

**NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**School Board Minutes**

School Board Meeting  
March 23, 2006  
Northfield High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order.  
Chairperson Kari Nelson called the meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District 659 to order at 7:00 p.m. Wendy Smith was absent. (Date was changed from March 27 to March 23 due to a lack of a quorum on March 27, which is the beginning of spring break.)
- II. Agenda Changes.  
The table file was added.
- III. Public Comment.  
State Representative Ray Cox reported on activity in the House of Representatives. A bill has been introduced allowing a flexible levy for districts in statutory operating debt. Also, Representative Cox indicated his willingness to work towards restoring a percentage of K-12 funding. He also thanked Superintendent Richardson and Board member Berthelsen for attending the leadership dinner. Berthelsen thanked Cox for making the opportunity available for school districts to inform their legislators of their concerns.
- IV. Approval of Minutes.  
On a motion by Hager, seconded by Cirksena, the minutes of the Regular School Board meeting held on March 13, 2006, were approved.
- V. Announcements.
  - Excellent and well executed Academic Award Banquets for Juniors and Seniors were held March 20 and 21 with four alumni receiving the 'distinguished alumni award.'
  - Northfield High School seniors battled the faculty in the third annual student-faculty basketball game and fundraiser. The proceeds of the game will benefit Andrew and Brenda Gilbertson, who are elementary teachers in the District. Brenda is battling terminal cancer.
  - Ethan Freier coordinated a Jazz Band Festival at the Middle School on March 16th. The two middle school jazz bands and the two high school jazz bands performed in the middle school auditorium. After they performed, they were given an opportunity to work with St. Olaf jazz band director, Dave Hagedorn. To close the day, the St. Olaf Jazz Ensemble One performed a short concert.
  - An excellent MS/HS Orchestra Concert was held on March 16th.
  - The Middle School Spelling Bee was held on February 7th. Mark Emmons was the champion. Haley Ryan placed second. Mark and Haley went on to the competition at the Southeast Regional Spelling Bee, which was held in Rochester on February 21. Out of forty-one participants, Haley Ryan placed first and will compete on March 28th at the Multi-Regional Spelling Bee. The winner of the Multi-Regional Spelling Bee will continue to the National Spelling Bee which will be held in Washington D.C., on May 31-June 1.
  - Greenvale Park Elementary participated in a seven day coin drive for Pennies for Patients in late January/early February. The money the school donated goes toward blood cancer research and patients services for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Greenvale's grand total to date is \$4769.86.
  - The Raiders speech team hosted its first tournament.

- Thank you to Community Services for arranging the "open lab" at Greenvale Park. Although the first evening was sparsely attended, it is still a great service to the community.

VI. Items for Discussion and / or Reports.

1. ARTech Evaluation Team Presentation.

Caroline Jones and Tim Goodwin provided the Board with an overview of the external visitation team's evaluation of the school and its program areas. The team report included a review of the academic program and curriculum, school/community climate, special education services, governance and administration, and finance and accountability. The report included commendations and recommendations in each area. District administration, using the criteria approved by the Board of Education and from the current sponsorship contract, will review the materials, as well as financial audit data and information from the Minnesota Department of Education, to complete the Northfield Public Schools evaluation of the ARTech Charter School. This evaluation will be forwarded to the MDE Commissioner who will complete a review and comment on the evaluation and return it to the District by late May or early June. The positive review and comment from MDE will allow the District to complete the sponsorship renewal process and approve a new 3-year contract with ARTech.

2. Wind Turbine Presentation.

Bruce Anderson of RENEw Northfield presented a new proposed Wind Turbine Project for the Northfield Public Schools. A similar project was placed on hold in July of 2004 because the identified state and federal funding and incentives to complete the project were no longer available and the District felt it could not afford to invest the dollars needed to make the project successful. The new proposal is for a joint project with Rice County with the possible co-location of several wind turbines on the Rice County Landfill site south of Northfield. The County and several other entities are considering locating wind turbines on this property and might be willing to lease space to the School District to install a District wind turbine on the same site. The District's wind turbine would be funded using a special federal no interest energy loan program that would be paid back with the dollars earned from generating power and selling it to Excel or Great River Power. The loan would pay for application development, engineering, turbine purchase and installation and grid connection. The plan will also include appropriate amounts for maintenance and updates. As with the last wind turbine proposal, time is of the essence since the final application must be submitted for the loan by April 26, 2006. Even if the District's application is approved, it does not obligate the District to move forward with the wind turbine project. Under no circumstances will the Board use any District funds to complete or implement this project.

