

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING TO DISCUSS INCREASED SCHOOL SAFETY PROPOSAL WITH THE
POCATELLO POLICE DEPARTMENT AND TO TAKE ACTION ON THE INCREASED SCHOOL SAFETY
PROPOSAL**

**POCATELLO/CHUBBUCK SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 25
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Board Room at the Education Service Center
Wednesday, February 6, 2013
5:30 p.m.**

BOARD MEMBERS/SUPERINTENDENT PRESENT:

Janie Gebhardt, Chair
John Sargent, Vice Chair
Jackie Cranor, Clerk

Jim Facer, Member
Paul Vitale, Member
Mary M. Vagner, Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kent Hobbs Director of Student Support Services/Safety
Scott Marchand, Chief, Pocatello Police Department
Ralph Daniels, Sergeant, Pocatello Police Department
Steve Stone, Captain, Pocatello Police Department
Renae Johnson, Board Secretary

Welcome, Call to Order and Statement of Purpose – Chair Gebhardt

Chair Gebhardt called the Special Meeting/Work Session to order at 5:33 p.m. She said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the increased school safety proposal from the Pocatello Police Department relative to the possession of weapons on school property, to receive public comment on the same and to consider a Resolution regarding School Safety.

Discuss Increased School Safety Proposal with Pocatello Police Department

Ms. Vagner said the Board previously met with the Chief of Police to discuss a proposal regarding SROs carrying service rifles on school property and storing them in gun safes during the day in secondary buildings. She said following that meeting the administration had an opportunity to meet with K-12 administrators to receive input and address concerns from staff and the community. She said the administration developed a series of managerial questions that addressed safety from a nurturing perspective to ensure an environment in which children could grow and learn productively. She said the administration was aware that violence had increased over the years. She said during the meeting with K-12 Administrators a number of security questions were raised. She said those questions were presented to the Chief of Police on Monday for direction in addressing those questions and ensuring the gun safes would be locked at all times and monitored on camera in the SRO offices. She said principals understood the shift in culture. She said some elementary principals were concerned about police officers visiting their buildings with a rifle. She said the Chief expressed that police officers had no intention of bringing rifles onto elementary school property. She said it was helpful for the Chief to address logistical concerns and the answers were straight forward and upfront. Chief Marchand said the process was a learning experience and he believed the School District and Police Department worked very well together. He said he appreciated the opportunity to educate the public and the School District on the importance of being prepared and having the best tools available. He said he believed having access to the rifle would help them do their job and would not interfere with taking care of immediate problems. He said the department had a great plan in place that would be updated and improved as needed. He said the gun safes would be monitored throughout the school year and their use would be evaluated at the end of the year. Ms. Vagner said K-12 Administrators did express a concern about any intent the Board may have to allow teachers to carry weapons on school property. She said the administration made it very clear that the Board was not considering that option. Mr. Hobbs said the administration appreciated the opportunity to provide the best tools to trained individuals and the collaboration with SROs to accomplish the plan. Ms. Vagner said the principals were supportive of the District's safety practices and the focus on the healthy mental development of children. She said the District would continue to work with the Safety Committee on safety practices that needed to be in place and would continue to emphasize

the importance of building capacity in children to behave appropriately. She said staff would continue to intervene at the level of disrespect and put-downs. Ms. Gebhardt requested that as the Police Department updated its safety plan or practices that it would inform the Board each step of the way in order to avoid any surprises and to have the information needed to keep staff, parents and the community informed. Chief Marchand apologized for not researching previous communications prior to his becoming Chief. Ms. Cranor said the Blackfoot School District had a “bullying box” that students could report bullying incidents in writing without being scared to go to an adult. Ms. Vagner said the District had been successful in breaking down the code of silence to the point that children were becoming less and less afraid to report. Mr. Vitale said the Key Communicators Committee was receptive to placing gun safes in the secondary schools and allowing SROs to have access to their rifles. Ms. Vagner said the staff and community encouraged the District to continue its course of providing safe and nurturing environments and encouraged the Police Department to use discretion.

