THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Special Meeting - June 24, 2003

MINUTES

The School Board of St. Lucie County held a special meeting in the School Board Room at approximately 3:00 p.m. on June 24, 2003.

PRESENT: DR. JOHN CARVELLI, Chairman

Member Residing in District No. 3

MS. CAROL A. HILSON, Vice Chairman

Member Residing in District No. 2

DR. SAMUEL S. GAINES

Member Residing in District No. 5

MRS. KATHRYN HENSLEY

Member Residing in District No. 4

DR. JUDI MILLER

Member Residing in District No. 1

ALSO PRESENT: DR. WILLIAM VOGEL, Executive Officer/

Superintendent of Schools

**BUDGET WORKSHOP (CAPITAL PROJECTS)**

A) Legislative Changes

Chairman Carvelli started the meeting and Mr. Marty Sanders, Executive Director of Facilities, and Maintenance, reviewed legislative changes on class size reduction. Staff was waiting on the law to be written to implement the class size amendment which was finalized in Senate Bill 30A. DOE was now trying to make final interpretations of how the law will be implemented and what it would mean to the FISH program. A preliminary analysis of the plant survey had been done by the district’s consultant, John Love, using the small class size amendment. Elementary school stations would be reduced to 13,483; middle school stations would drop to 8,400; high school current capacity would drop to 11,200. Class size reduction would eliminate 7,556 spaces in the district’s schools. Many schools may have a student station capacity of 28 but this would be further reduced to 18. The district’s Plant Survey showed the impact of class size reduction (see column F and G). Mr. Sanders directed the Board’s attention to the survey numbers for each school (see handout in supplemental minutes packet). The district would need a total of 218 additional classrooms to meet the CSR and keep the same capacity at each school. Options to make up student stations that would be lost through CSR were: 1)build additional classrooms either through modular construction or build a traditional classroom wing addition; 2) leave schools at the reduced capacity and build new schools, or 3) look at sub-dividing classrooms. Mr. Sanders stated that the district’s FISH capacity showed 41,000 student stations with an enrollment of 31,000. Consequently, the numbers did not mean anything due to the size of classes. The district could never achieve the number of students that FISH said the district had. Total full time equivalent projections for 2007-08 were 34,315 based upon last year’s DOE projections.

Mr. Sanders concluded that the district had little room for growth with projected growth and CSR.

- Based upon FISH methodology, the district currently had 41,000 student

stations. When classsize reduction is implemented, the district will

have 33,879 (a lost of 7,500 student stations).Actually, the district would

not lose 7,500 due to class size reduction grants that allows the district to

meet that reduction already. From a capital perspective, the district would

be losing the student stations (what had already been built).

- The exact allocation for class size reduction was currently unknown by

district staff--Mr. Bargeron estimated $7 million based on the district’s

pro rata share of FTE. There was also another $30 million dollars that

the district should draw on for its local effort. However, by having a

sales tax authorized and having a GO bond ad valorem tax would not

benefit the district that much because they were looking at the long term

revenue earning potential and both of those items would be gone in a

few years. They were not looking at impact fees.

- Dr. Carvelli wanted to know how long the district could anticipate

receiving some funding on capital from the state even though it’s year

to year. Mr. Bargeron indicated he had no idea how much funding

would be coming from the state.

- In terms of use, Dr. Carvelli asked if there were any areas where some

growth could be handled. Mr. Sanders said the 41,000 number included

all student stations and all portables. Due to the size of classes, the

district had very little room for growth. The district was receiving about

500 new elementary students per year. If 4,300 student stations are

eliminated due to class size reduction, the impact would overwhelm

the growth. Mr. Sanders referred to the bar charts and pointed out that

the darker area showed the student stations that could not be used because

of the way the schools are used. If the district recouped the student

stations, the greatest percentage would be in the elementary schools

and a fair amount in the middle schools.

- Dr. Gaines asked if the Fishkind report had taken into consideration that

various schools had different configurations that affected how space was

utilized. Some may possibly be re-configured in order to provide extra

seating capacity. Mr. Sanders said that had not been taken into consideration

and that may be a philosophy decision v. individual use. Schools and

principals have been allowed to utilize space as they felt was necessary.

- Mr. Sanders stated if schools did not have floating teachers, the best

occupancy rate was 80%.

- Ms. Hilson mentioned that DOE did not care about curriculum and asked

if there was a way to list possibilities and some of the unused facilities

the district had right now.

The accountability for class utilization rested with the principals and

school scheduling. There was a class utilization report which the

facilities department could review. Zone executive directors could

also look at the schools to see what was practicable regarding best

utilization of schools. Dr. Miller looked at the range of percentages

of how well capacity was being utilized and there was some room

for improvement due to budget constraints. Dr. Carvelli asked Mr.

Sanders to put some utilization ratios together for the Board to

review (actual enrollment vs. FISH capacity). The Board may

want to set some standards for utilization, realizing there may be

some extenuating circumstances involved. The Board needed to

look at programs, needs, and facility use.

Mr. Sanders informed the Board that the Plant Survey recommended that the district would need four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. The question to Mr. Sanders was how much capacity and in what areas would that give the district.

Dr. Vogel suggested looking at what sights it was practicable to add capacity and then fill in with new facilities. Staff needed direction quickly from the Board. Mr. Sanders indicated he thought an architect should be brought on board (either through continuing contract with the limitation there would be $1 million worth of construction). An ad for specific multiple architects to help the district implement the class size reduction could be used or schools with the same floor plan could be combined. Dr. Carvelli suggested getting one architect on board to master plan the sites

short term (five years). Dr. Miller liked the suggestion of pulling the sister schools together to determine efficiencies and programs as a start. Mrs. Hensley stated she would like to see the work moved around to get more people tied in and share knowledge rather than go with one architect.

Board members asked that staff look at enrollment vs. FISH capacity vs. utilization vs. site capacity to expand. Mr. Sanders agreed that he needed to put the basic data together before going further with an architect. Dr. Vogel stated the challenge would be the budget because even though some would go for growth, the district needed new schools too. Mr. Sanders reminded the Board that rules continued to change with CSR and that complicated the matter.

Dr. Carvelli summarized the Board needed more information in order to be able to make some short-term decisions (possibly five months). Mr. Sanders stated he was confident with what the district was doing with CSR, the district could regain enough student stations to accommodate growth and meet CSR. The Board may need to schedule a follow-up workshop to cover all of the information that was requested.

Mr. Sanders updated the Board on the FAU Lab School at Tradition (K-12). There was not enough information available to move forward with any recommendation. This school could impact the district’s number of student stations. Dr. Vogel had questions about the Lab capital--it may be in jeopardy--be vetoed. Once that issue is settled, staff will continue to work together to provide more information as soon as possible. Transportation was an issue that Senator Pruitt was working on but there still was no information coming forth. Dr. Vogel recommended that conversations continue with FAU and Core Communities. Dr. Miller suggested that someone contact Senator Pruitt about a long-term interpretation of transportation costs. It was agreed that decisions needed to be made within a month.

Discussion ended and Chairman Carvelli adjourned the special June 24, 2003 meeting at approximately 4:12 p.m.