

June 8, 2020

The school board meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, June 8, 2020, via virtual zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 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:** Mr. Wayne Brookhart, Ms. Renee Gomez, Attorney Bull, Mr. Robert Croop, Mr. Benton Culver, Mrs. Janet Kovach, Mrs. Wendy Kupsy, Ms. Amy Melchiorre, Mr. Greg Michael, Ms. Susan Swartz, Mr. Bill Phillips, tax payers

Moment of Silence

Flag Salute

Presentation: Autumn Alleman – PSBA Member Update

Reading of the Minutes:

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting on May 11, 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 Brenda Post, 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 Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve the budgetary transfers as presented. 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” – Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick,
Joseph DeMelfi, Ronald Robsock, Brenda Post,

Keith Hess, Susy Wiegand
 “Nays” – None
 “Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Business: Renee Gomez – I will defer to Mr. Brookhart in his Superintendent’s report.

Superintendent’s Report: Wayne Brookhart

- Thank you to Matt Getty of Campbell Printing, who made the display of senior portrait signs on Market Street possible.
- Thank you to Lifetouch Photography for taking photos of each graduate receiving their diploma and for providing the service and a 5x7 print for free.
- Thank you to the Press Enterprise for their expanded coverage of the Class of 2020.
- Thank you to Joe Reilly, Ben Willis and WHLM for their expanded coverage of the Class of 2020.
- Thank you to all of our administration, teachers, support staff and Amy Melchiorre, High School Principal for her efforts in coordinating all end-of-year activities. Mrs. Kupsky also for coordinating everything as well.

Amy Melchiorre – We had our ceremony on Friday. All students who participated now have their diplomas. There will be a virtual ceremony, which is scheduled to air on Friday, June 12th at 7 p.m. Everything we did on Friday was recorded. The speeches were recorded along with the graduates receiving their diplomas. WHLM will be airing our graduation over the radio. That will be broadcasted at 1 pm on Friday. There will be a parade of the graduates on Market Street where the signs will be lit up in conjunction with the Boulevard Association and the Borough.

- Benton Culver – Updating on cleaning/projects
 - The Gatehouse project, we got our grant money for that on Friday that totaled \$247,500.
 - Doing some maintenance in the boiler room at the high school.
 - Still waiting on quotes on the tennis courts.
 - We are working within the guidelines with covid.
 - Researching what is out there including equipment.
 - Got great support from Hilliard and Trane.
 - We are doing a deep cleaning.
 - We are working on opening up the schools in the fall.
- Education will be funded at the same level as it was last year even though the State is doing a five month budget. They did commit to a twelve month allocation to public schools. We want to thank to local legislators and State Governor for that commitment. CARES funding is being released and we are fortunate to get over \$700,000. There may be other pots of money out there for pandemic related expenses that we may qualify for.
- Last week we did get an outline on how schools are to re-open and the development of a pandemic plan. It came from the State. It was placed in your board packet. The administration has meet on a few occasions. They did talk last week about the priority of K-4 although we prioritize K-12 on all students. We are looking at getting all of them in on a daily basis.

- Re-opening and Pandemic Plan

Wendy Kupsky – We have been having safety meeting with the Administration 2-3 times a week.

There is a template for the health and safety plan. The template is on PDE. The school district will have to appoint a pandemic coordinator, most likely it will be myself and then from there we will have a team of stakeholders, teachers from each grade level, faculty, paraeducators, custodians and some parents from the community that will formulate this guiding team of how we are going to move in the direction that we need to. One of the biggest things we need to focus on is educating our students. We firmly believe that the best place to educate our students is in the building. In dealing with the pandemic we have to follow certain guidelines and do it safely. We respect that there are a lot of different views that people may have, but we have to follow certain guidelines that have been given to us. Part of the plan involves if we have to go back to the yellow phase or the red phase. There are multiple levels. Later on in the agenda, we are going to go over the calendar. We have weekly meetings with the IU. Senator Gordner was there. One of his remarks was, if we can build time into our calendar to seriously look at what colleges are doing and how colleges are starting early, potentially moving into the winter months with the flu season and covid 19 escalate, it would be beneficial to have some time built in. We are proposing to move the school calendar back one week. The teachers would start August 10th. There are Flexible Instruction Days (FID's). There are five of them that we can apply for. That would give us three weeks of this extra time we would then have to potentially use in the winter months, if there was a peak again of the virus. If we don't use those days, then we would end a little bit early. That is something we are committed to and it is on the agenda. We are trying our hardest to have the elementary kids in every day. We feel that piece is essential. Middle school and the high school may look a little bit different. I propose a plan to you in July. I may need approval from the board in July. We will need to post it on our website. It also needs to be submitted to PDE.

