

March 9, 2020

The school board meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, March 9, 2020, in the Line Street Administrative Office. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President, Mrs. Susy Wiegand.

PRESENT: Mrs. Susy Wiegand, Mr. Keith Hess, Ms. Carol Bodwalk, Mr. Joseph DeMelfi, Mr. Jon Morell, Mrs. Brenda Post, Mr. Ronald Robsock, Mrs. Sandra Slavick

ABSENT: Mrs. Maryann Kovalewski

Also **PRESENT:** Mrs. Wendy Kupsky, Ms. Renee Gomez, Attorney Bull, Mr. Robert Croop, Mr. Benton Culver, Mrs. Pamela Hegland, Mrs. Janet Kovach, Mrs. Jennifer McHale, Mr. Gregory Michael, Ms. Amy Melchiorre, Mr. Joseph “Bo” Orlando, Mr. Patrick Sharkey, Brian Pinterich, Sarah Warner, Annette Isenberg, Jason Warner, Jason Kingery, Steve Lazar, Angie Davis, Brian Williams, Kathy Fedder, Jessica Karns, Mrs. Tanya Cleaver, Ms. Lori Frey, Ms. Susan Swartz, tax payers

Moment of Silence

Flag Salute

Reading of the Minutes:

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting on February 10, 2020 as everyone had received copies prior to the meeting. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - none and no abstentions.

Business Manager’s Report

Financial Report; Treasurer’s Report:

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve the financial report and the treasurer’s report as presented. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Budgetary Transfers: Approval

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve the budgetary transfers as presented, pages 22-33. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Presentation of the Bills:

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Ronald Robsock, we pay the bills as listed.

ROLL CALL VOTE: “Ayes” – Joseph DeMelfi, Ronald Robsock, Brenda Post,
Keith Hess, Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra
Slavick, Susy Wiegand

“Nays” – None

“Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Business: Renee Gomez – Defer until Mrs. Kupsky’s report.

Wendy Kupsky’s Report: Assistant to the Superintendent in Charge of Student Services

- The Student recognition that was going to be held tonight will be done at the April board meeting.
 - The 2020-2021 school calendar will be voted on tonight.
 - We will be looking in the next few weeks to be setting the graduation date. We currently used one snow day.
 - We are closely monitoring the coronavirus situation. Notes have gone home with every student and things have been posted on our website. The nurses are watching the CDC website for any changes. The primary focus is on washing hands and not touching eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Adams Family Musical is on March 20th-22nd. The tickets are available online. If you can’t get them that way, then call the high school.
 - We have ten teacher retirements and eleven support staff (pending approval from the school board tonight).
 - Plaque was given to the Directors – Keith Hess: “With sincere appreciation we would like to thank the Berwick Area School District and Board of Directors for their continued support of the Odyssey of the Mind Program in the North Central Region of Pennsylvania. By opening the doors to the Berwick Area High School and Middle School for our regional competition you have made it possible for the youth of our region to experience a program that not only challenges one to think creatively, solve problems but provides the building blocks to a successful future. Your staff and facility have been exemplary throughout our tenure at Berwick, a wonderful example of teamwork seen in action. Our success is your success. Thank you! March 7, 2020 North Central Pennsylvania Odyssey of the Mind Board of Directors”.
- Wendy Kupsky - Odyssey of the Mind was hosted here over the weekend. Berwick did not have any teams this year. Hopefully, we will have some representation next year.
- Benton Culver- Recently the Pennsylvania law is requiring us to do lead testing in our district. We brought in a company and we did 50 tests across the district. Our water is safe and clean. Just wanted to let everyone know we completed the testing.
 - Preliminary Budget - Renee
The 2020-2021 budget that is being proposed tonight is balanced meaning the revenues and the expenditures are equal. We are restoring the millage similar to the rates in 2016. As a reminder, the State Tax equalization board is the one that governs on how we determine the millage. We are a multi county District. There is a formula that is applied to determine the millage. In addition to the retirements, support staff increases were \$.50 for non-exempt employees, 3% for exempt employees, Act 93 employees per the contract, coaches’ salaries are budgeted with no increase. Capital projects are not budgeted in this budget. We are in the process with the district’s financial advisor at looking at different alternatives and methods for loans and bonds which will then be brought to the Budget Committee to be discussed for capital projects. We have done

some things with the debt service over the last year. Just as a reminder, in May 2019, we are going from a fixed rate to a variable rate on a previous note that we had at that time. Additionally in 2017, we paid off two notes early. The school district's debt is equalized/leveled throughout all the years on which the debt was in operation. So by us paying that off early, it looks like the budget is absorbing a large amount of debt but that is not really the case. We paid off the debt early with our Fund Balance so the debt is equalized. We are actually saving about \$100,000 by us renewing the debt last year and revising it.

