



H.7.a.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 14, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.**

The Board of Education of the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools district convened a Committee of the Whole Board Meeting on Monday, April 14, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the Harry L. Wheeler Community Center and Administrative Offices, located at 24076 F.V. Pankow Boulevard, Clinton Township, Michigan.

A. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Mr. Al Doss, Vice President, called the Committee of the Whole Board Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Mr. Al Doss, Vice President
Mrs. Sharon Ross, Secretary
Mr. John Da Via, Treasurer
Mr. Jeff Cyprus, Trustee
Mrs. Sandra Hernden, Trustee

Absent: Mr. Adam Lipski, President – arrived at 7:12 pm
Mr. Shane Sellers, Trustee – arrived at 6:31 pm

Also present: Mr. Keith Howell, Superintendent
Ms. Lisa Montpas, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Michael Van Camp, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Ms. Kimberly Rawski, Director for Secondary Education
Mr. Tony Sedick, Director for Elementary Education
Ms. Nancy Supanich, Director for Special Education
Dr. Major Mickens, Director for Community Education and Student Services
Mr. Donald Gratton, Director for Operations
Mr. Brandon Streng, Director for Technology
Ms. Beth Disbrow, Director for Finance
Employees and Patrons of the District

Motion by Mr. Da Via, supported by Mr. Cyprus, to make this a voting meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Da Via, Cyprus, Doss, Hernden, Ross, Sellers

No: None

Motion carried.

A.1. Swearing in of New Board Member

Mr. Doss welcomed Mr. Jeff Cyprus as this is his first meeting since being appointed as Trustee. Mr. Cyprus read the oath and was sworn in by Anita Dzieszowski, notary public.

B. Bond Updates

Mr. Howell introduced Mr. Gratton who presented information about the Bond Program Project Series Transfers as listed in the Consent Agenda. Shifting some of the projects between Series 1 & Series 2 are relatively neutral but necessary as they will help achieve economies of scale during project completion. Representatives from Barton Malow and Partners in Architecture were also present to address any questions the Board may have.

Mr. Sam Esser of Barton Malow also gave a summary of technology-related transfers between Series 1 and Series 2. This will allow more parity project efficiencies between Series 1 and Series 2 benefitting the district's safety and security projects while accommodating the coordination of the installation of A/V equipment with construction projects scheduled in the buildings.

Discussion followed.

C. Superintendent's Report

C.1. District Update

Mr. Howell stated while there are many great highlights in the district there are also challenges. He read a report regarding the arrest of a student at High School–North on April 1, 2025 for an alleged crime that did not take place on school grounds nor in Macomb County. The district understands the gravity of the situation and a full investigation is taking place. A districtwide safety audit will also be taking place in the coming weeks.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Lipski arrived at 7:12 p.m.

D. Hearing of School District Patrons

Public comment began at 7:13 p.m.

- Mitchell Osadchuk, teacher (11 years) and parent, made a statement in support of the environment, culture and safety at LCHS-N. He thanked those who have stood behind staff and students.
- Michael Lynch, teacher (28 years) and parent, made a statement in support of LCHS-N. He stated has never felt unsafe or disrespected by administration or students. He stated he witnesses many more positive actions by students than negative, and feels very supported by administration. He thanked community for sending their kids to him to teacher and stated they are safe and loved at this school.
- Trindin Cavalier, teacher (27 years), read statement she had written prior to April 1 to all of the Board members in support of the remarkable learning environment, culture and climate at LCHS-N. The supportive and professional atmosphere benefits staff & students in countless ways.
- Heather Dishman, teacher (9 years), made a statement in support of LCHS-N. She does not like seeing the discord online and misinformation posted. She stated she is proud of her administration, the superintendent and the students and has always felt safe. The volatile and aggressive behavior online is not constructive. We should come together as a community and support one another.
- Mr. P who has no students currently in the district made a statement with several concerns about the district.
- Joel Patterson, parent, stated this is a very good district but questioned the policy of arrests in classroom/building.
- Carrie Ryan, parent, stated the teachers are phenomenal, but the Board needs to work together. She stated she feels the Board is split and the room is split. She would like to see better communication with parents, a clearer safety plan,, and the Board and Administration work together towards solutions. She also inquired about the parent advisory committee.
- Jacqueline Guzzo, parent, stated she feels trust has eroded in leadership. She stated it appears as though administration allowed a known threat in school and expressed concern.

Mr. Doss stated 30 minutes has been exhausted.

Motion by Mrs. Hernden, supported by Mr. Sellers, to extend the first session of Hearing of School District Patrons to go beyond the standard 30 minutes.

Discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Hernden, Sellers, Da Via, Doss, Lipski, Cyprus

No: Ross

Motion carried.

