April 7, 2014

A special meeting of the Sidney Public Schools Board of Trustees was held in the Superintendent’s Office (Room 105) at Central School on Monday, April 7, 2014, following the monthly Buildings & Grounds and Finance Committee Meetings at 7:00 PM on posted notice by the Clerk for the purpose of consideration of the District Superintendent vacancy. In attendance were Trustees Luann Cooley, Kelly Dey, Dennis Lorenz, Dexter Thiel and Craig Steinbeisser. Also in attendance were Superintendent Farr, Clerk Beyer, High School Principal- Sue Andersen, West Side Principal- Jon Skinner, Central Principal- Brent Sukut, Middle School Principal- Kelly Johnson, Curriculum/Federal Programs/Testing Coordinator- Thom Barnhart; SEA representative, Cara Lokken-Frandsen; Tami Edinger, Lynette Farr, Missy Sanders and Bill Vanderweele with the Sidney Herald. Absent were Trustee Serina Everett and Assistant High School Principal- Loretta Thiel.

Chairwoman Dey called the Buildings & Grounds meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Superintendent Farr reviewed the following Informational Updates:**

- Administrative Office Space- Conversations continue but plans are on hold pending the long-range facility study/ plan. Possible relocation of the Middle School to the High School and the building of a new high school would open up an opportunity to house Administration at the current Middle School. Mr. Thiel asked if the 8th grade could be relocated to the high school. This would result in the need to utilize one full wing for grade 8 which would negate any gain made by moving them;

- High School camera system update is complete and the increased security lighting will be underway soon as the ground thaws;

- Frontier Heating is addressing the repairs to the Middle School boiler/electrical issues.

- Dr. Farr also authorized updates to the electrical panel in the stage area in the amount of $3,327.00. This will make operation of the lights and utilization of the electrical panel much safer;

- Bradford Roof Management, Inc. has been contacted to provide an estimate on the West Side roof replacement for the insurance. Trustees discussed the type of roof desired. Consensus was rubber on the courtyard side, metal for part of the roof and shingles as necessary. The recommendation is to not over-spend on the west side of the building as there is a possibility of an addition in the next few years;

- The West Side gravity sewer line is in progress. It is anticipated the actual connection will be made over a weekend or Easter break as school cannot be in session when this is done; and

- Remodel of the first floor 1949 wing at Central is underway. Four feet is being added to the custodian space under the stairway, most of the framing in the rooms is complete and plans are to build two public bathrooms to replace the individual bathrooms in the classrooms.

**The meeting continued with Discussion Items:**

- The Request for Qualifications for the long-range facility plan has been sent to nine architects/consulting firms. A screening/interview process will take place narrowing the field to three or four to continue to the interview phase. This project must be completed by December 31, 2014;

- Langlas, contractor on the design/build of the CTE wing at the high school, has met with District representatives twice. Plans will be here by Friday and will be delivered to the Trustees once they are received. Dave Reynolds with Langlas will attend the board meeting on Monday night to answer any questions. From that point, Trustees can decide how they wish to continue; review the design and estimated cost then either move forward on the project including the option of re-bidding for construction or pay for the design work and drop the project; and

- Trustees discussed unfinished Middle School and West Side projects. Mrs. Cooley expressed a desire to complete the air conditioning at West Side. Mr. Thiel brought up the concept of utilizing mini-splits to complete this project. Ms. Dey mentioned the Middle School gymnasium is experiencing heating issues. Discussions will continue.

Chairwoman Dey called the Finance Committee meeting to order.