On a motion by Hager, seconded by Cirksena, the Board - on a five to one vote - asked Bruce Anderson of RENEw Northfield to complete the application and bring it with anticipated pre-production costs and other documents to the Board for final Board approval at the April 10, 2006 Board meeting with the understanding that this process would be at no cost to the School District. Voting 'yes' was Hargis, Stratmoen, Cirksena, Hager and Nelson. Voting 'no' was Berthelsen. Smith was absent.

3. Update General Fund Budget Forecast Based on Approved Reductions.

The forecast used for Statutory Operating Debt reporting and Finance Committee deliberations during December and January has been updated to reflect the approval of

\$707,158 in budget adjustments at the recent March 13, 2006 Board meeting. Director of Business Affairs Tom Stringer presented various scenarios that could play out given upcoming referendum renewal/replacement and/or additional budget adjustments. No Board action was required on these potential forecast scenarios.

VII. Superintendent's Report

A. Items for Individual Action

1. Proposed Debt Service Budget for 2006-07.

On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Hargis, the Board approved the proposed 2006-07 Debt Service Budget as presented.

2. Village School Sponsorship.

On a motion by Berthelsen, seconded by Hager, the Board approved sending a notice to the Village School of the proposed non-renewal of the sponsorship contract at the end of the 2005-06 school year.

B. Items for Consent Grouping.

On a motion by Hargis, seconded by Hager, the Board approved the following items listed under the Consent Grouping.

1. Agreement with Rice County Family Services Collaborative.

The Board approved the agreement between the Northfield Public Schools and Rice County Family Services Collaborative for hiring Mary Loven as the Collaborative's Parent Education and Support Facilitator. The Agreement details the duties and costs associated with this position.

2. Personnel Items.

a. Appointments

1. Co-Curricular Assignments

Amy Blom, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade PT Assistant Softball Coach (Hourly)

b. Resignations / Retirements

1. Jennifer Riley, Housekeeper at Bridgewater School, resignation. Her last day of work is March 23, 2006.

2. Rachel Peterson, Reading Recovery and Title I Teacher at Bridgewater and Sibley Elementary Schools, retirement effective end of the 2005-06 school year. Ms. Peterson has been with the district for 31 years.

3. Patrick Foley, Special Education Teacher at the High School, retirement effective end of the 2005-06 school year. Mr. Foley has been with the district for 27 years.

4. Suzanne McDowell, English Teacher, resignation effective end of the 2005-06 school year.

c. Increase in Hours for Non-licensed Staff

1. Shari Acosta, Special Ed Educational Assistant at Greenvale Park, add ½ hour per day, 3 days per week, beginning April 4, 2006, for the remainder of the 2005-06 school year.

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2. Angela Nielsen, Special Ed Educational Assistant at Greenvale Park, add 1.0 hour per day, 3 days per week, beginning April 4, 2006, for the remainder of the 2005-06 school year.

3. Grant Application.

A grant application for Grace Whittier Funds to support summer programming plans for the Middle School Youth Center submitted by Susan Sanderson, Youth Programs Coordinator, was approved.

4. Gift Agreement.

The Sibley PTO has donated \$3625.00 to be used to purchase a "climbing wall."

VIII. Future Meetings

Monday, April 10, 2006, 7:00 PM, Regular School Board Meeting,  
Northfield High School Media Center

Monday, April 24, 2006, 7:00 PM, Regular School Board Meeting,  
Northfield High School Media Center

IX. On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Cirksena, the Board adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Katy Hargis, Clerk