

B. Financial Status of Corporation

Dr. Lovejoy discussed the financial status of the Corporation. The Board was asked in January 2009 to approve \$6.7 million in loans. The Corporation paid back \$4.7 million. In June, the Corporation had to borrow \$3 million and in July, they sought another \$1 million. The Corporation paid back \$1.5 million leaving a debt balance of \$2.5 million. Currently, the General Fund has approximately \$954,000, but the Transportation Fund is \$126,757 in debt. Dr. Lovejoy also explained that the Corporation lost \$529,000 due to student reductions and state reductions. If we do nothing, we will be \$2.5 million to \$3 million in debt by the end of 2010. The total cuts for the Corporation would be \$1.8 million. Dr. Lovejoy received notice that another \$100,000 would be cut from the budget by the state. The Corporation will appeal the new appropriations.

C. Enrollment Projections

Mr. Emsweller discussed enrollment projections and comparisons from 2003-2004 and 2009-2010. Class size projections have declined. A major factor is the decline in enrollment. The Corporation is projecting a decline in enrollment at the North Putnam Middle School, and Bainbridge Elementary for 2010-2011. For the 2009-2010 school year, the School Corporation has lost 40 students. Student enrollment is a big concern and has a direct impact on funding.

D. Teacher/Student Class Size Ratios with Reductions (2010-2011)

Mr. Emsweller discussed teacher/student class size ratios with reductions for 2010-2011. Mr. Emsweller noted the Corporation is considering reducing the number of sections for each grade level. For example, instead of five sections for grade six there would be four sections. This would mean class sizes would increase, but classes will not have more than 30 students. Administrators feel that increased class sized will be manageable. The Corporation has looked at ways to reduce the student population at Bainbridge Elementary by changing attendance areas.

IV. CERTIFIED STAFF REDUCTION CONSIDERATIONS – ACROSS THE CORPORATION

A. Special Area Teachers, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Athletics, and ECA

Dr. Lovejoy discussed possible reductions in certified staff for special areas, general education, and special education. Wages and benefits were considered when looking into reduction of certified staff. The Board is considering reducing seven general education teachers and three special education teachers.

Dr. Lovejoy stated that the Corporation is not eliminating all athletics. One proposal under consideration is to have the high school athletic director handle the middle school and the high school. They are looking at reducing the number of assistant coaches in all sports. Another proposed plan is to close the swimming pool, except during the four months of swim season. Dr. Lovejoy noted that they have not considered eliminating band, choir, or the dance team.

V. CLASSIFIED POSITIONS

The Board discussed the possible reduction of hours for instructional assistants, custodians, and secretaries. These positions would be reduced by 15 minutes at the beginning of the day and 15 minutes at the end of the day, which would save \$169,000. These positions are being reviewed very carefully.

VI. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Mark Hoke commented that the Board is contemplating everything. The Board has discussed opening the pool to the public (i.e. community swim lessons). Mark Hoke thought opening the pool to the public would

be a good idea. Andy Beck agreed about opening the pool to the public. Andy Beck commented that it would cause more trouble and cost more money to completely shut down the pool. When a pool sits empty, it is inevitable that cracks will form. Andy Beck agrees that sports should not be eliminated. The Corporation needs to look hard at coaching positions and rerouting buses to get townships in line.

Debbie Sillery also expressed concern over completely shutting down the pool. Debbie Sillery applauded Dr. Lovejoy and administrators for thinking about everything and trying to make the best decision for the Corporation.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

The meeting was opened up for comments from the community. Several concerns were expressed by parents over reducing teachers, increasing class sizes, and eliminating arts, music, and extra-curricular activities. One patron questioned how much the school pays for athletics including field maintenance and coaches. Andy Beck noted that these expenses are paid through the athletic department. Andy Beck commended Jason Sims for his hard work in keeping the Athletic Department in the positive. Extra-curricular activities cost approximately \$189,000 per year. Pay to play also has been considered. Dr. Lovejoy noted that the athletic and maintenance departments began taking care of the sports fields during fall activities.

It was questioned whether or not the school has offered retirement incentives for teachers. Teachers were notified of an early retirement incentive and had until December 1, 2009, to notify the Corporation of their retirement. Dr. Lovejoy has considered extending the retirement incentive.

One patron wanted to know how the Board allowed the Corporation to get in this situation. The community has heard a lot about reducing teachers, but the Board should look at eliminating administrative positions. Dr. Lovejoy noted that the assistant principal position at Bainbridge Elementary will not be filled. The patron suggested cutting the pay for Board members, which is paid out at \$2,000 per year for each Board member. The patron noted that extra-curricular activities are very important and using the pool for community use could generate money. The patron discussed reducing energy costs such as utilities and heat. Dr. Lovejoy noted that utilities are being reviewed.