On motion of Ronald Robsock, seconded by Jon Morell, we add the addendum. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - None and no abstentions.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

Wendy Kupsky read a portion of policy #903 Public Participation in Board Meetings.

Brian Pinterich – Talked about the move to District 4 vs staying in District 2. (Baseball) Agenda item EC-2.

Sarah Warner – Talked about why not to move conferences for all sports including volleyball. Agenda item EC-2.

Annette Isenberg – Talked about why not moving conferences. (Volleyball) Agenda item EC-2.

Jason Warner – Talked about keeping us in District 2 for all programs. Agenda item EC-2.

Jason Kingery – Opening of the Head Basketball Coaching position. Agenda item EC-1.

Steve Lazar – Opening of the Head Basketball Coaching position. Agenda item EC-1.

Angie Davis – Opening of the Head Basketball Coaching position and not moving to the Heartland Conference. Agenda item EC-1.

Brian Williams – Opening of the Head Basketball Coaching position. Agenda item EC-1.

Kathy Fedder – Agenda item AA-1. Talked about Columbia Montour Vocational Technical School.

Keith Hess – Just to give you a little clarification on this, this is the way it was provided to us from the Columbia Montour Vocational Technical School solicitor. It is uniform across all seven districts.

Jessica Karns – Agenda item AA-1. Talked about Columbia Montour Vocational Technical School.

General:

Approve Items G-1 through G-4 With One Motion

G-1 Approval to accept a donation from First Keystone Community Bank in the amount of \$2,000 for the High School Musical.

G-2 Approval to accept a donation from The Medicine Shoppe in the amount of \$200 for the High School Musical.

G-3 Approval to accept a donation from Darlene Kuchinski-Donnelly in the amount of \$100 for the High School Musical.

G-4 Approval to accept a donation from the School Age Group Swim Club in the amount of \$200 for the Middle School Pool.

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Joseph DeMelfi, we approve G-1 through G-4 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Academic Affairs:

AA-1 Approval of the Benton Area School District’s request to have the Columbia Montour Vocational Technical School, beginning with the 2020/21 school year, modify the school’s delivery of education to only provide half (1/2) day vocational technical training for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students for all participating School Districts. (ROLL CALL)

On motion of Sandra Slavick, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve the Benton Area School District’s request to have the Columbia Montour Vocational Technical School, beginning with the 2020/21 school year, modify the school’s delivery of education to only provide half (1/2) day vocational technical training for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students for all participating School Districts.

ROLL CALL VOTE: “Ayes” – None

“Nays” – Ronald Robsock, Brenda Post, Keith Hess, Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick, Joseph DeMelfi, Susy Wiegand

“Abstaining” – None

Motion failed.

Approve Items AA-2 through AA-4 With One Motion

AA-2 Approval of the 2020-2021 school calendar. (enc.)

AA-3 Approval for Stephanie Rothery to coordinate fund raising activities with the intent of raising money to facilitate a trip to Costa Rica.

AA-4 Approval of the Enrollment Booklet for the 2020-2021 school year. (enc.)

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve AA-2 through AA-4 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Budget & Finance:

BF-1 Approval of the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School Budget for the 2020-2021 school term. Berwick’s share is \$1,889,470. This is an increase of \$33,520. (enc.) (ROLL CALL)

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve the Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School Budget for the 2020-2021 school term. Berwick’s share is

\$1,889,470. This is an increase of \$33,520.

Joseph DeMelfi - With Benton possibly leaving, how will it affect the number?

Keith Hess - Right now, this is proposed as Benton is a current member because they are. Right now, we are looking at the 4th district that has disapproved their plan so at that point the next JOC meeting which is going to be on Tuesday they are going to have to make a determination based upon that.

