

**Cardinal Local School District  
Special/Work Session Meeting  
January 25, 2017**

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The **Special/Work Session Meeting** of the Cardinal Board of Education held at 6:00 p.m. on January 25, 2017, was attended by Ken Klima, Wendy Anderson, Greg McClain, and Katie Thomas. Linda Smallwood was absent.

**Officer's Oath of Office**

Mrs. Anderson was sworn in by Treasurer Merry Lou Knuckles

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Do you solemnly swear that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Ohio, and that you will faithfully and impartially discharge your duties as Vice-President of the Board of Education of the Cardinal Local School District, Geauga County, Ohio, to the best of your ability, and in accordance with the laws now in effect and hereby to be enacted during your continuance in said office, and until your successor is elected and qualified:

The answer is "I do". Mrs. Anderson responded, "*I do*".

The new officer took her elected position and the meeting continued.

**Discussion Item:**

Pay-to-Participate Fees – Dr. Hunt stated at the last meeting we discussed the PTP fees and determined the starting fees for all spring sports, but the cap has come up. We decided to hold off discussion until further information was available. Currently we have set the deadlines for collection of fees and determination of whether there will be a team or not. The musical deadline was February 1<sup>st</sup>, baseball and softball was February 17<sup>th</sup> and track was February 24<sup>th</sup>. He shared with the board a document that showed the fees and outstanding fees for those students who played last year. He believes we need to hold to what was said at the last meeting. *Mrs. Thomas stated last year the four of us were given a recommendation to lower the fees from \$400 to \$300 and establish a family cap. At no point in that discussion did we say if the levy failed we would revisit the cap. Now we are changing this. Some families understand the dilemma, but we need to consider a little break. We need to consider a fair situation for all involved. We set a price and a minimum amount of participants. We said if over the minimum, the amount of the fee would be reduced. She heard they had to pay in full and then they would be reimbursed later. Not sure how that will work out. We have not heard much about the past due PTP fees. How much are out there and how are we working to get them collected.* Dr. Hunt replied he wanted Andy Cardinal here to answer those type of questions. We have in place that you are to pay the fee for one sport before you can start the next sport. This is not a new thing. It has been around for a while. We have been loosely following this. We need to make sure the fees are collected to cover the costs of that sport. *Mrs. Thomas said this was not part of the board discussion. This is a bad time of year to pay bills. This is not the time to upset parents.* Dr. Hunt repeated again, paying for the first sport before playing in the second sport is not new to the District. *Mrs. Thomas stated past practice is we have not done this and she hopes we can request the spring sport money now, but set a deadline of May 15<sup>th</sup> to have all money paid. Seniors have to have the money paid by graduation. We are hitting the parents hard and she thinks it would be fair to allow parents to make payments for past due fees, but that is just her opinion.* Dr. Hunt again stated, what we are doing is nothing new. He appreciates her opinion, but we set this meeting to focus on the family cap. We have three families that have met the cap and 3-4 other families that are close to the cap right now. *Mr. McClain does not think we can honor the cap right now. We have to make decisions based on the information available at the time. We as a Board felt good about the levy passing. If we are trying to tell the community we need money because we are strapped, then we need to stand firm. It is unfortunate, but we need the fees paid and the costs of spring sports covered.* Mrs. Anderson said the reality is it has always been that way, but it was never truly enforced. Some

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would pay the fee and some would not until they absolutely had to. We set the cap because we suppose to get money from the Fenselon Foundation – which we did and thank you very much for your continued support – and from the boosters which we have received. We need the fees to be paid on time. We have sent out quarterly letters, but we have not always been successful at collecting the money until we put our foot down. *Dr. Hunt shared some information from Andy Cardinal. There was over \$30,000 in uncollected fees when he started three years ago and there is half that number now. Letters are sent out at least once a grading period as that is the current mechanism. Most of the fees outstanding are expected to be paid by the end of the season. We realize when we are talking about levying a fee on families we have to be flexible and try to work with the families. This puts us in the current situation where we have past due fees adding up. We have to concentrate on being afloat in July. This is a dire situation for the District.*