Wayne Brookhart – Previously the district has approved the K-4 cyber this year.

Wendy Kupsky – Grades 5-12 have chromebooks or laptops. We are still waiting for the elementary chromebooks to come in. For the start of the year, everyone will have a device. With that, we will have web cams in the classrooms. If the parents decide that is not reasonable for their child, we do have a K-12 cyber option available now. If that is what the parent is thinking, we would ask that you contact us now. The support is right here. We feel we have enough room in the elementary building for social distancing. We did send a survey out. We received 773 surveys back so far. This week, I will be sending something inter-district to all the faculty and staff.

- We have disturbed more than 70,000 meals since March 13th to our students.
- Kindergarten numbers are down.
- Safety comes first. We will have a cyber-option if that is what they choose. Please consider coming to our cyber. It is consistent with our curriculum. We wanted to pass that on to the district.

Ronald Robsock – What about lunchtime?

Wendy Kupsky – In the guidelines, they recommend you don't go in the cafeteria at all. In fact, that room will become an instructional space. The students are recommended to eat in their classrooms.

Wayne Brookhart – All rooms can be used for instructional areas including libraries, gyms and auditoriums. We will not have a pre-school this year because of the need of space for social distancing. Pre-school is not a mandate. It's district funded.

Ronald Robsock – If there is a vaccine, will we go back to five days a week?

Wendy Kupsky – We would love that, but safely.

Keith Hess – Have we considered redrawing district lines?

Wendy Kupsky – That definitely was part of our conversation.

Keith Hess – I know it is not ideal put it is an option.

Wayne Brookhart – I think there is still time while we are waiting for the surveys to come back, there are different options.

Keith Hess – There is probably kids that are getting bused to West Berwick that could walk to Salem. I hate to separate kids in their school cycle. It's a better option to have them five days a week.

Wayne Brookhart – The space issues are West Berwick and the middle school. They are pretty maxed out without social distancing.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: None

Agenda

Academic Affairs:

AA-1 Approval of modifications of the 2020-2021 school calendar. (enc.)

On motion of Joseph DeMelfi, seconded by Brenda Post, we approve the modifications of the 2020-2021 school calendar.

Keith Hess – What are we doing for fair week? Are we going to do at least one day for fair?

Wayne Brookhart – Are you allowing for educational travel for fair week?

Wendy Kupsky – For students?

Keith Hess – Instead of the whole week, maybe at least Friday?

Wendy Kupsky – This year, that is not what is proposed but I can tell you definitely that I would look back at it in the future. This year because of the pandemic, I am looking to recover as many days as possible.

Susy Wiegand – We need every single day we can get. We need to watch the cases.

Keith Hess – Can we keep it fluent if there is a fair?

Wayne Brookhart – You can modify the calendar at another time.

Ronald Robsock – What about applying for the snow days?

Wendy Kupsky – Those days will potentially count if we apply for the FID's (flexible instructional days). That is what gives us the three weeks of time in the winter months when the CDC is projecting an increase in the virus.

Susy Wiegand – We have to come up with some plan. We are modifying our educational plan as it is now. We can approve this, however if it needs a modification down the line, we can certainly consider it. Right now, we have to have a plan and this will work for us.