Wendy Kupsky - Right now, Benton has eight slots and then they will determine how they are divided up amongst the different districts.

ROLL CALL VOTE: "Ayes" – Brenda Post, Keith Hess, Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick, Joseph DeMelfi, Ronald Robsock, Susy Wiegand

"Nays" – None

"Abstaining" – None

Motion carried.

BF-2 Approval of the preliminary budgeted expenditures in the amount of \$47,336,422.00 for fiscal year 2020-2021 including the salary and work schedules as proposed. (ROLL CALL VOTE)

Preliminary revenues supporting the budget are as follows:

Mill Values: Columbia County 44.42

Luzerne County 11.37

Real Estate Transfer Tax (Act 511) 0.5%

Local Services Tax (Act 511) \$5.00

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve the preliminary budgeted expenditures in the amount of \$47,336,422.00 for fiscal year 2020-2021 including the salary and work schedules as proposed. (ROLL CALL VOTE)

Preliminary revenues supporting the budget are as follows:

Mill Values: Columbia County 44.42

Luzerne County 11.37

Real Estate Transfer Tax (Act 511) 0.5%

Local Services Tax (Act 511) \$5.00

Ronald Robsock - There is no property tax increase?

Keith Hess - It is reestablishing. It is less than a mill in each county. It will bring in approximately an additional \$632,000. We needed it to balance the operating budget. We couldn't balance the operating budget without it.

Renee Gomez - We are going back to the millage rate that was established back in 2016 before it was reduced.

ROLL CALL VOTE: "Ayes" – Keith Hess, Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick, Joseph DeMelfi, Ronald Robsock,

Brenda Post, Susy Wiegand
 “Nays” – None
 “Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Extra Curricular:

**EC-1 Approval to open the position of Head Varsity Boys’ Basketball Coach.
 (ROLL CALL)**

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we open the position of Head Varsity Boys’ Basketball Coach.

ROLL CALL VOTE: “Ayes” – Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick, Joseph DeMelfi, Keith Hess, Susy Wiegand
 “Nays” – Ronald Robsock, Brenda Post
 “Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

EC-2 Approval to submit an application for membership to the Pennsylvania – Heartland Athletic Conference. (ROLL CALL)

On motion of Ronald Robsock, seconded by Joseph DeMelfi, we submit an application for membership to the Pennsylvania – Heartland Athletic Conference.

ROLL CALL VOTE: “Ayes” – None
 “Nays” – Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick, Joseph DeMelfi, Ronald Robsock, Brenda Post, Keith Hess, Jon Morell, Susy Wiegand
 “Abstaining” – None

Motion failed.

Personnel:

Approve Items P-1 through P-13 With One Motion

P-1 Approval of the following as volunteer baseball coaches, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork.

Christopher Sult

Mark Andrews

P-2 Approval to hire Eric May as assistant baseball coach. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$2,000.

- P-3 Approval of Tara Bacon as long term substitute teacher effective October 21, 2019 through to the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Compensation will be at the Bachelor's Step 1, \$39,837 prorated.**
- P-4 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Deborah Bloom, effective July 1, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-5 Approval to add the following to the day to day substitute teacher list, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$15.71 per hour.**
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Catherine Carter | Sherri Boyles |
| Shayla DiPasquale | Micah Beiter |
- P-6 Approval of Marisa Boschetto as an After School Tutor. Tutoring will run through April 20, 2020. Compensation will be at the instructional rate of \$26.00 per hour.**
- P-7 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Ann Marie Slusser, effective August 19, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-8 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Van Johnson, effective June 30, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-9 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Meg Dyer, effective at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. (enc.)**
- P-10 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Rose Wynings, effective at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. (enc.)**
- P-11 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of John Allen, effective at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. (enc.)**
- P-12 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Christine Allen, effective at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.**
- P-13 Approval of Pepin Klinger as long term substitute teacher effective February 11, 2020 through to May 31, 2020. Compensation will be at the Bachelor's Step 1, \$39,837 prorated.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Joseph DeMelfi, we approve P-1 through P-13 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - None and no abstentions.

Addendum:

Transportation:

T-1 Approval of Bianca Daum as school van driver for Gallagher Student Transportation for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school term.

