

Mr. Winchell reminded the Board that by statute, any purchase over \$150,000 requires that the purchase go out to public bid and if it is a construction project, it requires that we have an architect and an engineer to plan and put it out to bid. The Board sets the threshold for what the administration is allowed to purchase, and what requires pre-approval of the school board. For purchases \$0 - \$150,000, the Board approves every purchase through claims in the Consent Agenda at each board meeting. Currently, our Board Policy has a threshold of \$25,000 that requires three quotes for consideration and pre-approval in a public meeting before we move forward with a purchase. We are requesting to increase this threshold from \$25,000 to \$75,000. We feel this change is necessary for a few reasons, the first being that the State has its own guidelines in relation to food service and the State has increased its threshold related to food service from \$25,000 to \$50,000. We live under a lot of different guidelines, Federal, State and Local guidelines affect our daily business. The State increasing their threshold for food purchases, requires us to increase our purchasing threshold so that Mrs. Smith, Food Service Director, is not limited by our policy threshold of \$25,000 to make large food purchases particularly related to discount opportunities and substitutionary products. You may remember that we belong to the Northern Indiana Educational Service Center. They put a lot of food out to bid at the beginning of the school year and the Board approves a lot of those bids for general purchasing power throughout the year. I am recommending that we give ourselves a little buffer for inflation and adjust to \$75,000. If the State minimum is now \$50,000, with the rate of inflation, we could see ourselves back here a year from now to make another policy adjustment. We typically only revise policies when State or Federal Statutes change, or when our local operations call for ourselves to change. Rather than going to the State food threshold, I am recommending we put our threshold at \$75,000. Even at \$75,000, our board will still see items of interest beyond the normal daily operations. We always work to get three quotes, even on purchases that do not come before the Board for pre-approval. Every day we work closely with our vendors to ensure we are getting the best pricing and service available while following best business practices, raising this threshold will not affect our daily practices. This has been discussed at length with Mr. Bill Kaminski, Corporation Legal Counsel, and he is in agreement. Mr. Todd McGaughey asked if this is only for purchasing food. Mr. Winchell explained that this policy covers all purchases made by the corporation. One of the things the corporation purchases is food, which is then connected to a state policy. Since that state policy has changed, it is in our best interest to change our policy as well. After a brief discussion regarding the appropriate threshold, it was determined that the \$75,000 threshold suggested by Mr. Winchell was the purchasing threshold the majority of the Board is comfortable with. No official action is needed on this business item at this time, a second reading will be held at the next meeting, April 4, 2023.

REPORTS

1. Facilities Report

Mr. Will Groves reported the following:

- As you know we are a part of NIESC, Northern Indiana Educational Service Center, and recently we transitioned our trash removal services to reflect the contract pricing that the NIESC agreement allows. NIESC is currently in the process of collecting bids for the next school year and will come to the member schools soon with a recommendation for approval.
- Blacktop maintenance – we are in the beginning stages of obtaining quotes for blacktop sealing and crack repair. We want to make sure we are maintaining the \$600,000 investment in the new blacktop that was recently done in the summer of 2020.
- Radios – Two meetings ago the Board approved the purchase of new digital radios. It was estimated that they would not be in for 16 weeks. Fortunately, we got a call today saying all of our radios are in, and they would like to begin installation as soon as possible. The new bus radios will be installed over spring break and portable radios will be distributed as soon as we return. Mr. Medesi will work on the switch over from analog to digital.
- GPS units were installed in two buses last week as a preview. We will get to see it go live tomorrow and it will eventually be able to integrate with our routing system. This is a trial run to make sure it is beneficial.

- Roofing update – as you are aware, we have a service agreement with Morris and Sons Roofing. They have been out at least three times to fix a few different items and even solved a leak that has been a mystery for several years at the high school. All of these repairs have fallen under the service agreement and have not cost us any additional money.
- Over the past weekend, a majority of the town of Walkerton lost power for several hours. I am proud to report that our generators did a great job of kicking in when we needed them to, and prevented any interruption of service to our computer servers.
- The boilers have been installed and are up and running. It will be a year before we see the real difference in our energy use but it is amazing how much more efficient they are.
- We finally accepted delivery of the two school buses that were ordered in September 2021. As with anything brand new, there are a few bugs that we are working through but all items will fall under warranty.

