

February 8, 2012

The second Joint Board of Education meeting between Chatham Central School District and the New Lebanon Central School District was held on February 8, 2012. The meeting was held in the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Cafeteria and called to order at 7:00. The Chatham Board members in attendance were John Wapner, President; James Toteno, Vice President; Gail Day; Francis Iaconetti; David O'Connor; Melony Spock; James Marks and James Cartin. Michael Clark and Student Representative, Catherine Fowler were absent. New Lebanon Board members in attendance were Monique Wood, President; Raymond Sowalski, Vice President; Christine Sotek; David Kroboth and Michael Bienes. Tracy Bingham and JoAnn Gavrity were absent.

CALL TO ORDER

Other in attendance were Cheryl Nuciforo, Superintendent Chatham School District; Karen McGraw, Superintendent New Lebanon Central School District; Carrie Nyc-Chevrier, New Lebanon Business Administrator; Lisa Connell, Chatham Courier; Emilia Teasdale, Columbia Paper and several community and staff members.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the Pledge of Allegiance the following business was conducted.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Superintendent, Cheryl Nuciforo, stated there was a change to the agenda. She would like the Board to vote on **R. 96**, the board minutes of the January 25, 2012 joint Board with New Lebanon Central School District meeting, before the Superintendent's Report.

Motion by James Toteno, seconded by James Marks to approve the present agenda as amended. **Motion Carried 8-0**

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS-NEW BUSINESS

Motion by James Marks, seconded by Melony Spock to approve **R. 96 BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accept the minutes of the January 25, 2012 Joint Board of Education meeting with New Lebanon Central School District. **Motion Carried 8-0**

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

Information Regarding Merger/Consolidation Studies- The purpose of this second joint board meeting was to further discuss the option to go forward with the grant application to fund a merger study between the two districts. Superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo gave an overview of the discussion at the joint Board meeting with New Lebanon from January 25, 2012. At this joint Board meeting the Boards felt that a merger study would yield beneficial information to what works best for both districts. The Board members also wanted further information about the process of the merger study, the impact of projected financial climate and information from other districts that have been involved in merger studies. Mrs. Nuciforo reviewed the meaning of shared services, merger, and functional consolidation. The goals for both

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districts are programmatic opportunities and responsible financial decisions.

Mrs. Nuciforo explained the merger study process and the commitment that such a study would entail. Financially, the tax impact of a merger is unclear. Mrs. Nuciforo stated that incentive aid may not be enough to offset increases. Karen McGraw, New Lebanon Central School District Superintendent, stated a merger may not always result in savings. A possibility would be for the districts to explore a Financial Study. The Financial Study would show if it is feasible to even consider a merger. Options to consider at this point: apply for merger study grant, do not collaborate, or explore other options for collaboration this spring and next year, or complete Financial Study to determine projected tax impact of merging.

Chatham Board Member James Cartin addressed both boards with concerns with declining enrollment, stating that we need to be thinking of not just the next five years but the next ten years. Collaboration may not be enough for long range. Mr. Cartin asked if we have considered a way BOCES could assist us. President John Wapner of Chatham suggested we collaborate on what we can do now and what we want to be doing in the next 5-10 years and watch what happens to neighboring districts. Superintendent Nuciforo suggested we approach BOCES and start a regional conversation programmatically where we want to be in 5-10 years and have questions answered.

At the end of the joint meeting the consensus both boards determined there will be no merger study at this time. Both Districts agreed to explore other possibilities. They agreed to move forward with a financial study to see what the tax implications of merger may be.

Superintendent of New Lebanon, Karen McGraw, recapped the next steps. Start a regional discussion with BOCES; have collaboration discussions through next year; engage in an enrollment study and a financial study for both districts. Chatham has already completed an Enrollment Study. The Superintendents will meet. A small group meeting with representatives from both Boards will meet at the end of February to plan another joint meeting between the two school districts in March. The purpose of this meeting will be to structure the long term programmatic discussion. By December of 2012, the districts should have enough information to decide next steps.

Motion by James Marks, seconded by Melony Spock to adjourn meeting. Time: 8:24 **Motion Carried 13-0**

ADJOURNMENT

Deborah Pottenburgh
Chatham Central School District Clerk

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