

WILLOWS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting – February 17, 2011

Special Session 6:00 p.m.

Willows Intermediate School Library

1145 W. Cedar Street, Willows, CA 95988

SPECIAL MINUTES

1. OPEN SESSION - CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Roll Call – President Geiger called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Present were: Mr. Ward, Mrs. Knight, Mr. Geiger, Mr. Parisio, and Mr. Munguia.

1.2 Welcome to Visitors

1.3 Flag Salute was led by Ron Bazan.

2. AGENDA

2.1 (**Action**) Approve Special Agenda for 2/17/11. Mr. Munguia moved, seconded by Mr. Parisio, to approve the Special Agenda for February 17, 2011. The motion passed unanimously with 5 yes votes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

4. DISCUSSION/ACTION CALENDAR

4.1 (**Discussion/Action**) Cut List. Dr. Geivett introduced the item saying that we are in the most dire straits with the California budget and nation-wide we have ever experienced. We are here tonight to go through a very trying time and painful process. No one wants to see any students leave our District, programs cut, or personnel laid off. Ms. Skala addressed the Board and discussed the budget preparation process. The bottom line is that we need to cut \$892,509.00, based on the First Interim Report. The Second Interim is due to GCOE on March 15th. Ms. Skala is working with four different budgets recommended by CASBO (California Association of School Business Officials). They are: Wishful Thinking - \$19 Cut per ADA; Boy Scout (Be Prepared) - \$330 Cut per ADA – School Services recommends to go with this budget; The Sky is Falling \$620 cut per ADA; and Dooms Day \$1,000 Cut per ADA. There is so much contingent with the June election. School Services has been reliable in the past. Dr. Geivett explained the Board has to make cuts due to the Education Code timelines and it is easier to bring personnel back than to make cuts later. Categorical funding was discussed. Federal programs are receiving less money each year, but some services still have to be provided. Categorical funding also receives less funding with declining enrollment. The 175 school calendar was discussed – Ms. Skala said there are no penalties for PERS or STRS with that calendar. Dr. Geivett explained that Items #1-#7 have to be negotiated. The District is meeting with WUTA on March 7th. He also explained that the Cut List is a fluid document and can be brought back before the Board if items are negotiated with the unions.

Item #9 was discussed. The District has received new information that 50 additional students are scheduled to attend Wm. Finch next year. With this information Item #9 would have to be changed to eliminate not 4 FTE's, but 6 FTE positions. Item #8 was the 3 FTE's that were reinstated last year and were paid with ARRA funding and the federal jobs monies. Item #20 was discussed. Dr. Geivett recommended keeping WCHS open with 1 FTE and working with GCOE possibly having more ROP classes available for the students.

Karen Hanson, CSEA president, addressed the Board. She spoke out in support of the classified positions on the Cut List, but specifically asked the Board to remove Items #11, #12 and #14 from the Cut List. She thought that the positions on those items were brought back with the understanding that it would be for two years. Dr. Geivett stated he hopes to keep those positions next year, but with the current budget we may not be able to. Ms. Hanson stated that CSEA has been cut to the bare bones and to maintain operations for the District classified should not be cut. She requested once again that they remove Items #11, #12 and #14 from the Cut List.

Heather Baker, citizen and parent, addressed the Board. She stated that two years ago she came before a different Board and suggested that they consider a 5% pay cut then. She discussed the private sector that took 5% cuts early on, from the highest paid person to the lowest paid, and it saved them. She thinks the 5% cut for all employees from the top down, should happen. She said nation-wide people are taking 5% - 10% cuts. She expressed her concern about cutting out Items #24, #25, and #26 which are the “carrots” for the kids – she thinks Item #20 should go first. She wants to see more for students who want to excel and not always putting money towards the underachievers. She also commented on Item #5 – she thinks the teachers can teach their own P.E. class

James Stevens, WUSD employee, addressed the Board. He pointed out that Item #11 and #12 are his positions. Although, he would love to keep the technology position, he is most concerned about Item #12 – the MES library media specialist position. He commented that the District has already lost students partly because of the library being closed. He is a parent of a young daughter and stated he would not want her in a school without those resources. He doesn't think that position should be on the Cut List. He commented on salary rollbacks - \$480,000.00 would be a huge savings – it needs to be negotiated. He invited the Board to visit the MES library to see the changes he has made and thinks it might encourage parents to have their kids come back.

Lauren Albert, WIS teacher, addressed the Board. She discussed the warrant listing and asked the Board members to please look over each item before they approve payment to make sure there aren't items on there that could be on the Cut List. She brought up the item of water coolers, although trivial, thinks we could do without them. Regarding Item #9 – she asked if it is only MES teachers. Dr. Geivett stated that it should be 6 FTE's district-wide. She also commented that she makes less now than she did as a new teacher seven years ago and accepts that but said that with a 5% cut she could lose her house. She also mentioned that other cuts have been made to their salaries.

Mr. Geiger brought up that 90% of our budget goes to salaries and benefits. Mr. Parisio stated that in the last three years the District has cut almost three million dollars so everyone has been affected. Dr. Geivett also commented that the District has to negotiate with both WUTA and CSEA on Items #1-7. Mrs. Perez commented on categorical positions. She stated that the District is trying to save those positions Mrs. Hanson spoke of (Items #11, #12, #14) that are categorically funded. Mrs. Knight brought up the School Resource Officer position. It is being paid out of Safety Monies in the amount of \$25,000. She wants to add the SRO position to the Cut List.

