

July 27, 2020

The special meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, July 27, 2020, via virtual zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President, Mrs. Susy Wiegand.

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

ABSENT: Mr. Ronald Robsock

Also **PRESENT:** Mr. Wayne Brookhart, Dr. Albert Alley, Attorney Bull, Mr. Steven Christian, Mr. Robert Croop, Mr. Benton Culver, Mrs. Wendy Daily, Mrs. Pamela Hegland, Mrs. Janet Kovach, Mrs. Wendy Kupsky, Mrs. Jennifer McHale, Ms. Amy Melchiorre, Mr. Gregory Michael, Mr. Joseph Bo Orlando, Mr. Trevor Palmatier, Mr. Randy Peters, Mr. David Robbins, Mr. Patrick Sharkey, Ms. Jill Shipman, tax payers

Moment of Silence

Salute to the Flag

Recognition and Presentation – Berwick Area School Board of Directors presented a plaque to Mr. Wayne Brookhart in appreciation of his many years of leadership, hard work and commitment to the Berwick Area School District.

Mr. Brookhart thanked the School Board members past and present, our administration, the teachers, the support staff and the students. We have a great community. I came 13 years ago and never once regretted it. It has been a wonderful experience. Thank you to our police, Borough and to all those groups we work with including Vo-tech and CSIU. It's a wonderful school district. I recognize my wonderful secretary Janet Kovach. I wish my successor Wendy Kupsky the best of luck in these most difficult times and all the time that you have put into it. You will do a great job. Good luck. Thanks to everyone.

Presentation: Jon Morell – Update on the proposed teacher contract. (Power Point)

Reading of the Minutes:

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Brenda Post, we dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings on June 8, 2020 and June 24, 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

Presentation of the Bills:**Budgetary Transfers:**

On motion of Maryann Kovalewski, seconded by Jon Morell, we pay the bills as listed.

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

“Nays” – None

“Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: None

Agenda**General:****Approve Items G-1 through G-2 With One Motion****G-1 Approval of the resolution for reopening (Section 520.1 of the Pennsylvania school Code). (enc.)**

The resolution is for the school district to provide 180 days/ 990 hours for secondary students and 900 hours for the elementary students. The resolution is regarding the delivery of service. Our plan will address those things.

I would like to thank the pandemic committee team for volunteering their time, resources and their knowledge for the planning of reopening schools. We had parents, teachers, medical professionals, administrators, community members and support staff. We meet on a regular basis at the Evansville Lake so that we were able to maintain social distance and be able to come together as a group. This plan is changing all the time. Since last week, some of the guidelines have changed. They are changing from day to day. We have discussed many different scenarios and many different deliveries of service. Thank you to all the parents that have been emailing me. I don't mind if you call. I want to focus on what is right for our Berwick Area School District and our Berwick community. We met with Senator Gordner at an IU meeting. He suggested to keep it local and focus on what is local. We hear a lot of things with other school districts and other places around Pennsylvania and around the country. We need to focus on what is happening in Berwick. In Columbia County, we are always under 10% and sometimes under 5% for our daily positive rate. Even in Luzerne County, when we had a large spike, we were still under 10% and most of the time under 5%. We continue to watch that. We are aware the

numbers are spiking all over the country right now. Our numbers are increasing. We are not denying that. Right now, the numbers are manageable and not taxing to our medical system. The plan will be based on what your needs are not your neighbor's needs.

Mrs. Kupsky did a power point proposal presentation about the reopening of the district. See attachment for the slides for the power point proposed presentation or view on the district website.

We have been answering questions online as we have been going.

Question: Under what conditions would school become virtual?

Mrs. Kupsky – If the Governor shuts us down, then we would go virtual. We would go to synchronous learning meaning the teachers would be live in front of the students.

Question: Is there a specific number of COVID positive tests among students, teachers and staff that would change this plan?

Dr. Albert Alley – If someone is positive, they have to be quarantined for ten days from the start of their symptoms. If they have a positive test and were not symptomatic it is ten days from the positive test. If they have had close exposure, that is 15 minutes of close contact without social distancing or any kind of direct exposure, its 14 days of quarantine unless you have a negative test then you can return. In closing the system down, 5% in any 14 day period of teachers or students. These are not rules but these are the recommendations that they say to close the system down and do online learning.

Question: How or when are you notifying when someone is positive?