Wayne Brookhart – I remember saying last month, you are going to revisit your budget. You don't know what your transportation will cost. You don't know what the pandemic preparations will cost like things you are going to have to buy.

Wendy Kupsy – Thermometers could cost \$20,000, enough to take temperatures.

Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - None and no abstentions.

Budget & Finance:

BF-1 Approval of the final budget in the amount of \$46,338,520 for fiscal year 2020-2021 including the salary and work schedules as proposed. (ROLL CALL)

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 Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve the final budget in the amount of \$46,338,520 for fiscal year 2020-2021 including the salary and work schedules as proposed as listed.

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

"Nays" – None

"Abstaining" – None

Motion carried.

Approve Items BF-2 through BF-3 With One Motion

BF-2 Approval of the 2020 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution. (enc.)

BF-3 Approval of the resolution to the new committed fund balance for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

On motion of Ronald Robsock, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve BF-2 through BF-3 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - None and no abstentions.

Personnel:

P-1 Approval of the resignation of Nicole McCloskey as part-time paraeducator, effective April 18, 2020. (enc.)

P-2 Approval of the resignation of Diane Hofe as part-time paraeducator, effective June

5, 2020. (enc.)

- P-3 Approval to accept the resignation of Theresa Christian as Yearbook Advisor, effective at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. (enc.)**
- P-4 Approval of the list of fall sports coaches for the 2020-2021 school term, pending completion of the necessary PIAA mandated education and necessary paperwork. With this approval, the district commits to paying Head Varsity Coaches in full regardless of external factors, such as duration of season. This commitment also encompasses the prior hiring of Varsity Boys' Basketball Coach Robert Calarco Jr. (enc.)**
- P-5 Approval to pay the second half payment for the 2020 Spring Coaches.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Brenda Post, we approve P-1 through P-5 With One Motion.

Wayne Brookhart – Attorney Bull, would you take a close look on P-4 to make sure that is what we intend it to be? We discussed this last week. The board members have seen this. Mr. DeMelfi and Mr. Robsock, you were part of this as athletics.

Attorney Bull – Yes.

Motion carried. All members voting “Aye” except Joseph DeMelfi on P-5. “Nay” – Joseph DeMelfi on P-5 and no abstentions.

- P-6 Approval to hire Jessalyn Engle as temporary Professional Employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Engle will be employed as a Special Education Teacher based on the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. (ROLL CALL VOTE)**

On motion of Ronald Robsock, seconded by Jon Morell, we hire Jessalyn Engle as temporary Professional Employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Engle will be employed as a Special Education Teacher based on the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork.

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

“Nays” – None

“Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

- P-7 Approval to hire Jessica Gordner as temporary Professional Employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Gordner will be employed as a Special Education Teacher based on the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. (ROLL CALL VOTE)**

On motion of Brenda Post, seconded by Carol Bodwalk, we hire Jessica Gordner as temporary Professional Employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Gordner will be employed as a Special Education Teacher based on the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork.

Joseph DeMelfi – Are these two replacing retired teachers?

Wayne Brookhart – Yes.

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.

Wayne Brookhart – We may need a kindergarten teacher. We go through this every year. We don’t know what the enrollment will look like. We watch it and come to you. We are prepared in the budget.

Reports:

Committee Reports:

Susy Wiegand – We did have a Committee of the Whole but some committees had a meeting individually.

Academic Affairs: Sandra Slavick

- Talked about switching out Title 1 targeted program to a school wide program.
- Talked briefly about schedules but the Principals are still working on that.
- Robert Croop – School wide does not affect funding at all and it will not hinder our services to our students. It will allow us to service more students.

Jon Morell – Did academic affairs committee talk about the resolution at all?

Wayne Brookhart – We have never participated in those resolutions because we talk to Senator Gordner because he is so involved in the district that he always tells us to call him tell him what we think. Years ago, we have never adopted those things. If you want to, we certainly can. That is why, it goes back many, many years.

Wendy Kupsky – Does any in our IU?