One patron feels that it will be harder for children to get the education they need with larger class sizes. The patron noted that added students will increase discipline issues. The schools need to fully enforce the zero tolerance policy to handle discipline issues. Andy Beck commented that when he was enrolled in school they did not have as many teachers as they do now and there were 28 to 30 students per classroom. This is why the Corporation is trying very hard to look at bus routes and class sizes.

Members of the North Putnam high school football team distributed letters to the Board supporting Coach Greg Barrett. A few team members commented on how hard Coach Barrett pushes the students in class to work hard. He is a good teacher, coach, and person. He has taught them to be better people. Dr. Lovejoy commented on how proud she is to have such an articulate group of young men. Dr. Lovejoy and the Board thanked the team members for the letter and their comments.

A school counselor commented that everyone plays a vital role in school programs to provide effective education. She feels that 26 to 30 students in classrooms at Bainbridge and 16 to 18 students in classrooms at Roachdale Elementary is unacceptable. All staff is needed and special education teachers. She invited the Board to sit in one of the classrooms at Bainbridge Elementary and see how much each teacher is needed.

Another patron commented that she has heard how far in debt the Corporation is, but has not heard what is in the best interest of the students. It is not the students' debt to pay. Do not put this debt on the backs of students. The patron questioned why the Honeywell Alert System was not used for this meeting. Dr. Lovejoy noted that an Instant Alert was sent. Patrons were asked to notify the Corporation office if they did not receive the Instant Alert. Why are we not asking the top administrators to take a pay cut? The patron directed a comment towards Dr. Lovejoy. Show us how important this is to the Superintendent by taking a pay cut. Dr. Lovejoy commented at the last meeting she would be happy to take a pay cut. The patron directed a comment to the Board. I look to you. You live in this community and you hear the concerns. Reduction in force for teachers will not help the children. The Board was elected in hopes they would take

care of the children. We are all here because of our children. We want to keep children in this community. Do not make radical cuts. Do not make her have to move her children to another school.

A maintenance staff member noted that eight people in the Corporation have their insurance paid for totaling \$182,000. He recommended dropping this to \$60,000. He suggested eliminating bus stops for kids who live in town close to the elementary schools. He agrees with conserving energy. Maintenance on buses is high and our roads are terrible. It is tearing up the buses. Need to think about bus routes.

The next patron opened by thanking the Dr. Lovejoy and the Board for opening this up to the community. Please be careful when deciding bus routes. Please put kids first.

A staff member commented how important band is in our school and community. The band program at the high school has increased by 59%. There are 166 students in band. Will we be able to meet accreditation standards? There are 419 students enrolled in music classes, which is 66 students per class period. The band and choir are invited to perform at events (1 ½ per week). North Putnam is the only school that performs at the Putnam County Fair. They perform in their own school building eight to ten times a year. Band and choir students are getting ready to go to Washington to learn about careers in music. These programs can make a difference in a student's life. He commented that music students score higher on verbal and math tests. Music students have increased math scores by being in this program. Music supports all other curriculums.

A special education teacher expressed concerns related to cutting special education teachers. Cutting three special education teachers will have a dramatic impact. As a teacher and mother, she feels there will be a dramatic difference in having classes with 30 students. The State of Indiana has a checklist and teacher cuts are a last resort.

One teacher commented on how important it is to keep PE swim classes for students. A high percentage of students cannot swim before taking PE. After attending swim classes, students know how to use safety equipment, call 911 in an emergency, and learn to swim. Each year, Mr. Richardson borrows equipment from another school to teach 8th grade lifeguarding. PE cannot accommodate more than 30 students to be effective. The class teaches basic life skills and the program has saved lives.

Nancy Michael, State Representative, commented that she does not envy the Board for the decisions regarding cuts. She noted that the Indiana House just passed Bill 1367, which is supported by teachers and schools. House Bill 1367 places permanent limitations on the creation of new charter schools and delays funding for the pilot program for virtual charter schools and postpones the Indiana education tax credit enacted in 2009. These provisions could potentially make Indiana ineligible for the federal "Race to the Top" performance grants. She asked the community to contact the state senators. She discussed increasing the amount that can be used out of the capital fund. Require schools to look at rainy day fund and how schools can use cash reserve funds to save teachers, aides, and certified staff positions.

Another teacher thanked the Board for opening this to the public. She applauded the audience for their great questions. Hopefully the community will come away with more accurate information. It is apparent that local schools are going to need to come up with inventive ways to save staff and programs. She asked the Board exhausts all areas possible before cutting teachers and other certified staff. Currently, there are bills in process that could take some of the pressure off. Please make your voices heard and contact your legislators.

Debbie Sillery noted the Board is looking at other areas including better use of facilities, and administration cuts. Debbie Sillery commented to the community that she would be willing to serve on the Board without any pay. Andy Beck agreed and would give up his pay also.

Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjournment.

Andy Beck, President

Jon Buser, Member

Debbie Siller, Vice-President

Mark Hoke, Member

Charlie Boller, Secretary

Carl Blau, Member