

Unapproved Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Sequoia Union High School District
Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Call to Order The special meeting of the Sequoia Union High School District Board of Trustees was called to order by President Gordon Lewin at 5:32 p.m., Wednesday, April 26, 2006, in the Sanford Building in Redwood City.

Roll Call Trustees present:

 Don Gibson
 Gordon Lewin
 Lorraine Rumley
 Olivia Martinez
 Sally Stewart
 Allyson Hillerby, Student Trustee

 Trustees absent:

 None

Invitation to Audience President Lewin welcomed the audience and explained that the Consent Calendar consists of routine or previously discussed items to be considered as a unit and voted upon by roll call vote. He explained that visitors were expected to want to speak under the Public Hearing for Summit Charter High School and indicated that proponents of the Summit charter petition would be given 30 minutes, and people with other views would be given 30 minutes.

Pledge of Allegiance President Lewin led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments to
Consent Calendar Delete:

 5a Approval of Construction Bids

Approval of
Consent Calendar Student consent – “yes.” On a motion by Trustee Rumley, seconded by Trustee Martinez, the Board of Trustees approved the Consent Calendar as amended. Voting “yes” – Trustees Gibson, Lewin, Martinez, Rumley, and Stewart; voting “no” – none; absent – none.

Discussion of Revised
Bond Budget Ed LaVigne, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services, gave an overview for district construction since the two bonds were passed, the amount of money that has been spent on bond projects thus far, and the need to plan carefully for future projects. He stated that careful planning is especially important because the cost associated with the District’s Proposition 39 obligation to charter schools is going to exceed the initial budget.

 Don Gielow, Construction Manager, reviewed the projects that construction staff and site construction committees have scheduled for the future. He noted that the new figure requiring approval of the Board is over \$55 million, and he cautioned that construction expenses are increasing at such a rate that staff is recommending moving ahead as fast as possible on the projects to protect the budget from expected increases.

Nancy Brandon, Rick Ciardella, Susan Ellis, and Kevin Menninger, members of the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center Committee, reported that they supported the design for and the process behind development of the Menlo-

Atherton Performing Arts Center but expressed concern about other issues, including the beautification plan for the front of the school, including the fence, parking, and traffic flow challenges.

Philip Lively, Atherton resident and President of Lindenwood Homeowners Association, also expressed concern about the landscaping, parking, and traffic issues which no longer appear to be part of the PAC planning.

Mona Klein, Menlo-Atherton teacher and parent of Sequoia High School junior, asked that the Sequoia school community be kept informed about any proposed building at the corner of Brewster and Elwood.

Ed LaVigne, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services, explained the different categories of funds which could be used for landscaping, parking issues, and circulation, including Maintenance Assessment District and Deferred Maintenance funds. He added that the City of Atherton has been approached about sharing the cost of a study of traffic patterns in the area. He summarized by stating that the traffic, parking, and landscaping issues at the Menlo-Atherton High School entrance will be addressed.

Public Hearing
Opened at 6:31 p.m.

Dianne Tavenner, Director of Summit Charter High School, highlighted sections of the school's charter petition, including the school's mission and accomplishments.

Grace Ramirez & Ramon Alvarez, Summit EL students, reported on the success they had experience as Summit students.

Kelly Garcia, founding teacher, and George Glascock, Summit parent and foundation and board member, spoke highly of Summit's accomplishments.

Michael Radoye, President, Sequoia District Teachers Association, expressed concern about students who had not done well at Summit and were counseled out of the school. He asked for more information about the breakdown of socio-economic and racial and ethnic and special needs students served by the school.

Pam Jones, district parent, asked that, if the Board approves the charter petition, it give only what is legally required to avoid shortchanging district student for whom the Board is charged with serving.

Ernest Minelli, teacher, Redwood City School District, indicated that he supports families having choice.

Bill Heath, Redwood City resident and parent of district graduate, expressed concern about the Board using district resources to support a charter school when the Board is responsible for 7,000 students, and Summit does not have to address the needs of high needs students.

Don Baker, parent of three district graduates, expressed concern about needing to provide more funds than are legally required.

Trustee Stewart indicated she was more interested in performance outcomes than in how things get done. She asked how the charter school viewed its accountability and questioned parent contributions to the school and the number of hours donated. She asked what subgroups are in the school in addition to Caucasian and Hispanic students.

In response to a question posed by Trustee Martinez, Superintendent Gemma reported that 40, or approximately 10 percent of Summit's students come from outside the District. She also asked for information about the school's demographic subgroups, including the socio-economic and EL numbers. She asked, "What happens to students who are academically challenged and don't make the minimum criteria?" She also asked, "How many students have been expelled and suspended and why?" and "How many students have enrolled in Summit and left?"

Trustee Rumley expressed concern about the A – G courses and asked about the status of the school's certification; how many Summit students are Below and Far Below Basic. She also asked about foundation donations and what they are used for and for copies of the school board minutes and number and process for community complaints. She asked if the District will be able to collect funds for students from outside the District. She also asked for some assurance that the basic mission of Summit will go on after the Director leaves, and she asked, "What happens when a student doesn't have a parent or guardian to volunteer?"

Trustee Gibson expressed concern about access and questioned whether the program's design prevents equal access. He, too, asked, "How many students are Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic?" and "How many are eligible for free and reduced lunch?" and "What is their rate of success?" He asked for more data for the last three years.

Student Trustee Hillerby expressed concern about the impact Summit will have on district students in the other schools.

President Lewin asked questions about the school's governance and budget. He suggested that a 3 percent reserve would be appropriate for the charter school and asked if a reserve for charter schools is required or recommended. He questioned whether the school had understated its financial situation, because it was difficult to ascertain how foundation funds are used. He expressed concern about the District's commitment and particularly whether the District would have to pay for students who live outside the District. He asked if having the County charter Summit would be a better match. He also expressed concern about founding members being given preference for enrollment apart and suggested that a lottery be used for all prospective students. In addition, he expressed concern about Summit listing the API results of the Sequoia District on its website with the inference that the Sequoia District would also be successful if its faculty and parents were as committed as Summit's faculty and parents. President Lewin noted that Summit board members have been generous about loaning money to the school and questioned what they get in return which suggests a possible conflict of interest.

Superintendent Gemma announced that he will bring the Summit charter petition back to the Board for action as early as the May 17 meeting or by May 31st at the latest.

Public Hearing
Closed at 8:13 p.m.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:13 p.m.

Approval of
Construction Bids

Student consent – “yes. On a motion by Trustee Gibson, seconded by Trustee Stewart, the Board of Trustees approved the following low bids: \$993,620 received from John Plane Construction for summer modernization at Carlmont High School; \$327,630 received from Coast Side Associates for classroom modernization at Menlo-Atherton High School, and \$168,856 received from Coast Side Associates for the boys’ and girls’ locker rooms and restroom modernization projects at Woodside High School.

Recess to
Closed Session
8:16 p.m.

The Board of Trustees recessed to Closed Session at 8:16 to discuss Personnel Matters as permitted under Government Code Section 54957; the Superintendent’s Evaluation as permitted under Government Code Section 54957, and to Conference with Real Property Negotiators as permitted under Government Code Section 54954.5.

Return to
Public Session
& Adjournment
at 9:20 p.m.

The Board of Trustees returned to Public Session, and by consensus adjourned its meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Lewin, President

Olivia Martinez, Clerk