

Joint committee meeting between Wausa and Osmond was called to order at 8:00 PM. Those in attendance included:

Mike Kumm-Wausa BOE Member  
Michelle Reikofski-Osmond BOE Member  
Katie Clausen-Wausa BOE Member  
Justin Koehler-Osmond BOE Member  
Derek Cunningham-Wausa BOE Member  
Mark Moes-Osmond BOE Member  
Skip Bremer-Osmond Superintendent  
Brad Hoelsing-Wausa Superintendent  
Kurt Polt-Osmond Principal  
Shane Anderson-Wausa Principal

Katie Clausen opened the meeting asking everyone to describe their strengths as well as potential areas for growth in their school districts. Mr. Polt described the Osmond school district as a district having a strong staff, supportive community members, and students who work hard to excel both academically and in extracurricular activities. Mr. Polt remarked that their choir numbers are as large as they have been since he has been there, and that they have excellent participation in a number of other sports and activities, and their ACT scores last year were above the state average. Mr. Polt also remarked that there have been obvious challenges with boys sports, particularly football, both in junior high as well as high school, where they struggle in participation due to enrollment as well as an imbalance in their numbers of boys vs. girls. Last year Osmond had eleven kids on the football team, with a large number of seniors, and due to lack of depth, they lost a lot of games and limped through the back half of the season, and now have no team for the 2nd year of the 2 year NSAA cycle. As of now, if they do not find a long term partnership with another school, they will be forced to try to make a 6-man schedule work with 8 students or not have varsity football again; and will not have a junior high football team.

Mr. Anderson talked about Wausa's strengths and needs. He described Wausa as a district with hard working staff, supportive community, facilities that are very good, and students who participate in a variety of activities. He remarked that their athletic numbers in the high school are currently strong, that our MTSS program in the elementary is a great program that has addressed past weaknesses, that our band and choir numbers are growing, and our one act and speech teams have a history of high participation and success. Mr. Anderson also expressed that while our elementary numbers are nowhere near to the point of having to look at a consolidation, he is very concerned that we may not have enough kids to field a junior high football team next year, and we do not have the ability numbers wise to offer a wider variety of sports/activities/academic possibilities to our students, such as girls golf, wrestling (boys and girls), and an ag/FFA program as examples if we do not find a long term partnership for our kids and our parents.

The committees discussed that Wausa and Osmond are very comparable in their strengths as well as their needs. Both school communities have similar demographics, populations,

enrollments, and long term enrollment that necessitates the need to find a long term partnership. Strategic planning was also brought up as a strength of the Wausa School District, and in order for Wausa to achieve some of their long term goals, without putting a large financial burden on the taxpayers, a partnership needs to be sought that is mutually beneficial to both parties, so both schools can be viable both now and in the future.

Wausa posed the question to Osmond in what they want out of a partnership, Osmond responded that they want a long term commitment, and are willing to work with any district to achieve that for their kids as well as their patrons. Mr. Bremer spoke on the fact that kids are a priority, and we need to do what is best for kids in whatever district they reside, and to give them opportunities in a variety of academic as well as in sports/activities. Mr. Bremer quoted "We exist for our kids, and what is best for our kids". Both districts discussed the importance of the academic component in the partnership being the most imperative piece. Mr. Hoelsing brought up the teacher shortage as a real issue that schools are going to face down the road, so in order to keep the quality staff we have, as well as attract new staff, we must be creative in providing opportunities for staff to teach in a high quality environment, with competitive classroom environments and students being able to work with each other at like levels.

AP coursework, as well as dual credit opportunities were brought up, as well as potentially common bell schedules so students could take advantage of course offerings in both schools. Common professional development for teaching staff was also discussed, as well as the opportunity for teaching staff to participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) which are impossible when you only have one teacher per grade level, or one english teacher and one math teacher, etc. Osmond board members worry that with enrollment declining, there may be a time for them to have to cut courses for their kids due to lack of enrollment.

Timelines were then discussed. Both parties agreed that we needed to speak to our parents soon, due to the nature of the football timelines having to be declared by November 1st, and gather their input through meetings and survey work, to both educate them of what our needs in both districts are, as well as the potential advantages that a partnership can bring and work to address any concerns that they may have. Communication to the public was stated as imperative to this process. Communication with each other as board members was also brought up as very important, so that the message stays the same. Osmond brought up the need to have common information and surveys, so as to compare "apples to apples" which both sides agreed to. Wausa stated that they will need to inform and discuss this with their parents, as this may have hit them suddenly, and gather their input. It was decided that Mr. Anderson and Mr. Polt together will work to post relative information to send jointly to both communities, so when the boards ultimately decide on what or if this partnership should be started, that it comes with educating, informing, as well as receiving input from the parents before coming to any decision. With nothing else to discuss, meeting was adjourned.