Mrs. Kupsky – The guidelines we have been following are if someone is within six feet for more than 15 minutes, they are considered by the guidelines to be in close contact. That is why Berwick is choosing to maintain that six feet. So, if you are six feet away and wearing a mask, that is the best. We do have to have some break times for the kids wearing masks so that is why we have to maintain the six feet distance. If you are six feet apart and wearing a mask and you are wearing a mask and someone is positive you have established those guidelines that the other people around don't have to quarantine which is what we are trying to do. We are trying to keep the kids in school and maintain that without going to distance learning.

Robert Croop – There were questions in the chat about seniors not going every day and expressing their concern.

Robert Croop – There were questions about working parents and what they are supposed to do and how they are going to handle the schedule.

Mrs. Kupsky – If we can do this and we can mitigate and we can get our kids into school and introduce them to the safety measures that we are talking about and these sensitizing measures and we follow these protocols and recommendations and we do well and we are a model school district; then come the second marking period, we can increase our

capacity at the secondary level. We can bring those kids in. My fear is that if you need 5% of cases, then it is out of our control. We would then be told you can't go to school and you have to go virtual. When we met with the pandemic team, including medical professionals, we felt this was right for Berwick.

Question: Why are masks only being used during transition at the middle school?

Mrs. Kupsky – Because we can't maintain six feet. In the district, if you can't maintain six feet you have to have your mask on. Once you are in your seats and you are six feet apart you then can have some break time.

Gregory Michael – For band and chorus classes, we are still working on some of the logistics. We know they are important programs for students and parents. We do plan to offer them; we are still working on it.

Amy Melchiorre – At the high school, band is already meeting for band camp. They are starting to practice. The marching band right now is split in half and I think we will schedule like that in the building. We will still have band and chorus at the high school.

Question: Dr. Alley, when you say 5% is the cut off, is that 5% of the total student population or staff population?

Mrs. Kupsky – My understanding is the total population of staff, students, everybody in the building.

Dr. Alley – Yes, everyone who is in the building and that is in a 14 day period. It is not a cumulative thing.

Maryann Kovalewski – Are we giving any thought to or could we give some thought to a Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday schedule? The reason I suggest this is because you will have the same group of kids in a classroom Monday/Tuesday and take Wednesday to give the classroom a thorough cleaning and bring the second group of students in Thursday/Friday and then you have the weekend to do a thorough cleaning again.

Wendy Kupsky – We did think of that. There are still different kids coming into that classroom even on Monday/Tuesday. You still have period 1, period 2, etc.

Maryann Kovalewski – It's still the same population of kids, just different periods.

Benton Culver – The biggest thing for us is, it is difficult to say in one night between classes changing to completely deep clean the buildings. We are going to bring in people to do more. What helps us with the Friday, Saturday and Sunday cleaning by giving us more time that we can do that deep cleaning. Doing on a Wednesday, you can't get out of it as you would on a three day cleaning. I think it is a matter of efficiency with the size of our buildings. Instead of giving it one day, we are giving it three. We will utilize a weekend rotation for overtime. It is about hitting one day in the middle or three days in a

row in line with the typical cleanings that we usually do. We felt it was the best approach and that is why it was developed as the plan.

Maryann Kovalewski – I was considering both. Have we considered plexiglass in the classrooms at the teacher stations?

Wendy Kupsky – If that is an ADA issue. If a teacher comes to us. A form is going out tomorrow to all the teachers and staff, if anyone needs that type of ADA accommodation. It's really about what accommodations are reasonable as per the guidelines we have been given for ADA.

Maryann Kovalewski – I am asking about individual offices as well. Would that be for administrators, if it is needed in their office?

Wendy Kupsky – If that is what they come to say, absolutely.

Benton Culver – We are putting protective barriers/sneeze guards in all the offices, guidance offices and cafeterias. If teachers or anyone else wants that, we can certainly discuss that as a team. We may need to do more. The situation changes from day to day.

Joseph DeMelfi – What happens if we have parents that have their child go online for the first month, then say they want to send them back to school. Can they do that?

Wendy Kupsky – We are asking that if they are going to choose to do cyber, they choose to do that for a marking period and then they can transition back. If this is out of our hands and the Governor was to shut us down, then everyone would be doing synchronous learning, live teaching with teachers in front of their computers.

Joseph DeMelfi – Questions about masks in the schools?

Wendy Kupsky – The guidelines are to wear a mask all the time. When in public, the safest thing is to wear a mask at all times. Outside, inside, all the time. That's the guidelines. I am talking about the Governor's mandate. He wants everyone to wear a mask. What we are trying to do is when you are at least 6 feet apart to give people a break because going back to the contact tracing, if you are not in close contact with somebody for more than 15 minutes then you are not considered in close contact.

