

SPECIAL MEETING

January 7, 2015

7:00 p.m.

The Special Meeting of the PORTA Community Unit School District #202, Board of Education, Petersburg, Illinois was held at the Superintendents Office on January 7, 2015 at 7:00 pm. President Joni Churchill presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order.

Upon a call of the roll the following members were found to be present: Bettis, Bumgardner, Churchill, Chalmers, McCurdy, Kuehl and Burris. Also present was Matthew Brue, Superintendent and Principals Darren Hartry, Eric Kesler, Amy McMahan and Jeff Hill. Members of the audience include Carrie Jo Donnan, Matt Puckett, Sally Ames, Rich McMahan, Shelby Kinney, Phil Sexton and Toby Turek.

Open Session

President Churchill began open session by announcing the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and act on the future of the PORTA/AC Cooperative. President Churchill asked members of the audience to speak about their concerns in regards to renewing the cooperative. Carrie Jo Donnan spoke on behalf of the Girl's Volleyball program, noting that without the cooperative the Volleyball team would be reduced in half and many of the expected varsity players for next year would be underclassman, making it very difficult to compete in the Sangamo Conference. She noted that she understood the Board's position was tenuous with the current Board leadership in AC but without a cooperative agreement the Girls Volleyball program would be hurt.

Shelby Kinney spoke on behalf of the Girl's Softball program, noting similar concerns as Coach Donnan. Coach Kinney, noted that the Girl's Softball program would be reduced initially by nearly half and they too would have a difficult time competing in a Conference like the Sangamo. The Coach went on to say she has been on both sides of a cooperative agreement and could see the pros and cons of continuing the Cooperative with AC, but the deciding factor for her would be how the lack of a cooperative would affect her softball program.

President Churchill thanked the audience for their participation and explained that the decision making process in this decision has been ongoing since early in the school year. Initially, after the consolidation vote failed in A-C, many Board Members felt that we should not offer a cooperative because the main reason for doing so was to grow a relationship with AC and move towards some sort of merger. That obviously did not happen and as a result it would seem that the Cooperative was not important as well. Couple the consolidation loss with unwarranted attack's by A-C Board members on the PORTA Communities, Administration and School District and it became very evident to PORTA Board members that many, if not most, of the families in the PORTA District did not want PORTA Children associated with the A-C Board leadership. President Churchill went on to explain that throughout the process she was trying to focus on

continuing the cooperative in hopes that the A-C District would take opportunities to send students to PORTA to take advantage of courses offered by the PORTA District. Unfortunately, the A-C Board offered very limited access to their students. Churchill, noted the final deciding factor came in October when the A-C Board sent a letter stating “the members of the A-C Board did not believe the current Cooperative agreement did not reflect an equitable arrangement as they wanted.” The A-C Board asked for more Varsity events to be hosted at their site as well as hosting the Volleyball program at A-C. Additionally, the A-C Board wanted the PORTA Board to consider how to incorporate both school colors, logos and both school mascots on uniforms and other attire and finally giving A-C more opportunities to host practices so that A-C could reduce transportation costs. The PORTA Board responded with an agreement that they believed offered opportunities for A-C to earn more home events with an increase in participation in all cooperative events. Unfortunately, the A-C Board refused to consider the offer by the PORTA Board during their regular December Board of Education meeting. Members began discussing various options which included informing the A-C Board no cooperative agreement would be offered, offering an agreement that was much more focused on maintaining programs at PORTA and finally not acting upon the cooperative until later in the Spring. The merits of each option were discussed and a motion was made by Member Bumgardner and seconded by member Kuehl, “to not consider a cooperative agreement for the 2015-17 school terms with the A-C District.” A discussion followed, lead by Member Bumgardner who stated that “he was just one member and his belief was that we should end the cooperative with A-C.” He believes that continuing the cooperative will only slow any opportunities to merge with a district like A-C and that the only reason a cooperative should be offered would be to meet the final goal of consolidation. Additionally, Member Bumgardner noted that the A-C Board had made it very clear during the consolidation process that they did not want to be associated with PORTA, through comments like calling the Superintendent a liar and a cheat, making disparaging remarks about the District and the communities of the PORTA District. Member Bettis, noted that while his vote would be to cancel the cooperative, he did want the remaining Board members to know that if their sentiment was different and they wanted to continue he was respectful of their beliefs and understood. Member McCurdy noted “ I believe their current board is not a group that I feel we should continue to do business with,” and his decision was based on similar beliefs as member Bumgardner. Member Kuehl stated he was not in favor of the cooperative at this point but wanted everyone to consider the timing of this decision and would making the decision immediately cause issues within the PORTA district. Superintendent Brue and Principal Hartry did not see any issues with making the decision tonight, other than from a scheduling perspective some of the LTEC courses may see a slight decline in enrollment. Member McCurdy noted that both he and member Bumgardner would not be running for the board and that new members may decide to continue the cooperative, so delaying the decision might be wise. Member Bumgardner noted that if the PORTA board were to delay any decision they would potentially be harming A-C students abilities to participate in programs the school may offer or other cooperative opportunities. He noted that if the Board feels they are not in support of the cooperative they should not belabor the point and harm those students at AC as well. Superintendent Brue offered that if the Board chose to not make a decision or failed to pass the motion, he would be glad to explain to

the A-C Superintendent and Board that the cooperative was likely not to pass as it currently was offered and that the PORTA Board wanted some confirmation that the A-C Board saw the need to continue the cooperative along with shared courses. Member discussion ended and President Churchill called for a roll call vote on the motion presented. Members voting AYE on motion to “Not consider a Cooperative Agreement for the 2015-17 school terms”, were Bettis, Burris, Bumgardner, Chalmers, Churchill, Kuehl and McCurdy. Members voting Nay.

Closed Session

Member Bumgardner made a motion to enter closed session to discuss personnel and individual students. Member Kuehl seconded the motion. All members present voted AYE. President Churchill declared the motion carried.

Member Bumgardner made a motion to come out of closed session and member Bettis seconded that motion. All present vote AYE.

Adjourn

At 8:30 PM Member Bumgardner made a motion to adjourn. Member Kuehl seconded the motion. All members present voted AYE.