

**GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 304  
227 NORTH FOURTH STREET, GENEVA, ILLINOIS  
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 304 met in a regular session on Monday, September 10, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. at Coultrap, 1113 Peyton, Geneva, Illinois.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.1 Roll Call
- 1.2 Welcome
- 1.3 Pledge
- 1.4 Reminder to sign attendance sheet

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Grosso.

Board members present: President Mark Grosso, Vice President Kelly Nowak, Mike McCormick, Tim Moran, Policy Committee Chair Mary Stith, Finance Committee Chair Bill Wilson. Late: None.  
Absent: Matt Henry.

The President welcomed everyone, led them in the Pledge and reminded them to sign the attendance record.

District administrators present: Craig Collins, Assistant Superintendent Personnel Services; Donna Oberg, Assistant Superintendent Business Services; Patty O'Neil, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction; and Dr. Kent Mutchler, Superintendent.

Others present: Fred Dresser, Chris Bourdage, Patrick J. Murphy, Sandra Ellis, Brenda Schory (K.C. Chronicle), Jenny Scott, M. Lonsay, Geneva Teachers, Danica Fahmy, Jim Kurczek, Colleen Carrciro, Deb Jongebloed, Pat Zachwieja, Alexa Aguilar (Trib Local), and individuals who did not sign the attendance record.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Prior to opening the floor to public comments, the President commented on the following: There has been much comment, suggestion, and opinion over the last few weeks regarding the teachers' contract. He asked that individuals wishing to speak leave their negative comments at home on their keyboard, because we didn't need them at this meeting.

He added that the Board has a high regard for our teachers in this District, as they do for all of its employees. We are all aware of the tough economy. The Board's goal for the past several years has been to maintain a flat operating budget despite the increases in costs, in insurance, and in the debt service. The Board hasn't asked anyone to take a pay cut, has not reduced any jobs during this time, and has maintained the course offerings as we have in years past. He asked everyone for patience during this process (*teacher contract negotiations*). This Board is committed to seeing the current process through until a solution is reached and will negotiate in good faith with our teachers.

Regarding the term "surplus funds" being inquired about by some members of the press and being used in the community, he stated that to him surplus funds means that there is a big box of money sitting around doing nothing. What we have are reserve funds and those reserve funds are the same as one would have in a savings account. Those funds belong to the taxpayers. Those funds need to be spent wisely and as stewards of the taxpayers' money, we need to be very prudent with how we spend those funds.

The President reminded audience members that comments or discussion regarding individual students or personnel matters were not permitted and that individuals wishing to address the Board should come to the podium, use the microphone, and state their name and address as the meetings are video recorded.

The President requested a show of hands of those wishing to address the Board so he would know how to manage time. Four teachers and three community members indicated a desire to address

the Board of Education.

Comments included:

Thank you for the privilege of addressing you. Have been an educator for 25 years, 15 at GMS South. Have two sons who grew up in Geneva, graduated, attended wonderful universities and now one is employed as an IT specialist and one is a nuclear engineer for the Navy. Want to thank the Geneva school district, the wonderful, committed teachers, the administrators and school board for preparing them for successful lives. Respectfully, ask that the Board reconsider the hard salary freeze. I admit that I knew that maintenance and administrators had taken freezes before us and I was ready to do the same. However, over the past few weeks I have come to understand that the district's financial condition has improved somewhat, in part, due to the cuts and sacrifices that are still in place made by the entire staff, administration and students. The proposed hard freeze will have a continuing ripple effect long after the freeze is removed. Everyone is interpreting the facts and figures differently. In the past, the Board, the administration and the teachers shared a unified purpose. We need that unity now. I served on the teacher negotiation team for the past two teacher contracts and the model used, and that had been successfully used for many years in the district, was a problem-solving model. The purpose of that model was to set the stage for a win-win and not winners and losers. The model required that both teams did not come to the table with a set, must-have or a set position; rather that both groups bring the issues to the table, and then the issues are worked out in smaller groups within the teams, using the same information, cost sheets and figures to find solutions. It takes a tremendous amount of time, patience and energy. I'm asking for everyone here to push away the rancor from the outside. Entities like the *Geneva Patch*, although a helpful, informative web site, contain hateful and inaccurate accounts that only poison focus and cloud vision and, along with other very negative groups that are becoming destructive and divisive, have no place in our community or in this conversation. So, please, let's all of us come together as a group of leaders did in the past and rediscover the power of coming to the table with the desire for a win-win; to acknowledge that each side holds a different philosophical point of view regarding the economic issues; and that each is willing to step outside of their self to look at the whole picture. Do not unnecessarily delay or put on hold the negotiations because members of the teams from time-to-time have personal obligations. Now is not the time to put all on hold, that will only serve to raise feelings of mistrust. The future of our children rests upon your actions and the very fabric of our community rests in the balance. Cohesiveness and civic pride have been the hallmarks of Geneva and its residents. Please don't let divisiveness irrevocably damage that gift.

