

**Community Financial Review Committee  
Report to the Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of  
Education  
Wednesday, November 14, 2007**

**Our meeting Minutes:**

The Community Financial Review Committee met on Thursday, November 1, 2007 at 7:00 P.M., at the Linden Park Offices.

**Members in attendance:** Paul Lloyd, John Allison, Jane Rattenni, Tom Shopa, Michael Bank-RCEA, Jill Floore-Red Clay Financial Director, Gary Linarducci-Red Clay Board, James Buckley-Red Clay Board, Dorcell Spence- Delaware Department of Education (DOE), and Frank Rishel-DOE.

**Public Attendance:** 17 members- parents, community members, the press, PTA organization and Red Clay Board President Mr. Irwin Becnel.

The purpose of the meeting was to approve committee officers, start the process of formalizing the committee, review subcommittee recommendations, and engage in meaningful dialog with Red Clay Financial Director Jill Floore.

**I. Introduction and Opening Comments**

Meeting started 7: 00 P.M.: Mr. Buckley welcomed the committee and public members. Mr. Buckley also respectfully informed the public that the committee requested that their comments be saved until after the committee conducted its formal business. The committee agreed to allow 30 minutes after the completion of formal business for public comments.

Red Clay Board President Mr. Becnel requested the floor to make a comment. Mr. Becnel addressed some of the rumors and comments about who is responsible for actual adjustment to district staffing and services. Mr. Becnel explained that Frank Rishel appointed by DOE to serve on their Financial Recovery Team is only advising the district in regards to needed budget cuts. Mr. Becnel reported that the district administrators make all decisions on financial cuts or adjustments in staffing needs. Mr. Becnel reported that recent staffing changes at various Red Clay schools were in response to the final unit count.

**II. Report from the Organizational Subcommittee**

Jane Rattenni, Chairperson of the Organizational Subcommittee provided a slate of names recommended for officers. The slate as follows: Paul Lloyd for Chair, Tom Shopa for Vice-Chair, and John Allison for Recording Secretary. The Community Financial Review Committee unanimously elected Paul Lloyd Chair, Tom Shopa Vice-Chair, and John Allison Recording Secretary.

Newly elected Chair Paul Lloyd took over responsibilities and then led the meeting.

Chair Paul Lloyd yielded the floor to Jane Rattenni, so that she could continue presenting the other issues discussed during the Organizational Subcommittee meeting, which were: length of terms for committee members and the need to establish by-laws.

Michael Bank expressed a desire to add another district representative as he feels he could only speak on behalf of teachers not other district employees serving in other job functions. The consensus was that having a member of each various labor organization within Red Clay would add too many individuals to the committee. The consensus suggested that Mr. Bank reach out to the other labor organizations and offer himself as the means for them to communicate issues of concern. John Allison reminded the committee that the meetings were open and that these organizations could send a representative who could express their concerns during public comment time.

Chair Paul Lloyd suggested that the Organizational Subcommittee establish bylaws, which would include term limits for elected officers. The consensus feels the term limit for the Chair and Vice-Chair be as long as three years, and the term limit for community members be for two years. The committee agreed that further discussion and a draft for bylaws were needed.

The Organizational Subcommittee discussed monthly meeting times for the Community Financial Review Committee, and everyone was in agreement that the meeting should be held the first Monday of each month, with a meeting time of 6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

Jane Rattenni also commented that the committee, once fully organized, should rotate meeting locations.

The Community Financial Review Committee agreed that it would like to review the district's monthly financial report prior to each Red Clay Board of Education meeting. However, due to time constraints from when the report is issued each month, the committee feels it needs more time to adequately review the numbers and to communicate with each other, as well as Jill Floore, if necessary. It was agreed that the Community Financial Review Committee will be a "review committee," not a committee to approve financial reports. Monthly reports to the school board would list recommendations and/or opinions from the committee. The school board would weight the committee's concerns and recommendations to determine if any action was needed.

Communications: The Community Financial Review Committee was in agreement that ongoing communication between committee members would be best done via E-mails. Also, realizing Jill Floore needs to focus on the day-to-day business of district finance, the committee agreed to not include Jill Floore in E-mail communications between committee members. The consensus was that any question needing answered by Jill Floore would be channeled through Paul Lloyd, the Committee Chair.

Jill Floore will provide the committee monthly financial reports as they are released.

Dorcell Spence indicated that the district is required to file three financial position reports throughout the year and the next one due is February 1, 2008. This report is not the same as the monthly financial report, but is more comprehensive. The committee will also review the district's financial position report when it is released.

Michael Bank requested a calendar from DOE that indicates when all financial reports from the district are due.

DOE will be facilitating a workshop for the committee to help them understand the processes that are involved in public school finances. The workshop is targeted for December and will be in the evening, so that it will be convenient for the committee members to attend.

### **III. Financial Director's Presentation**

Jill Floore provided the committee with copies of Red Clay's FY 08 Preliminary Budget and draft copies of the DOE required standardized financial reporting format required under Delaware House Bill 21. The presented document was not representative of Red Clay finances, but was just a generic draft.

Dorcell Spence reported that the template for school district financial reporting is nearing completion and will be approved by DOE soon.

Jill Floore reviewed the Preliminary FY 08 Budget with the committee asking numerous questions about the content.

Jill Floore reported that 79% of local school taxes have been collected and deposited by New Castle County, so far totaling \$31 million dollars. DOE has also met its financial obligations to date. Deposits from New Castle County will continue as taxes are collected. Jill Floore assured the committee that New Castle County was aggressive in collecting delinquent County Taxes and pointed out it was also in the county's best interest, since a portion of that money is retained by the county to cover their collection and other expenses.

### **IV. Public Comments**

Yvonne Johnson: Questioned Jill Floore on Delaware House Bill 247 - School Climate. She wanted to know if funding was frozen or currently available for use. Jill Floore indicated the funds were not frozen and that school climate needs were being met.

Parent (didn't state name): Expressed deep concerns with the impact of the layoff and subsequent shortage of paraprofessionals at Meadowood and reminded the committee how vital those services are to children attending that school.

Antonio Prado: Asked questions in regards to positions paid solely with local funds. Jill Floore explained that state unit funding factors in the educator's degree and that the district moves positions in regards to state allocations, so they can maximize the funding made possible by DOE.

**V. Next Meeting Date and Time**

Monday, December 3, 2007, 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. at the Linden Park Offices.

**VI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John Allison, Recording Secretary