- Karla Warren, staff member (14 years) and parent, would like to see everyone refocus conversations and energy toward educating students. She stated she feels disheartened by the negative social media posts and the spreading of misinformation. Jostens professional development is needed in the current teaching climate.
- Carey Wolschleger, parent and former football coach at LCHS-N, stated he is hoping there is an internal investigation about the incident at LCHS-N to ensure it doesn't happen again.
- Tracy Miller, parent and police officer, stated she has security concerns about why the warrant was served in school. She feels trust is needed and in-house security resource officers would help build relationships with the students vs. Macomb County Sheriffs who are not able to be always present in the buildings.
- Marie Howard, parent and LCHS-N teacher retiree (25 years), stated she is very concerned about the presence of mold at Middle School-North and LCHS-N. She is requesting something be done to remediate the water/mold issue in the buildings.
- Yvonne Michalski, parent, stated the teachers are amazing but feels building conditions at LCHS-N are poor and the health & safety of students and staff are at risk. She stated the gym floor was sealed during school hours and questioned who approved this in October 2023.

Public comment ended at 8:09 p.m.

E. Department Updates

Mr. Howell stated most department updates are in the agenda. He introduced Mr. Van Camp for an update from Human Resources. Mr. Van Camp stated there will be a retiree recognition program on May 12 at 4:45 pm in Multi-Purpose room at Wheeler. Forty individuals will be honored, representing 1027 years of service to L'Anse Creuse.

Mr. Howell introduced Mrs. Supanich for an update from Special Education. Mrs. Supanich provided an update regarding the annual census cards. These cards are updated and reviewed annually. The printing company inadvertently mailed out the cards using an old template, not the current, approved one. The company has accepted responsibility and we are requesting a full refund from them for the cards and postal costs.

Discussion followed.

F. Curriculum and Instruction Office**F.1. Student Travel Requests**

Mr. Sellers questioned the ratio of staff to students and the funding of the Jostens Renaissance Leadership Conference trip. He stated he does not feel this is something that should be funded by the district. Mr. Sellers showed a video of a trip last year to Orlando.

Mrs. Hernden questioned previous expenditures on student travel requests and how many professional development days are gained from event.

Mrs. Ross questioned what staff members were attending and asked about budget approval for this conference. She also questioned why fundraising isn't in place for part of the costs of the trip.

Mr. Howell stated it was approved as a part of last year's budget. He recommended that we have some representatives from each school speak to elaborate on the details and benefits of the trip.

Mr. Da Via explained that the zero-based budgeting process was used in order to justify building needs. He stated he feels there is extreme value in professional development activities such as this but would also like to hear from the principals.

Discussion followed.

G. Business Office

G.1. Consent Agenda Items

Mr. Howell advised Mrs. Konon was not present today, but stated if there were any questions, she would follow-up on those when she returns. All information was provided in the agenda packet.

- Bond Program Project Series Transfer
- Accounts Payable Check Register Approval Reminder
- Budget Report
- Overtime Report
- Payment Registers
- Purchases Bond
- Purchases
- Quarterly Budget Update
- Summary of Investments
- Summary of Wire Transfers

H. Human Resources

H.1. Employment Recommendations

No questions or comments.

I. Technology

I.1. Technology Firewall Support Recommendation

Mr. Streng stated two bids were received and after evaluating both bids it was determined that Delta Network Services' bid met all the requirements and was the lowest bid for a total of \$61,231.50 and \$17,757.14 is E-Rate eligible. Of that amount, the district would be able to get 80% reimbursed which would be \$14,205.71. This will be brought to the Board for a vote on April 28, 2025. This licensing renewal is due July, 2025.

Discussion followed.

I.2. *Technology Network Electronics Recommendation

Mr. Streng stated five bids were received and after evaluating the bids, it was determined that Delta Network Services' bid met all the requirements and was the lowest overall bid when combining the costs for both Category 1 and 2 components. The district will bear the full cost of the project totaling \$1,131,626.84 using bond funds and seek the expected E-Rate reimbursement of \$817,464.72 once the filing window opens on July 1, 2025. This project was planned for Series 1 and the total cost falls within the bond budget.

Motion by Mr. Sellers, supported by Mr. Da Via, to approve the Technology Network Electronics Recommendation as presented.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

J. Operations**J.1. Abatement Associated with Yacks Flooring Project**

Mr. Gratton gave an overview of asbestos abatement and testing as a part of the flooring project. He will bring the detailed amounts to the next meeting. The bid was approximately \$37,000.00 and testing is expected to be about \$14,000.00. The total cost is expected to be approximately \$51,000.00 to include abatement and testing. No vote is necessary today.

Discussion followed.

K. Other Matters**K.1. Letter to Prosecutor Update**

Mr. Lipski asked if anyone has heard any follow-up regarding this letter. Mr. Sellers advised a news station requested follow up and he advised them to follow up with the police department. Mr. Lipski stated he would also follow-up on this.

