March 24, 2006

The March 22, 2006, meeting of the Williamson Central School District Board of Education was opened by President Richard Jordan. An executive session followed. The Board returned to open session and, with the approval of the Consent Agenda, several substitutes and volunteers were appointed. In addition, permanent appointments were approved for Cynthia Monahan, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Sheila Knowlden, Food Service Helper and Kara Steinmetz, Elementary Monitor. The Board also accepted the resignation of Tracie Holcomb, High School Teacher Aide.

Eliza Pope-Collins, student representative, reported on the eighth grade orientation scheduled for March 23. She indicated that this was sponsored by the Link Leaders and that students would be completing course selections. She also stated that Mr. Lauf will be establishing a Principal’s Advisory Council which is a positive step for student involvement in the school. Under Reports from District Administrators, Superintendent Ehresman announced that Mrs. Kathy Johnson was nominated for the National Honor Roll for American Teachers by Erika Young, and she reported on the meeting with Senator Nozzolio held with the Williamson and Wayne Boards of Education. Mr. Doug Lauf stated that the High School musical and the All-County Jr./Sr. High Instrumental Concerts were outstanding. He also stated that all Williamson High School students had participated in Leadership Workshops led by Mr. Ron Sutherland last week. As a follow up, Student Council organized a friendly competition to raise money for local organizations. Miss Ellen Saxby reported on the very well attended St. Patrick’s Day dances at the Middle School, spring sports and a seventh grade interdisciplinary project, which involved maple syrup activities. Miss Anne Ressler highlighted Makenna McKeon who donates her hair to Locks of Love each year to assist children who have lost their hair due to illness, Mrs. Judy Plyter for her assistance with a student who injured himself at school and the Elementary School’s Bully-Free Committee which is encouraging all parents and students to participate in a television-free week.

Board Committee Reports included an update by Superintendent Ehresman on the capital project. The new rooms at the Elementary and High Schools are nearing completion. All work is being completed on schedule, and the project should be done by early fall. Board members commented on how good the High School musical was, and Mr. Lauf reported that there was a great turn out for eighth grade parent night. President Jordan commented on the Board of Education Work Session, which included work on the charter for the newly established Audit Committee. He also stated that he attended the All-County Concert and that it was a terrific concert with many people in attendance. Mrs. Linda Moll reported on Curriculum Council, which included a discussion of Teaching Rounds that were held recently in the District. This is a professional development experience that involves teachers observing each other teaching and then analyzing it together.
In the next part of the meeting, several Committee on Special Education case summaries were approved and Mr. Lauf, Miss Saxby and Miss Ressler presented the Pyramids of Support that were developed in each building. These pyramids reflect levels of intervention that are available to students who are having difficulty in school. The philosophy is that there is not an option to fail; there is always something to help students get through difficult times. The Board briefly commented on the Winter Sports Report.

Under Old Business, Superintendent Ehresman reviewed the status of the 2006-07 budget including the increase that is the result of the building project approved last year. The proposed budget is under the contingency budget level with a tax rate increase under $1.00, including the $0.54 increase for the capital project. She reviewed the revenue and expenditures and how State aid has decreased over the past several years. Superintendent Ehresman reported that in their meeting last week, Senator Nozzolio stated that there would be more state aid than was originally proposed and the final New York State budget is to be established by April 1. If State Aid does increase, she proposed splitting the increase between reinstatement of positions and a reduction to the tax levy. The Board will discuss this further when the State Aid final figures are available.

Also under Old Business, the second readings of four policies were approved, and a brief discussion was held regarding the need to keep a handicapped accessible door open for Board meetings and the steps that have been taken to ensure that there is not mold in the Middle School.

Under New Business, the Board approved the updated Shared Decision-Making Plan. In addition, Laurie Verbridge announced that she is resigning her Board seat. She stated that she will potentially be moving within the next year and would like interested individuals to have the opportunity to run for her seat at the time of the annual election. She commented that being on the Board has been one of the best things that she has done in her life and that it was a wonderful experience. Mr. Jordan commented on her long time commitment to the children of the District and how much she has done for them over the years. Superintendent Ehresman recognized Mrs. Verbridge and Mrs. Craft, whose term ends this June, for their perseverance on behalf of the children of the District and how doing what’s best for children has always been at the core of their decisions.