Wayne Brookhart – I don’t know. You can do it if you like.

Jon Morell – This one is significant to us financially. If the rest of the board is status quo. I’m ok with that.

Wayne Brookhart – We can put it out at your next meeting. It’s not time sensitive. This has been a discussion that has been out there for many, many years.

Joseph DeMelfi - Why don’t we take a look at this resolution and put it on the agenda for August.

Athletics – Joseph Bo Orlando

No change since the last time but at the AD meetings, Governor Wolf said the guidelines should be out Tuesday or Wednesday. The PIAA is meeting with him. We are still at the July 1st date of getting together as a team outside. We are waiting to hear more.

Buildings and Grounds

Benton Culver – We are following the guidelines. We are getting ready for the school year.

Keith Hess – With opening early, do you have any staffing issues?

Benton Culver – Vacations will be difficult to cover. I will let you know if I have a problem.

Keith Hess – Would it help to extend their vacation days so we can work as a team? Would that help?

Benton Culver – My only problem with that is the vacations have already been submitted. They were already approved. I can't go back and tell them they can't take vacation.

Jon Morell – If it comes down to it, we have worked with a temporary company before that we could possibly pull some temporary staff if we needed to.

Keith Hess - I hear you talk about the Hilliard program, can we get a presentation at a buildings and grounds committee meeting?

Benton Culver – It's a custodial management program. It provides new training, the new concepts and training placards. I'm sure we can get something together. The program is zero cost to the district. We purchase Hilliard products. That is just something they offer to the schools that work with them. It is an undertaking. It is a benefit. It's worth taking a look at.

CSIU – Susy Wiegand

- Meeting Wednesday.

Vo-tech – Keith Hess

- Virtual meeting last month.
- We accepted Benton's terms and proposal. They have left effective July 1st. There are going to be six sending districts. Benton students that are going to be there will be tuition students and any openings are going to be as open positions. Any open positions can be filled by any of the other six districts before any Benton students can.
- We hired a new Director. His name is Paul Ken Kryder.
- Last Thursday they hosted a drive thru graduation for their students.
- Meeting will be next week.

Old Business:

Joseph DeMelfi – Graduation DVD

Steven Christian – We are going to broadcast on our website and it will be online through the You Tube channel that was created for Bash TV. We do have DVD's that we can use. We need to figure out how many we need before we burn them. I was thinking about creating a form to have them fill out to get a copy and we can get it to them.

Keith Hess – What about USB's? I have had people ask about them.

Steven Christian – They will be able to download as well. That is also an option. DVD's and USB's all come with a cost. I don't have a giant quantity of them.

Jon Morell – You have to pre-order.

Wendy – I have reached out to other schools and most of them made it available on YouTube, streaming, Facebook for people to download and save. All the parents/guardians at graduation were videoing their child walking across the stage. If someone reaches out to you, their best bet is to contact the high school.

Susy Wiegand – We are trying to allocate a transmission through WYLN. They will probably televise it on Saturday. The time has not been determined yet.

Keith Hess – Can we put it on the website when we have it?

Wendy Kupsky – Mr. Christian is working on that.

New Business:

Keith Hess – A lot of students and parents are asking about the play. They want this play to happen.

Wendy Kupsky – Ms. Melchiorre has been in touch with those students and the director. Mr. Obringer is moving on to another district. He was the director of that. She has been in touch with Mrs. Driscoll. We want it to happen as much as they do. We just have guidelines we have to follow.

Jon Morell – Our priority is to educate the kids.

Wayne Brookhart – They put a lot of time in that and if there is a way to pull it off.

Public Comment:

Wayne Brookhart – Pre-K we started a few years ago. It is something we started as a district. We did not budget for that. We are concerned about the space for the coming year to get K-4 students in.

Wendy Kupsky – The two music positions have been replaced from within. We realigned some positions and moved those positions from within.

Summarization of Executive Session: Susy Wiegand

We had a meeting prior to this meeting. A few personnel items and collective bargaining teacher negotiation contract.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board