L. Hearing of District Patrons Follow-up

Public comment began at 8:46 p.m.

- Carrie Ryan, staff member (20 years), stated the Board appeared to be more cohesive as the meeting went on, but stated there should be more conflict resolution. She also stated a concern about building conditions. She feels leadership conference is needed for the morale of teachers, administrators and students and hopes to see a compromise on this issue. She stated clarification about whether district is in deficit or surplus is needed. She stated parents and families can be resources to the district for low or no cost.
- Kelly McDevitt, teacher, stated as we are addressing a budget deficit, field trips and other expenditures by the district, it should be noted that the words and actions of this Board cost the district money in legal expenditures.
- Kim Anderson, parent, stated her family is a Schools of Choice family and she knows her kids are safe and appreciates the thorough process in place to enroll. She stated she is concerned about how the student arrested was able to be enrolled. She stated attending L'Anse Creuse is a privilege, not a right and feels staff at L'Anse Creuse supports & protects students.
- Michael Lynch, teacher, stated he understands the challenges in making decisions on how to spend resources, but reinforced the value of training and positive changes attending these conferences can bring to a building and improving the building culture.
- Trindin Cavalier, teacher (27 years), stated she has not attended Jostens but stated how much she has learned and the value she received from her peers who have attended this conference. She listed several community partnerships who have provided gift cards & coupons that are distributed to students and by staff and students as positive reinforcement. She invited Board members to visit her room to get a feel for the climate and culture this type of professional development brings to the student and staff environment.
- Andrew Zuremski, staff member, volunteer and Schools of Choice parent, stated the process for enrolling was very thorough and the people that help them through the process were amazing. He stated actions speak louder than words in terms of safety and would like to see improved communication, disciplinary policies, and procedures implemented building wide and district wide.
- Michelle Ropp, staff member and former district parent, stated speaking as an employee, improved morale is needed and feels expenditure on Jostens trip is unfair.

M. Board Member Comment

Mr. Sellers expressed concern about the incident at LCHS-N and that he looks forward to providing any information he can learned in the closed session.

Mrs. Hernden thanked community members who spoke and thanked families who contacted her. She stated she has received negative feedback regarding the student in question. She stated she spoke to parent of victim. She would like to see more accountability and transparency. She disclosed the arrested student did not live in district. She stated criminal matters are not protected by FERPA. She stated attorneys are threatening lawsuits and she is also looking to remove her child from the district as she feels the district cannot protect students.

Mrs. Ross spoke about the word “transparency”, as though the district is not transparent, and requested the “LCPS Watchdog” to not talk about transparency if they’re not willing to be transparent also.

Mr. Lipski thanked community members who spoke. He also thanked Mr. Howell for his hard work and time. He stated they spent over 70-80 hours together doing what is needed to investigate this incident over and above his day-to-day tasks. He stated they have a job to do and will inform the community as best as they can. He also thanked Mr. Gratton for all he is doing on the Bond projects and going above and beyond.

Mr. Doss stated we have a surplus but are in a budget deficit for the year only. He stated there are differing leadership styles and he believes in professional courtesy. He operates from a position of due diligence and wants the facts before he communicates. Putting the district at risk for liability and additional costs is not beneficial for anyone. As a parent, he too wants to see issues handled but it must be done in the correct manner. He stated he does not feel threatened by lawyers. They simply laid out what should or should not be done to mitigate risk for the district. The budget was approved for the Jostens Leader Conference last year by the Board. Even though we know now there is a budget shortfall, the job now is making decisions from here on out, not calling out teachers and staff about a decision made last year. He stated their job is to make the learning environment better and will proceed with more due diligence from here on out and re-evaluate for next year. He thanked the community members who spoke and also appreciates how difficult it is to do so.

N. **Closed Session

N.1. Motion to enter closed session under section 8(1)(h) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act to review two attorney-client privileged materials that are exempt from disclosure under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act.

N.2. Motion to enter closed session pursuant to Section 8(1)(c) of the Open Meetings Act for strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement.

Motion by Mr. Da Via, supported by Mrs. Hernden, to move into Closed Session for both above items at 9:27 p.m.

Break from 9:27 p.m. until closed session started.

Discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Da Via, Hernden, Doss, Lipski, Cyprus, Ross

No: Sellers

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sellers, supported by Mr. Cyprus, to reconvene to Regular Session at 12:25 a.m., April 15, 2025.

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Sellers, Cyprus, Hernden, Ross, Doss, Lipski, Da Via

No: None

Motion carried.

O. *Adjournment

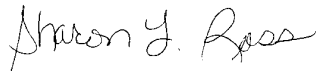
Motion by Mr. Sellers, supported by Mr. Da Via, to adjourn the meeting at 12:26 a.m., April 15, 2025.

Yes: All

No: None

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sharon L. Ross".

Sharon L. Ross, Secretary
Board of Education
SLR:cjg