Thanks for the opportunity to address the Board. Have been an art teacher at GHS for the past seven years and want to share my story and that of other lower-paid teachers in the district. This has been a very troubling economic time when people in all occupations have been losing their jobs. Am grateful to have been able to teach art at GHS and hope to be able to continue to teach for a long time. Teachers go into teaching for the love of education and the love of students; not for love of money. Know that I won't become a millionaire during my career but always felt I would have a somewhat comfortable life, loving what I do. While it hasn't been exactly comfortable, I haven't complained until recently when I discovered that the school board is hung up on imposing a hard freeze which will have dire effects on all of us, especially teachers who are making well under \$50,000, have finished a master degree program and have student loans. My masters is in art education, not administration, so I can better serve the needs of my students. If I don't receive a lane change by the time my student loan kicks in, I won't be able to pay the loan back. The price of everything has gone up while my paycheck has not risen much since 2007, when I went full-time. I drive 63 miles to get to work and back. Gas prices, toll rates, and my car insurance have increased and I pay almost \$750 per month to get back and forth to work. A fourth of my income goes to property taxes on my home, inherited after my father's untimely passing. That \$10,000 goes toward the salaries of teachers of Lyon's Township High School in LaGrange. I have never felt that those teachers who make double what I make with the same experience and credentials are undeserving or greedy; which is what some people are calling Geneva's teachers. I, and many other Geneva teachers, are living paycheck to paycheck. Many teachers are not making the median salary of \$72,000 that local newspapers and *Patch* are claiming. I hope the GEA and Board will come to an agreement soon that will benefit everyone; teachers, administrators, school board members, and taxpayers. If an agreement isn't reached soon, students will discover that some of their teachers with masters degrees are flipping burgers and I think that would send the message that a career in education and receiving a higher education is not worth all of the sacrifices.

We are two Geneva teachers, parents and taxpayers who have lived here for over 30 years and combined we have over 60 years of service as teachers at Geneva High School as a librarian, social

studies teacher, baseball/football coach, and sponsor of activities such as the stock market game, now in its 33rd year, Senior Seminar, and sponsor of 15-16 student teachers. We are very proud to be Geneva Vikings. In all the years as teachers and parents, we've never before felt it necessary to speak before the Board. There were issues that may have led others to complain; like elementary boundary changes every two years for our daughter, resulting in her attending three different schools in six years. We trusted that the decisions made by the Board were done after great consideration, and it was our job to do our part to prepare our child for those changes, and we did. But we now feel that trust is eroding. We discovered that Geneva was a special place where we wanted to raise our family. We are proud that our children have had a Geneva education. The two oldest have graduated from college and secured full-time jobs and the youngest is a freshman in college. There have been many changes at the high school over the years but the quality of education provided to students has remained consistent. We are proud of our Tradition of Excellence. Let's continue a relationship of trust and cooperation by negotiating a contract settlement that is fair to teachers and considerate of the pressures on the school board and taxpayers. It's possible to meet the needs of all involved. Teachers do it every day in their classrooms. We've been in Geneva through many contracts, in economic ups and downs. What is most disheartening about the current situation is that in the past, all parties came together, each with their own perspective, but with confidence that an agreement could be made. The spirit of cooperation and trust is one of the things that made Geneva special. We have always felt appreciated, trusted and respected, and were part of a team that solved problems together. The relationship between a community, school board and teachers is an important one for Geneva's students. There was always a trust that parents, teachers and the school board were working together to ensure our students received the best education we could provide, while providing the best value, and achieving at the highest levels possible. The loss of that trust would be a critical blow to the learning environment in Geneva and difficult to rebuild. We fear that relationship is not a priority with this Board and is in jeopardy. The Board President has announced that he will be out of town, negotiations would not be held in his absence, and the earliest meetings could not be held until October 23rd. There is no need for the delay. The GEA participated in negotiations, even though the GEA President went out of town, and, again, when the GEA's chief negotiator was unavailable. We implore you, the entire Board and the administration, to negotiate in good faith and in a timely manner, to be the strong leaders our community admires, and to reaffirm to both teachers and community that we are all Geneva Vikings and we work together.