Public Comment Regarding Increased School Safety Proposal

Board Protocols for Public Comment will be followed at all Board Meetings. Patrons wishing to address the Board will fill out Form AD 2 – Request to Appear before the Board and present it to the Board Chair or Board Secretary prior to the meeting. Because of the diversity of issues, members of the Board may not respond to delegations. Instead, issues are recorded and referred to the proper staff member for follow-up. The Board is informed of these efforts by the staff member responding to concerns.

Board Operating Principles #22 & 23:

22) The Board will follow the chain of command referring others to present their issues, problems, or proposals to the person who can properly and expeditiously address the issues; **23)** Board members will refrain from communications which create conditions of bias should a problem or complaint become the subject matter of a hearing before the Board.

Shane Reichert – 1305 E. Center Street, Pocatello, ID 83201

Ms. Gebhardt read the letter from Shane Reichert which was included in the packet. The letter stated his opposition to semi-automatic police issued rifles being placed in schools.

Gary Wodek – 2700 Michelle Street, Pocatello, ID 83201

Mr. Wodek said he provided materials to the Board and knew he would not have time to review it all. He said it was not his intention to alarm anyone or cause a panic but only to provide information to the Board so it could make more informed decisions. He said when weapons were not detected they caused tragedy. He said the PowerPoint he provided discussed how to be preventative and not reactive. He said when a person was reactive they were not in control. He said accessing a gun safe in an emergency took time and a gun clip could easily be emptied in 60 seconds. He asked the Board to think about how long it took for a school to go into lock down. He said in a panic students could easily run into the line of fire. He said in a proactive mode metal scanners were used to detect weapons and prevent violence. He said in Columbine the student shooters went in and out of the school twice with bombs and guns without being detected. He said the total shooting time from start to finish was 49 minutes. He said schools could be more proactive and could scan backpacks as students entered schools and busses. He said schools did not want to be in reactive mode. He said he provided information with examples of scanners available for nominal cost. He said the information included links to websites with more information on safety, scanners and the facts and history of the Columbine incident.

Susan Matsura – 754 S. 19th Avenue, Pocatello, ID 83201

Ms. Matsura said she worked for the Blackfoot School District for 19 years during the time that the Columbine incident took place. She said part of her job was to publicize school safety and she respected the opinion of experts relative to school safety. She said most of the time students were good children and citizens. She said she surveyed the number of suspensions and expulsions in the Blackfoot School District and 99.6% had never been suspended or expelled and 99.37% had never been cited or written up for breaking school rules. She said while she was no longer in the public school system she still thought about school safety. She said she spoke with her daughter following the Newtown, CT incident and her daughter who is a teacher told her that she had enough to think about without having to think about guns in schools. She said her family had experienced violence at the hands of a serial killer over 30 years ago. She said went from being terrified, to studying and learning and speaking out. She said she never made a snap decision about any change in her life. She said America was awash in guns and violence and it had increased over the years and she was extremely opposed to weapons in schools and did not want an “OK Corral” in the hallways of schools. She said she would continue to encourage a nurturing and safe environment in schools.

Jan Flandro – 72 Rosewood Avenue, Pocatello, ID 83201

Ms. Flandro said if the police needed to react it should only be for desperate measures and the District needed to be proactive in staying away from a culture of fear. She said she would rather concentrate on being proactive in preventing violence but instead the District had to make cuts to the number of counselors and SROs. She said she understood the need to plan for the worst and the necessity of drills in schools. She said students were aware of shootings in schools and the District did not need to unnecessarily increase their fear. She said one of the drills last year made one of the students so upset they had to send her to a counselor. She said if a person wanted to come into a school and shoot people they would do it if they wanted. She said she does not come to work every day thinking that someone may come into the school and start shooting and hoped students didn't either.