**Informational Items:**

- Clerk Beyer distributed copies of the March claims, February lunch report, monthly revenue, expenditures and fund balance reports;

- Mr. Farr reviewed the current enrollment which stands at 1311 district-wide. The District has had 129 new students and 133 withdrawals since the first day of school. 2014-2015 has 98 kindergarteners pre-enrolled;

- Bids for District property and liability insurance will be opened Monday night at the Board Meeting. Consultant, James Smith, will review the bids and have a recommendation ready for the May meeting;

- MUST rates for 2014-2015 show a 2% increase in premiums. The Insurance Committee will meet Thursday after school to review the rates and possible plan packages. Their recommendation will be presented at the board meeting. Interest Based Bargaining with the SEA will need to be scheduled the end of April/beginning of May;

- The worker’s compensation report from MSGIA was distributed. Types and numbers of claims as well as reserves to cover pending claims were reviewed; and

- Montana Quality Education Coalition will meet again in April. Concerns facing them include early childhood education and charter/private schools and vouchers.

**Discussion Items:**

- The 2014-2015 annual contracts with Altacare and Interquest Detection will be on the Consent Agenda;

- Clerk Beyer and Superintendent Farr reviewed conflicting information received on the options available to the District to continue Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs). Following questions and discussion, the consensus of the Trustees was to provide salaried staff with $3,000.00 (less tax expenses) worth of oil impact stipends instead of ½ going to HRAs with the intention of re-visiting the possibility of HRAs next year. Trustees will also look at the possibility of adding an additional oil impact stipend to classified staff in May; and

- Utilizing the provisions of SB 175 will allow the districts to reach maximum general fund budgets for 2014-2015 without running a mill levy. Election is scheduled for May 6th. The SEA will host a candidate forum featuring the four candidates running for two open spots at 6:00 PM on April 16th at the Middle School auditorium.

Chair Dey announced an opportunity for community comment on non-agenda items for the committee meetings. No comments were forthcoming.

As notice of the special meeting estimated the time as beginning between 8:15 and 8:30, Chair Dey recessed the meeting for five minutes.

At 8:11 Ms. Dey called the special meeting of the Board of Trustees to order. Daniel and Lynette Farr were no longer in attendance. Tami Johnson joined the meeting.

Ms. Dey announced that Larry Crowder was no longer under consideration by the Trustees as the District could not meet his financial requirements. She then asked for public comment with regards to the Superintendent search.

Bill Vanderweele asked if the Trustees could re-advertise. Ms. Dey said that was one of the considerations.

Thom Barnhart spoke about concerns regarding candidates coming from the west and their ability to take up the fight of the east at the legislature. He spoke in favor of re-opening the position and offering the position to Dr. Farr for an additional year at the same salary that would have been offered to one of the candidates.

Brent Sukut stated the District could always hire a lobbyist for legislative purposes but feels the District’s position would be better represented by the superintendent. He stated he felt it would be difficult for two of the candidates to do what it would take to keep the money in the area which would, in turn, impact student learning and hamper the ability to hire quality teachers.

Cara Lokken-Frandsen expressed concern about the abilities of either candidate to do the job expected of the Superintendent by the District.

Jon Skinner felt all candidates had greatness but Dr. Farr has been a great mentor and if he is a choice, should be considered.

Tami Edinger expressed the need for someone with a desire to stay in this community who is up to speed on dealing with the legislature.

At 8:20 PM Chairwoman Dey announced that the next matter to come before the Board was a personal matter and that she had determined as follows: 1) that the matter of the individual’s privacy is involved; 2) that such privacy demands protection of the individual for the sake of reputation, and otherwise, little, if anything, could be gained by publicly disclosing the information to be discussed; and 3) that the demand for privacy in this matter clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure. Therefore, she called for an executive session for the purpose of review of the superintendent candidate reference checks

At 8:45 Chair Dey reconvened the meeting.

Mrs. Cooley moved to thank the candidates that applied and to ask Dr. Farr to consider returning to finish the one year left on his contract for 2014-2015 allowing the Trustees the time to reopen the Districts’ search for a superintendent. Mr. Lorenz seconded the motion which passed on a 3 to 1 vote with Mr. Thiel voting against the motion and Mr. Steinbeisser unable to vote due to missing the interview on March 31st.

Preliminary discussion regarding possible staffing procedures to lighten the load of the superintendent will be continued at May committee meetings.

With no further business to come before the Trustees, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

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Board Chair

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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District Clerk