete. The market for bids should be late summer, early fall.

**Report of fees** - \$175 – drivers education, \$20 - activity fee,  
A discussion followed about the activity funds not “breaking even”. Consider altering how concessions management is organized.

Booster Club gives free passes for JHS activities to donors who give a particular amount. At this point, the school is missing out on that fee.

Sandy Rux – wished there was a better procedure for letting the community know about activities.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE  
AGENDAS

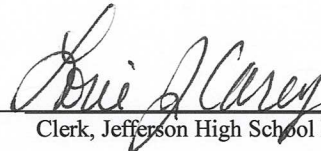
June 19th meeting – request attorney general's opinion  
June 19<sup>th</sup> meeting – board evaluation  
July meeting - Clerk evaluation  
July meeting - 1<sup>st</sup> reading 1310P  
July meeting -Track & Golf

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 11:00



Chair, Jefferson High School Board



Clerk, Jefferson High School Board

Negotiations/Personnel: P. Lewis, S. Senechal, T. Lloyd  
Policy/Handbook: P. Lewis, S. Steketee, L. Bryant  
Budget/Insurance/Investments: S. Senechal, K. Jackson, K. Eckman  
Building/Grounds/Transportation: K. Jackson, K. Eckman, T. Lloyd  
Teaching/Learning: S. Steketee, L. Bryan