Candi Peters asked if they were allowed to ask questions. *Mr. Klima said as long as they keep it from getting into a debate. Mrs. Peters stated she hears everything the Board is saying, she has been to the meetings, talked to the office, and knows we have several parents on payment plans. The only people being affected by this whole new fee structure are those participating in spring sports and the musical. The others do not have to worry about paying off their fees. She would like to request a little olive branch where we need to pay the spring fees up front to make sure there are the numbers as required. We need to make sure all folks are being held accountable. Right now the only people being held to this consequence are those involved in spring activities. This is putting a huge burden on parents to pay all of this up front. There has been no time to plan or implement a fundraiser. She is not sure how paying it all in February instead of May will put any more money in your bank account. Bill Poole agreed this is a sensitive situation. He loves Mrs. Thomas' proposal and understands Mr. McClain's position as well, but if you combine Mrs. Thomas' and Mrs. Peter's together it would work better. How are you getting all this paid? What are you holding over them? Everyone here at this meeting is involved and lives in the community. Huskie Nation will be giving all of the money raised from Saturday night's fundraiser for spring sports. He hopes the Board will give Mrs. Thomas' proposal some thought because it holds everyone accountable. We are here to help and do not want to upset more people when we need their support for the District. People are threatening to leave the school. His kids go here because they love the school and the sports program. He wants to help keep it going.* Mrs. Anderson asked Andy Cardinal about the payment plans. Were the payments all made before the season ended? *Mr. Cardinal stated it has always been the same plan. Three payments are made during the season to pay off the amount due, but there are some folks with larger values and we have tried to set up a little different plan for them. Most people are diligent and make the payments.* Mrs. Anderson wonders if those on payment plans are willing to continue to do so and then agree to pay the spring sports fee in full now. But, what do we do with those that are not involved with spring sports. *Mr. Cardinal responded most on the payment plans have indicated they will be paid off by the end of the season.* Mrs. Thomas stated students who have already met for spring sports have been told they must pay all outstanding fees as well the current PTP fee. That was not a Board decision. *Dr. Hunt stated it is not a decision to be made by the Board.* Mr. Cardinal said the fact that the fees have to be paid prior to the start of the season is not new. We have set up payment plans by the end of the season, but we have been flexible. *Mrs. Thomas said they are not truly enforced. The payment plans need to have all fees paid in full by May 15<sup>th</sup>.* Mr. Cardinal stated there is no accountability to pay unless the student is listed as ineligible to play until it is paid. *Dr. Hunt added this is part of the reason we are in this situation now. If you do not pay you will not be eligible for the next season.* Mr. Cardinal agreed, but if we held strictly to this we would have cancelled half of the varsity sports and the musical over the years. Most people do their best to make the payments. *Mr. Poole feels if it was strictly enforced we would have had the teams and no money issues.* Nick Ciminello said he understands what is being discussed, but it only affects the spring sports. The soccer player would have six months to pay, but spring sports only have two weeks. He understands they should pay on time and he feels the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for all outstanding fees is fair to everyone. *Mrs. Anderson was not sure how the rest of the Board feels, but she would be in agreement that they must be on a payment plan for the back fees to be paid in*

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*full by May 1<sup>st</sup> as opposed to May 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Cardinal would agree with the May 1<sup>st</sup> date as it hits better for the seniors who have to pay in full before being able to graduate.*

Bill Poole said the Board did not answer Dr. Hunt's question about the family cap. *Dr. Hunt stated we are here to talk about the family cap. He understands all of the other issues, but we need to be operational at the end of June. Mrs. Peters asked if they take away the cap is it only for spring sports. Mrs. Thomas said the parents need time to make payments and not have this sprung on them. Mr. Cardinal stated again that this is not new. Paying the fee by the start of the season has been the rule all along. May 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> sets a hard date for everybody. Start this as of May 15<sup>th</sup> and make it a hard goal going forward. Mrs. Thomas understands we need money in the bank. In her point of view, if we give parents time to pay the back fees, then we will have all the fees paid in full by the end of the year. That is what the District is trying to do. People will see where we are financially and we do not need to upset the parents. Public perception is crucial at this point. We need to pass this levy and the one in November. We need to keep the good will going. We need to show that we care and have folks say that the District does indeed care for our kids by hearing from you who are here at this meeting. Elizabeth Robinson was at the last meeting. Her family has met the cap and she knows the financial situation of the District. She has had time to consider the effect of the family cap on her family. She could not in good conscious ask the Board to make concessions for her family. We will have decide what to do with our kids. She could not have someone else pay for her kids. Mr. Cardinal said the names he provided to the Board have three families that have met the cap and there could be more hitting the cap after one student participating. Dr. Hunt feels we should hold hard and fast to get the numbers and get the money collected. Once it is done, it will be some work to make the necessary refunds, but we need to make a decision and stick to it. Mr. Poole thought you could save some money by applying the refunds to past due fees. Mr. Cardinal has meet with all teams but track and said he would be in touch once he had more information. Parents want to raise funds for the PTP fees. We are running youth basketball tournaments and that money will go directly towards PTP fees instead of towards officials.*