The Board President addressed the comment about his availability for negotiations. He noted that it was true that he would be out of town for several weeks but has made himself available to come back from a hunting trip he would be on earlier. He added that he wanted to point out to everyone here tonight that we did not have a meeting during the month of May, and it was not because the Board or the administrators didn't want to have one. They were waiting on the GEA. There was only one meeting in July after the Board was served a mediation notice. That mediation meeting wasn't productive because the GEA's chief negotiator wasn't there for the whole month of July. He commented that he didn't feel bad for taking some time off and going on vacation because he'd been involved in negotiations since last January, as had many other members of the Board of Education. We have made every meeting. If you were to look at the record, it's not the school board or the administration that has postponed meetings or chosen to cancel meetings. Before you throw those stones, take a look at the record, and we'll be glad to provide that for you. The President noted that he wasn't saying anything for applause. He was just stating some facts because he wasn't sure that all the teachers here have all of the information and all of the facts. He didn't know what their line of communication was but felt they need to improve those lines of communication.

A community member asked the teachers to please not tell part of the truth just to get what they want. She reported that a recent *Tribune* article quoted a representative of the teacher's union as saying: "The district is in a surplus state. They have the money to provide raises. It would be a different issue if the district didn't have the money on hand but since there is money available, it seems unfair not to keep teachers competitive with our neighboring districts." She added that the leader of the green shirts skewed the truth. The truth is that the Education Fund does show a surplus, approximately \$3 million, which is only one component of our total projected 2012-2013 budget, which hasn't even been approved. It is only a projection of expected revenues and expenses and it is assumed there will be a projected tax increase to cover the budget. There is a projected shortfall of \$2.4 million in the Operations & Maintenance Fund and \$4.2 million in the Transportation Fund. The real truth is that we are projecting a minimum of a \$4 million shortfall for the total budget that will require a tax levy increase for next year's taxes and we will increase a \$1.5 million debt service repayment. The only reason there is a surplus in the Education Fund is that tax collection allows the maximum of \$3.80 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The District has until December 24th to reduce

the projected expenses in this fund, which would make many taxpayers happy. They have over budgeted for many reasons, thus the “paper” surplus. The law allows the surplus to be moved among the funds that show negative amounts and that is what should happen. Anyone budgeting for a household knows a budget is an educated guess. If your budget for real estate taxes next year isn’t enough to cover the school district’s levy increase, you’ll have to take money from another area of your expenses, like food, medical expenses, or gasoline, to pay your taxes, or take out a loan. Don’t teachers really understand that the total budget is the bottom line, not just one single fund. Teachers, let your leader know that this is a different issue than her very misleading statement and there is no money piling up on hand just to hand out to teachers who want the same allowance as their neighbors. She asked the teachers to please do the right thing, don’t stretch the truth, and don’t plead a case on half-truths in front of children, and don’t use arguments that children use; the neighbor is getting more, so you deserve what they are getting. Please lead by example and don’t allow your fine reputations to lose credibility by insisting that you are entitled to something that doesn’t exist.

Unfortunately, I came tonight because I thought it would be about the budget. I would ask the school board to hold the tax levy. We’ve seen EAV decrease by over 10% in our community and it’s impact on property values. I don’t see the EAV’s increasing in the near future. As a 30 year resident in the community, I go back to the days when my school portion of the tax bill was about 61-62%. It has been rapidly approaching 68-69%. Please hold the line on the taxpayers as far as increasing. I’m aware you are limited and I’m aware that you are facing significant increases with the debt service. Nobody could have predicted what happened in the real estate market. We have to hope that we don’t see another down-turn. We lived this in the early 1980’s and it took a long time for us to recover. The District built for growth that didn’t happen. We don’t know when we will see growth in student population. I’m asking the Board to please hold the line on any increase on the taxpayers at this point in time.