2. Director of Learning Report

Mr. Tim Davis reported the following:

- On February 21st, we held the Retirement Workshop. 55 people were in attendance and were able to learn more about being ready for retirement.
- The science textbook adoption team is still working hard. We had thought we may have a recommendation for the standards at tonight's meeting, but we were informed that the state is working to reduce the standards by 25%. We have our books narrowed down to two or three so we will be ready when the IDOE gives the okay.
- There is a new program called Handle with Care that is being implemented by local emergency responders will give the school a heads up when one of our students has interaction with a local agency. For example if the police department is called to a student's home for any reason, they will call our designated personnel and report that this student should be handled with care. No specific details will be released to the school, but we will know that the student may need extra special handling. Mr. Winchell added that we already have a great working relationship with the Walkerton and North Liberty Police Departments and it is not uncommon for them to reach out to inform us that they have been involved with one of our students. This program will ensure that we are getting similar calls from other agencies that service the Marshall and St. Joe County area.
- The fence around the playground at St. Pat's will be installed over the next two weeks.

3. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Winchell reported the following:

- It is so exciting that the Boys Basketball Team won sectionals this last weekend for the first time since 2004-2005. I remember it well because it was my first year of employment with John Glenn and we made it to Semi-State in football, basketball and baseball that year. We will be playing Washington at Washington on Saturday at 4pm. We will be taking our own security to the game. Mr. McGaughey asked if we will be taking a fan bus and Mr. Winchell let him know that interestingly enough, every time we offer one, no one ever signs up to ride it. Hats off to Coach Hannah, his staff and the kids for all their hard work.
- Oliver the Musical will be performed this weekend. Opening show is at 7pm on Friday night, with two shows on Saturday at 1pm and 7pm and then Sunday at 2pm. The Saturday matinee was originally scheduled for 2pm, but to accommodate cheerleaders who are in the play and cheering at the sectional game, it has been moved to 1pm. We like to accommodate our students who are in multiple extracurricular activities as much as possible.
- We are working really hard on staffing for next school year. The union and administration teams have been in discussion regarding our needs and wants. You may remember that our most recent teacher contract was a two year contract. This is the end of year two, and we are starting to look ahead at the contract process. We had also been the recipient of ESSR money. We received approximately \$1.5 million which is being spread over three years to fund some COVID staffing.

We hired teachers to reduce class sizes, to do intervention work and after school tutoring. I mention this to remind everyone that these funds do not last forever and will run out at the end of next school year. We are good stewards of our finances, but we don't want anyone to be surprised that we are starting to have these discussions now, to make sure everything comes together as we want it to a year from now. The ultimate goal with the ESSR money was that our student body would grow over time and the funding from the general assembly would continue to grow and we would be able to absorb those positions. Unfortunately, student count has decreased 70 students from 2019 to 2023. We are being very fiscally sound so that we don't have to make knee jerk decisions. There is no reason to be alarmed or panic. The union and administration teams are working together to make the best decisions for kids and our financial health in a proactive manner.

- We have had some productive meetings regarding our athletic conference over the last couple of weeks. We are hopeful that we will be able to bring a formal recommendation before the board before the end of the school year.
- You know how excited we are about the 100% Graduation Rate that the high school was able to achieve. It was the culmination of not only the great school improvement plan at the high school level, but the entire K-12 system, parents and community. We have been trying hard to celebrate this accomplishment. We have advertised in the local papers, been on the local radio station and will have a few billboards going up very soon across southern St. Joseph County and one on the US 30 corridor as well as just outside of Walkerton by CVS. Our marketing campaign isn't just to attract new students but to celebrate our successes and hopefully attract staff who would want to teach here. We are also planning an insert in the South Bend Tribune. We will follow this up by doing some branding at the high school like signage and screens on the windows.
- Everyone is very excited about Spring Break!

BOARD COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Mr. Knowlton noted that he knows it has been past practice to not market the corporation for new students, but wondered if we had given any thought to possibly marketing specifically to the Greene Township area now that Kindergarten Round-up is upon us. A brief discussion regarding the pros and cons of this was held. Mr. Winchell added that historically, we rely on word of mouth, especially by Sandy Ort, Greene Township Trustee.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kindergarten Round-Up	March 8, 2023	NLES & WES	6pm
Oliver the Musical	March 10, 11, 12, 2023	JGHS	7pm
Spring Break	March 20-24, 2023		

NEXT MEETING DATE: April 4, 2023 7:00 P.M. Admin Building Regular Session

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Christian Mattix called the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

PRES. _____

SEC'Y. _____