*Mr. Klima thought there was a lot of good discussion here tonight and we as a Board need to make a decision. Mr. McClain does not disagree with a payment plan for the payments in arrears if the family is in good standing and agrees to pay the spring sports up front. On the list of students, there is one student who owes for baseball last year and for fall sports. Fall sports should have been paid by now. We need to make sure these are paid regardless of what decision we make tonight. Mr. Cardinal replied that is a long standing problem. We need to hold to the eligibility rules. You must pay for one sport before starting a second sport. Usually most parents are able to do that, but then go on a payment plan for the second sport. Mrs. Peters thinks it would be easier this year to set a deadline for everyone to pay by the end of this year. And going forward we will have time to fundraise and plan for next year. Make sure everyone understands the deadlines and enforce them for all people. Mr. Cardinal stated some people will not pay until they absolutely have to. We could have this in place in the fall. He has tried to enforce this with some flexibility for two years now. Short of using a collection agency, he has tried to collect the funds due. Mr. McClain believes we need to take the hardline approach going forward but he does like the idea of an adjustment period. They will know the cost and commit in writing to pay in three payments. They need to be prepared for the consequences of their child not playing due to outstanding fees. Michelle Soltis thought it will be helpful to know what the cost will be ahead of time so they can plan accordingly.*

Mr. Klima stated we have elementary students participating in the musical. He feels they should have to pay the fee as well. *Kitty Rose agreed. They have to pay to participate in rec programs. Dr. Hunt recommends not charging the elementary parents the fee. We have not done so in the past, but it is up to the Board. Mr. McClain asked how many student are affected by this. Mr. Cardinal thought there were five elementary students involved. Sports fees have been for seventh grade and up. Mr. McClain said \$162 was based on 35 participants. We should collect the fees and then when we go back to everyone it would only cost \$105, \$8 less with*

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*including the four or five kids. Mr. Ciminello feels it would promote this type of participation in future years by not charging the elementary kids. Mrs. Robinson agreed it would help with community relationships.*

The Board decided not to charge the elementary students participating in the musical. Mr. Klima thanked everyone for their participation in this discussion.

Mr. McClain moved and Mrs. Anderson seconded a motion to repeal the family cap for spring sports.

Roll call vote:

Ken Klima, aye    Wendy Anderson, aye    Katie Thomas, aye    Greg McClain, aye

Mr. McClain moved and Mrs. Thomas seconded a motion to require spring sports and activities to be paid in full up front and all other outstanding pay-to-participate fees to be paid in full by May 1, 2017.

Roll call vote:

Wendy Anderson, aye    Katie Thomas, aye    Greg McClain, aye    Ken Klima, aye

**Superintendent's Report**

**Action Items:**

**Human Resources/Personnel**

Mrs. Anderson moved and Mrs. Thomas seconded a motion to approve the following personnel matters:

Supplementals

- Vanessa Pintabona, Musical Director, Step 0 - .07.
- Josh Esenwine, Musical Assistant, - .04

*Mrs. Thomas stated since 2004 Vanessa is the eighth person to become the musical director. This is a big job being producer, director of staging and dialog. Her husband did it for 30 years. She hopes we can all support her as she takes on this project. It is a wonderful show – the Sound of Music. We need to embrace all the kids participating.*

Roll call vote:

Ken Klima, aye    Wendy Anderson, aye    Greg McClain, aye    Katie Thomas, aye

**Adjournment:**

Mrs. Anderson moved and Mr. McClain seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

Roll call vote: unanimous yes.