Seems like people are telling stories tonight, so, I’ll share mine. I’m 55, married 32 years, have 3 children. Me and three of my co-workers’ jobs were downsized in 1995 when our division was sold. Now, 17 years later, I’m making \$2,000 more than I did in 1995. I haven’t complained about my salary to anybody. I’ve gotten up at 2:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning to drive a limousine for \$8.25 an hour plus tip. I live in the real world. I have a 401k plan that I contribute to. My employer doesn’t offer medical benefits. Like most of the people in the room who live in Geneva, I have lost about 40% of the market value of my home and for most people that is their savings or their nest egg for when they retire. Nobody could have predicted what has gone on since 2009, and no one is disrespecting or treating teachers unfairly. The world has changed. We have to adapt to that change. The district has spent us \$350 million in debt to build schools and the debt is back loaded and coming due in the next 15 years. Any imagined surplus is going to be eaten up quickly. I’m not asking anyone to do anything that no one else had to or has been forced to do. If my employer told me that he’d guarantee my salary for two years at its current rate, I’d ask where I could sign. Like most people in the audience, my salary isn’t guaranteed for the next two weeks. I’m asking everyone to live in the real world and do some research. Look at the financial history of the district. It’s not about a salary increase for a teacher, administrator, or bus driver. It’s about the viability of the entire community and that the taxpayers will be able to stay in their homes. The debt repayment will increase from \$14 million to \$25 million. Where is that \$11 million going to come from?

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3.1 Regular Session August 27, 2012

3.2 Executive Session August 27, 2012

Motion by Nowak, second by McCormick, to approve the minutes, as presented. On roll call, Ayes, six (6), McCormick, Moran, Nowak, Stith, Wilson, Grosso. Nays, none (0). Motion carried unanimously.

### **4. RECOGNITION, AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS, BOARD REORGANIZATION** None.

### **5. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

The Superintendent reported that he has attended the first Board of Directors’ meeting of the new year for both the Fox Valley Career Center and the Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative, as well as a workshop on the State’s new principal/teacher evaluation model hosted by the DuPage County Regional Office of Education and will be meeting with the principals to set goals for the year. He noted that the number of Geneva’s high school students participating in the Career center’s programs

has remained consistent at about 100 for the past two years and that a representative from the Career Center attended the high school's Back-to-School night last week in order to talk to students and parents about their programs. He added that many of the Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative's classes are housed in Geneva, which is a great benefit to our students, and allows them to stay in their home district. He thanked the Board members for meeting in a special session last Saturday morning to discuss the elementary boundary study process and timeline and thanked Board Members Henry and Stith for agreeing to serve on the superintendent's elementary boundary study task force. He noted that there will be plenty of communication and opportunities for forums with at least one at each of the elementary schools following the winter break and that they hope to finalize the study by the first part of March so everyone can plan appropriately.

## **6. BOARD DIALOGUE TOPICS & PENDING ACTION CONSIDERATIONS**

None.

## **7. WORK-STUDY TOPICS & FUTURE ACTION CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 Board Policy Updates First Reading:

7.1.1 2432, Driver Education, Amended

7.1.2 2464, Program for Academically Talented Students, Amended

7.1.3 2510, Adoption of Textbooks, Amended

7.1.4 2521, Selection of Instructional Materials and Equipment, Amended

7.1.5 7540.03, Student Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety, Amended

7.1.6 7540.04, Staff Network and Internet Acceptable Use and Safety, Amended

7.1.7 8315, Information Management, New

The Policy Committee Chair reported that these policies have been reviewed by the administration and the Policy Committee and are presented for a first reading. Most of the revisions were for language consistency. If Board members have suggestions for additional revisions, contact the superintendent or a member of the Committee. The policies will be brought for second reading and adoption at the September 24th Board meeting.

## **8. INFORMATION**

8.1 FOIA Requests & Responses

8.2 2012 Summer Institute

No discussion.

## **9. CONSENT AGENDA**

9.1 Personnel Report: Resignations, Retirements, Leave Requests, Changes in Assignment/FTE, New Hires

### Reclassifications Certified

Campbell, Amy, CO, REMS Grant Coordinator, 40 hrs/wk to 24 hrs/wk

Williams, Charles, CO, REMS Grant Director, 16 hrs/wk to 8 hrs/wk

### Long-term Substitutes Certified

Doll, Pamela, HSS/WAS, Social Worker, 1.0, 8/28/12 to 10/11/12

### FMLA & Leave of Absence Certified

Miller, Karen, FES, Grade 4, 1.0 FTE, 11/26/12 - 5/30/13

Trudeau, Rawnee, HSS/WAS, Social Worker, 1.0 FTE, 8/28/12 - 10/11/12

### New Hires Support

Gill, Rebecca, WES, Reading Tutor, 9 Month, Start Date 8/27/12

Livingston, Elizabeth, WES, Reading Tutor, 9 Month, Start Date 8/27/12

Meier, Kelly, FES, Reading Tutor, 9 Month, Start Date 8/27/12

### Long-term Substitutes Support

Kuykendall, David, Transportation, Bus Driver, 9 Month, Start Date 8/30/12

9.2 Banking Resolution MB Financial Bank

9.3 Gifts, Grants & Bequests: Geneva Theater Boosters, \$3,549.00, Auditorium Seating

A Board member requested that Consent Agenda Item 9.2 be voted on separately.