Mr. Parisio brought up Item #16 – Technology. He asked how that would work as far as service is needed. Dr. Geivett said we would be dependent on GCOE if we contracted with them. GCOE has told us that they would assign a part-time position to WUSD. The only part GCOE couldn't do for the District would be the Erate process. Dr. Geivett stated he didn't think we would be as effective as we are. Mr. Lillie answered questions about what districts GCOE served. Mr. Stevens commented that Mr. Lillie is the “mechanic” and Mr. Stevens is the “detailer”. Mr. Stevens also asked questions about insurance costs for the District. Ms. Skala answered his question and said the District is looking into a county-wide plan to save money.

Sherry Brott, parent, addressed the Board, with her concern about declining enrollment at MES. She wonders what we can do to promote MES and get our kids back. We need to have programs to keep our kids in our schools, such as the MES library, sports, music, etc. WUSD is here to serve kids so anything we can keep to serve the students is what we need to do. She thinks we need to put ourselves in the media and let the community and parents know what is going on in WUSD because we are a good District.

Mr. Geiger discussed some dates. March 7th is the next negotiation with WUTA. The next regular meeting before deadlines is March 3rd. If the Board wants a Special Meeting on March 10th, it would be after negotiations and before the deadline for noticing employees. Dr. Geivett will meet with the attorney next week to work on the Resolution for layoffs.

Mrs. Heather Baker stated that hard work defines our community. She commented on the unions. Mrs. Knight asked if there would be any legal ramifications with closing WCHS. Dr. Geivett stated we provide programs for all students and we would need to find places for them. He thinks WUSD can offer a better program than Wm. Finch. Mrs. Perez stated that enrollment from CBEDS data was 1683 and currently we have 1558. In 2010-11, we lost 71 to Wm. Finch, 9 to Orland, 7 to Chico schools and 38 left the area. She

said since October CBEDS Day, an additional 12 have gone to Wm. Finch. She agreed with Mrs. Brott that we need to sell ourselves. Mrs. Brott said she thinks we will lose more if we cut programs because they can leave them. She thinks we have the best sports program, best ag program, and thinks our new music teacher is doing a great job. Mrs. Baker commented we need to find ways to welcome students back. Mrs. Brott said those families need to see WUSD as “unified” and not individual groups and work together. The Leadership Team is working on those concerns. Negotiations were discussed. Mr. Sailsbery stated that negotiations is a very slow process as he has learned being on the committee for the last three years. Dr. Geivett said it is a slow process but commended the representatives of both unions for coming to the table this year and settling on quite a few items. We will work together.

Mr. Jerry Smith, speaking as a community member, addressed the Board. He said three years ago it was suggested that everyone take a salary rollback. If we had done it back then we would be in a lot different situation than we are now. He challenged both unions and management to take a salary rollback – other districts have done it. If it is really about the kids we need to take the cut across the board.

Mr. Lillie asked if the Board has declared a fiscal emergency. He didn’t know if that might open other doors from other agencies. Ms. Skala said in the past we were assigned a fiscal advisor so in essence we have been in a fiscal emergency/fiscal recovery mode. She said she would look into it.

Mr. Geiger said this evening he would at this time cut Items #8 - #21. Mr. Ward said he thinks we should take all of Item #20. Mr. Parisio said it is hard to promote our schools when such serious cuts have to be made. Mr. Smith said as a school administrator said he will need direction from the Board concerning Items #8 and #9 so he knows how many sections he could cut. Mrs. Baker asked questions about the workings of the bargaining units. Discussion followed.

Mr. Munguia said if decisions had to be made tonight, he could live with going with Items #8, #9, #10, #18 and #20 being eliminated, although it is a hard decision and just a suggestion at this time.

Item #26 – WHS Sports was discussed. Baseball, softball, and soccer don’t generate any money – no gate dollars. Item #25 – Ag and FFA were discussed further. Both Mr. Sailsbery and Mr. Smith, principals, discussed how critical these positions are in today’s culture, especially if WCHS is eliminated.

Mrs. Parsons shared that at the parent meeting last summer, class size, loss of instructional aides, the loss of the library and computer, and the consideration of safety were the major concerns of the parents that evening. Those were the reasons the District was given for students pulling their children and enrolling them in Wm. Finch. Mr. Sailsbery also shared with the Board that sharing a vice-principal is also a safety issue and a huge concern. Class size reduction was discussed.

Mrs. Knight moved to cut Items #8 - #21, excluding Item #16, with Item #9 being amended to 6 FTE instead of 4 FTE and cross out MES. Discussion followed that the Cut List is a fluid document and items can be brought back. Mr. Ward seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with 5 yes votes.

Mrs. Knight moved, seconded by Mr. Munguia, to add the elimination of the SRO position in the amount of \$25,000 and eliminate all water coolers to be put above Item #22. The motion passed unanimously with 5 yes votes.

The Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. with a recess before going into Closed Session. President Geiger will report out in Open Session upon the conclusion of Closed Session.

5. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session began at 8:58 p.m.

5.1 Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9(a): Conference with Legal Counsel: Existing Litigation (2 cases)
Tim Crews v. Willows USD, et al., Case No. 09CV00697 and Case No. 10CV00860

At 9:33 p.m., the meeting reconvened to Open Session. President Geiger reported out:
Item 5.1: Update given to Board.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.