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Joseph DeMelfi, we approve Bianca Daum as school van driver for Gallagher Student Transportation for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school term. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Personnel:

Approve Items P-14 through P-15 With One Motion

P-14 Approval of the following as scoring room judges for Odyssey of the Mind on March 7, 2020. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$100 each.

Dione Soboleski

Valarie Anderson

P-15 Approval for employee #2616 to take unpaid days from March 25, 2020 through May 10, 2020. (enc.)

On motion of Ronald Robsock, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve P-14 through P-15 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we add the following item (AA-5) to the agenda. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

AA-5 Recommend expulsion for a student until the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Ronald Robsock, we approve the expulsion for a student until the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Reports:

Committee Reports:

Susy Wiegand - We met last week as a Committee of the Whole.

CSIU – Susy Wiegand

I attended their last meeting. I provided some materials to our Curriculum Department (WATCH). It’s a combined effort with Geisinger. It is a State program with funding. There is a program that combines to produce CNA’s. It provides an alternative in the medical field. They are also interested in purchasing networks as a Marketplace solution. Selling it to the districts for a reasonable price.

Vo-Tech – Keith Hess

We approved the budget tonight. The biggest topic is the Benton situation. The motion on the agenda tonight was written up by their solicitor. That is why it was written that way. I know we are the 4th district that has not approved it at this point. We will reconvene next week at the

meeting. Every district is going to announce what their vote was and then Benton is going to have to make their decision. Depending on what their decision is will determine how we move forward.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Jon Morell – In lieu of the situation with the coronavirus and other flu viruses, I have asked Mr. Culver to look into the cost of replacing the water fountains in the school with fill stations. In the hospital they have been taken out and in a lot of other buildings. It's an infection control issue. I have Mr. Culver into looking at the cost. The students are already allowed to have water bottles in the classroom.

Public Comment:

Tanya Cleaver - Questions about the new booster club policy.

Wendy Kupsy - I am just speaking for Mr. Brookhart. He has done a lot of research on this and gathered other district policies and used input from them as well as PSBA. The policy was addressed with the Board President and Mr. Brookhart.

Susy Wiegand - We do not have a true policy committee. The past practice has been that the Superintendent meets with the President of the Board. When you have a policy committee this is how it is done and has been done for years. We get input from PSBA. We normally, since some of the booster clubs is directed by some of the Principals, we get input from them. Normally we follow the guidelines from PSBA. We want to give a direction for the booster club. Parent clubs and booster clubs are the same and follow the same policy/bylaws. We want to make sure everyone gets the same. Needs to be level and transparent. We wanted a check and balance system and we want to have accountability.

Tanya Cleaver - I would like to sit down with a booster club person to let them know what goes into collecting all of these things.

Joseph DeMelfi - Is there a problem with something in the policy?

Tanya Cleaver - I have a real problem with the fact that I am working in these booster club stands. Giving up time with my own children to work to raise money and then if something happens and this booster club folds, the funds and things should stay with the club. It shouldn't go to the district. It shouldn't go into a general fund balance. It should stay with the club.

Further discussion followed.

Susy Wiegand - We are going to have Mr. Brookhart contact you.

Renee Gomez - I sent out the policy to all the heads of the booster clubs which included parent groups to keep the transparency because the agenda was approved. As the policy has changed, although you were present at the meetings, there are a lot of other clubs that are not here at the meetings so we wanted to be fair and transparent. If officers change over the summer, we would not know that information possibly.

Joseph DeMelfi - Can I suggest that a meeting be held with all heads of the booster clubs?

Susy Wiegand - I think that is something that we may want to establish. They are supposed to meet once or twice a year. Yes, that can be arranged.

Jon Morell - The 12th Man Club money went to the Health and Wellness Foundation and a Scholarship Fund was set up because that was in their bylaws.

Sandra Slavick - It didn't go to the District.

Tanya Cleaver - Is that what you are trying to prevent again?

Jon Morell - No, what we are trying to say is the money will be held by the district until another Football Booster Club is established.

Jason Warner - Agenda items EC-1 and EC-2.

Wendy Kupsky and Joseph DeMelfi - The position is open to anyone.

Summarization of Executive Session:

Susy Wiegand - Meeting was held prior to the meeting. Personnel and litigation.

On a motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Ronald Robsock we adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye." "Nay"- none and no abstentions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board