Wapello Community School District

Board of Directors

Special Meeting

1-3-18

The Wapello Board of Education met in open session for a special meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Wapello High School Auditorium.  Those present included Duane Boysen, Doug Housman, Doug Meeker, Eric Smith, Matt Stewart, Supt. Peterson, Board Secretary Eric Small, and a representative of the news media was also present along with a number of parents, teachers, and staff members.

**Approval of the Agenda:**  Motion by Smith and seconded by Housman to approve the agenda.  Motion carried with a 5-0 voice vote.

**Public Meeting to Consider Moving the 6th Grade to the 7-12 Building:**

Superintendent Peterson reviewed with the audience that this is a cost saving measure.  A couple of staff members could be reduced and this would allow retaining full time staff at the secondary building.  His fear is that if the district has a bunch of part time positions at the secondary building eventually staff members will move on as full time positions become available in other districts.

Space is available at the secondary building to accommodate the current 5th grade class.  Class sections could be configured to accommodate these additional sections of students.  Currently 7th and 8th grade are in three sections and could be reduced to two sections to allow teachers to accommodate the extra students.

Comments from the public included the following points:

Are the Junior High Teachers not teaching full time?  How will they accommodate the additional students?  They currently are full time but the number of sections being taught currently would be reduced to account for the new sections of 6th grade.

Parents do not want to see the top students being held up on progress by reducing sections to accommodate the new students in the building.

Parents want to make sure that the needs of kids are being met.  This class that would be the first section to be moved is typically a lower performing group.

Lunch and Passing Period is a concern for parents.  A 6th grader intermingling with Juniors and Seniors would not be ideal, otherwise the added opportunities of exploratory classes are exciting.

Parents wanted to clarify that 6th graders wouldn’t be in the same PE Class as Juniors and Seniors.

Is there any chance of having Morning Sun and Wapello combine and make our elementary PK-4, 5-8 housed at the Morning Sun Campus, and then 9-12 back at the Wapello Secondary Building?  Superintendent Peterson said that it has been discussed every year in the seven years that he has been here.  Duane Boysen said that there is a standing offer on the table that when Morning Sun would be ready to discuss the possibility, Wapello is ready to talk to them.

Open Enrollment Numbers were discussed.  Currently there are 85 students open enrolled out of the district and 12 are open enrolled in, is anything being done to try and reverse this trend.  If there were less students being open enrolled out the district may not have to be looking at cuts.  Superintendent Peterson noted that he tried to research why these students are open enrolled out but got a very low response from the families that are open enrolled out.

Has there been any discussion on a four day school week? On a four day work week buses run 4 days instead of 5, cooks only work 4 instead of 5 etc. overhead costs could be kept lower.

Some of the things that the board and administration are doing to attract students to come to Wapello include the facilities, technology, the 1:1 initiative.  Brett Nagle added that the district added a second section of all day 5 day per week preschool.  These items are things that the board and administration are steps in the right direction to provide the services and programming necessary to keep kids from open enrolling out.

It was asked that if this shift does not happen would positions have to be reduced at the High School Level?  Supt. Peterson said that he felt that it would be easier to reduce at the elementary and preserve full time positions and hopefully keep staff that is currently employed.

Staff at the elementary that have been hearing for years that the cuts would eventually come at the secondary level and now tonight the discussion is about cuts that probably should be coming from the secondary level, but the elementary level who has been cut numerous times will feel the effects of this cut once again.

Doug Meeker asked what is changing other than buildings?  The students will still be surrounded by a great staff, a great principal, and a move to another building is really the only change.

Will the kids mix with other groups of kids?  Jaci Thornburg said that for the most part the kids remain with the same cohorts in the core classes.  It would be possible that they would mix in with other students in some of the exploratory classes.

In looking at the total number of students in the 7-12 building from the current year to next year with the sixth grade being included is 8 students more in the building next year over this year.

There is a social issue that needs addressed; currently the district has had to hire 4 bus monitors to control behavior on the school buses.  Will the district be ready to address the issues that may happen in the building? The district will be ready to make changes to accommodate these students and to control behavior and give a good learning environment to all students.

Would Special Ed Change?  It is a possibility, there is capacity, but Special Education Delivery may have to change from what it currently is.

It was asked if anyone had talked to any Morning Sun Parents to see if this would impact their decision to send their students to Wapello if Middle School started in 6th grade as opposed to 7th grade.  No one had reached out to those parents at this point.

Seeing no further comments there was a motion by Stewart seconded by Housman to adjourn at 8:00.  Motion carried with a 5-0 voice vote.

 

   Duane Boysen, President                               Eric Small, Secretary