Motion by Moran, second by Wilson, to approve Consent Agenda Item 9.1 and 9.3, as presented. On roll call, Ayes, six (6), Moran, Nowak, Stith, Wilson, McCormick, Grosso. Nays, none (0). Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Wilson, second by Nowak, to approve Consent Agenda Item 9.2, as presented. On roll call, Ayes, five (5), Nowak, Stith, Wilson, McCormick, Grosso. Nays, none (0). Abstained, one (1),

Moran. Motion carried.

Board members thanked the Geneva Theater Boosters for the donation.

**10. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON BOARD OF EDUCATION ACTION**

Comments included:

As I stated earlier, I came tonight because I thought the focus would be on the budget but the more I heard, I decided to share a personal story. I joined my first union in 1972 and have been a proud dues-paying union member for all but six years of my adult life. In 1996, as a federal employee, step increases were eliminated. The only way to maintain or increase in a lane was to increase my skill-set. If I changed positions, the increase was lost. In 2006, during contract negotiations, and because we couldn't strike, we were forced to accept a 30% pay decrease. Nothing was won back until three years later and senior workers took only a 3% increase, while junior employees received an 11% increase to make up for the 30% decrease. 2006 was in a good economy. Step and lane is not status quo in unions. I fully support employees improving their functions, as long as it is for paying them for what they do. I don't see the value in getting a masters degree in administration when you are teaching art. The value is to the individual, not to the district. A lane increase in the area you are teaching brings value to the district and the individual deserves a lane increase because they are bringing skills that we as taxpayers want to see. We value good educators and have always valued good educators. I never expected to make what I'm making today when I entered my profession and I feel blessed to be making what I'm making. But I don't think that anyone that entered the education field in the 1980's expected to be making what they are today. Based on what I've heard here tonight, and it hasn't been reported in the newspapers, want to applaud the Board for your stance of holding firm on salaries. Thank you for doing that because the taxpayers in the community appreciate it.

**11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

*Policy Committee, Finance Committee, Facilities Task Force, Communication Task Force, Joint PTO, Geneva All-Sports Boosters, Geneva Music Boosters, Geneva High School Theater Boosters, Academic Foundation, GEARS, K-12 Discipline Committee, Geneva Coalition for Youth, PRIDE, REMS Grant*

A Board member thanked President Grosso, and members Nowak and Wilson for their work in the teacher negotiation process and commented that as a Board member not involved in the process, want to assure everyone that the Board is united, wants to help the community, believes in our teachers, and that we've taken the high road. A Board member commented that he felt it was absurd that the District had to spend the amount of time and expend the cost to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request from a Lombard, Illinois, investment firm, who it appears may want to make a bid, and wanted information about 403(b) carriers, vendors, participants, employee directory, etc. The President reported that while he will not be in attendance at the next meeting with the budget hearing being held as part of it at the September 24th Board meeting, he is 100% in support of the proposed budget and pledged the Board of Education's continued efforts to look for efficiencies as the 2013-2014 budget is developed.

**12. NOTICES / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**13. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER MATTERS PERTAINING TO COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATING MATTERS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC BODY AND ITS EMPLOYEES OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)]; AND THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE, OR DISMISSAL OF SPECIFIC EMPLOYEES OF THE PUBLIC BODY [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)]**

AT 7:52 p.m., motion by McCormick, second by Wilson, to go into executive session to consider matters pertaining to collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, and the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body. On roll call, Ayes, six (6), Stith, Wilson, McCormick, Moran, Nowak, Grosso. Nays, none (0). Motion carried unanimously.

At 7:59 p.m., following a break for the room to clear, the Board moved into executive session.

At 9:03 p.m., motion by Wilson, second by Nowak, and with unanimous consent, the Board returned to open session.

**14. ACTION POSSIBLE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None taken.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:04 p.m., motion by Wilson, second by McCormick, and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ PRESIDENT

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ RECORDING SECRETARY