Take Action on Increased School Safety Proposal

Ms. Cranor asked if there was any data to support Chief Marchand's claim that a rifle would be a better tool in an emergency. She also asked if Chief Marchand could ensure that the rifles would not fall into the wrong hands. Chief Marchand said if a school shooting occurred a responding officer would bring a semi-automatic into the school anyway and was an officers preferred weapon in facing an armed gunman. He said there was no guarantee that he could give that a rifle would not fall into the wrong hands, but he believed the department had done everything it could to prevent that from happening. He said the SROs door would be locked at all times and cameras would be on the gun safes. He said if he thought the risk was too great he would not have proposed the plan. He said he was invested in the community and had three children that attended the District. He said the department would continue to plan for and respond to school safety and to prepare for the worst. He said elementary principals and students were becoming accustomed to seeing officers at schools and as a result were not afraid. He said the police department had taken every precaution to ensure that police vehicles were secure and would do the same with the gun safes. Ms. Cranor asked about the time it would take for an SRO to get to the gun safe in an emergency. Chief Marchand said it would take longer to run out to the police vehicle. He said if either was too far SROs had a radio and immediate access to notify other officers in the area. He said if an officer was in his office or closer to the gun safe he would probably go for his rifle first. He said officers had to be trained and prepared for all situations. He said all of the Police Chiefs in Idaho convened a School Safety Committee and he was part of that. He said if he learned of any actions taken by another District that worked well he would look into implementing it in this District. He said he was committed to school safety. Mr. Vitale said some of the criticism he heard from the community was that this action was too soon after the Newtown, CT tragedy and seemed like a reaction and he would recommend a slower approach. He said he respected the SROs and all of the work they did for schools and kids. Chief Marchand said the idea was brought up over a year ago and he thought everyone involved was aware of the plan and was not a reaction to recent events. He said if he did not provide his officers with the tools they needed then he would feel like he failed. He said he did not want to put any of his officers at a disadvantage. He said the gun safes were not a guarantee that SROs would have immediate access but it was better to be prepared. He said he had mostly received positive support and only a letter or two in opposition. Ms. Cranor said a lot of the safety issues the District faced were due to a lack of funding. Chief Marchand said many Districts were implementing new safety protocols, some good and some not.

A motion was made by Mr. Facer and seconded by Ms. Cranor. Mr. Sargent read the Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District No. 25 Board of Trustees' Vision and Mission Statement communicates that a safe, supportive, caring and respectful environment is critical to student learning;

WHEREAS, the Vision and Mission Statement of the District also communicates that parents and the community play a vital role in a student's educational success;

WHEREAS, the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District No. 25 Board of Trustees is grateful to have the support and collaborative partnership of the City of Pocatello's Police Department as both entities work together to provide for the safety of the children and the staff in the public school system;

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees realizes that cultural conditions have changed in public schools in the past years and the need for increased purposeful vigilance with respect to school safety has intensified;

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees over time has increased safety expectations for school personnel and expects on-going practice and preparation of students and staff for various unanticipated events;

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees supports the increased school safety proposal submitted to it by the Pocatello Police Department;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees move to continue to support the Pocatello Police Department as it expands its practice of bringing weapons onto school grounds by expecting School Resource Officers to carry their service rifles onto school property on a daily basis and secure them in locked safes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Pocatello Police Officers are trained experts in the care and use of weapons and the Board of Trustees of the Pocatello/Chubbuck School District No.25 has no intent to move in the direction of allowing school personnel to carry weapons onto school property.

Ms. Gebhardt, Mr. Sargent, Ms. Cranor and Mr. Facer voted in the affirmative. Mr. Vitale was opposed.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Sargent and seconded by Mr. Facer to adjourn. The voting was unanimous in the affirmative. The Board adjourned the Special Meeting at 6:26 p.m.

APPROVED ON:

MARCH 19, 2013

BY:

Janie A. Gebhardt
Chair

ATTESTED BY:

John D. Sargent
Clerk

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

[Signature]
Secretary, Board of Trustees