Joseph DeMelfi – What about busing? Will there be enough room for social distancing?

Robert Croop – Right now on the buses, we cannot get everyone six feet apart. That is why we are mandating masks on the buses. We will do our best to only have two students per seat and if we face any routes that are a lot more than that, then we will look to run another bus. Once we know how many students are going to come to school and how many will need busing, then we will be able to finalize our busing plans. We have been working with all the bus companies. We are on the same page.

Questions: If the State say no gatherings more than 250 people, will anyone other than football players, band, spectators, cheerleaders be able to attend?

Wendy Kupsky – That is being addressed by PIAA. PIAA is coming out with those guidelines.

Bo Orlando – There is a 250 max allowance so it is unsure who is going to be allowed. They are trying to say that spectators are not allowed at this point. We are waiting from PIAA. The school sizes are different. There is a big meeting July 29th. Football starts in a couple of weeks.

Maryann Kovalewski – If we are limited as to who should the spectators be, I think it is no more than fair that parents be given the first priority to see their student athletes play.

Bo Orlando – If you get two big schools like Hazleton and Berwick with all the players, coaches and officials they may be over the 250 limit. Who do you pick and choose then? It's a touchy subject now. Until PIAA comes out with the guidelines, we don't know. It is just hearsay.

Wendy Kupsky – If this plan is acceptable to move forward, then I'm asking the board to approve the plan tonight so that we can move forward. If you want to continue with the meeting, Mr. Croop, Mr. Culver and the other administrators can continue to work through these questions. Every administrator is approachable. Email us or call us with your questions.

G-2 Approval to award bids for custodial supplies for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Joseph DeMelfi, we approve Items G-1 through G-2 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye except Maryann Kovalewski on G-1". "Nay" – Maryann Kovalewski on G-1 and no abstentions.

Later in the meeting, Maryann Kovalewski rescinded her no vote on G-1 and changed it to a yes vote.

Academic Affairs:

Approve Items AA-1 through AA-5 With One Motion

AA-1 Approval of the Dual Enrollment Agreement with Lackawanna College. (enc.)

AA-2 Approval to accept two non-resident students from the Benton Area School District on a tuition basis for the 2020-2021 school year. (enc.)

AA-3 Approval of the Elementary School Handbook for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

AA-4 Approval of the Middle School Handbook for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

AA-5 Approval of the Senior High School Handbook for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski and Jon Morell, we approve items AA-1 through AA-5 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - none and no abstentions.

Extra Curricular:

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

EC-1 Approval of a Girls’ Volleyball Co-op with Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School.

EC-2 Approval to recognize Berwick Girls Varsity Soccer as a Booster Club for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

EC-3 Approval to recognize S.E.S.A.M.E. as a Booster Group for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

EC-4 Approval of a Boys’ Soccer Co-op with Saint Columba Catholic School.

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Joseph DeMelfi, we approve items EC-1 through EC-4 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - none and no abstentions.

Personnel:

P-1 Approval to hire Tara Bacon as temporary professional employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Bacon will be employed as an Elementary Teacher at the Bachelor’s Step 1, based upon the collective bargaining agreement. (ROLL CALL VOTE)

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we hire Tara Bacon as temporary professional employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Bacon will be employed as an Elementary Teacher at the Bachelor’s Step 1, based upon the collective bargaining agreement.

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

“Nays” – None

“Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Approve Items P-2 through P-24 With One Motion

P-2 Approval of the resignation of Sherry Potter as part-time paraeducator. (enc.)

- P-3 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Georgene Raber as part-time paraeducator, effective June 8, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-4 Approval of the resignation of JoAnn Kishbaugh as substitute custodian, effective June 22, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-5 Approval to hire Jessica Thomas as full-time aide, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$14.46 per hour.**
- P-6 Approval of Megan Davenport as mentor teacher for the 2019-2020 school year. Compensation for this position will be \$600.**
- P-7 Approval of Catherine Kline as an intra-district trainer for the district's specialized reading program. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$2,000.**
- P-8 Approval of the resignation of Michele Burke as part-time cafeteria worker, effective June 24, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-9 Approval of the resignation of John Allen as volunteer golf coach. (enc.)**
- P-10 Approval of the resignation of Ashley Lawson as assistant field hockey coach. (enc.)**
- P-11 Approval of the resignation of Arithe Kline as assistant field hockey coach. (enc.)**
- P-12 Approval to hire Abbie Nevel as assistant field hockey coach, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$2,000. This stipend will be contingent upon playing the season.**
- P-13 Approval of Jacqueline Creasy as volunteer field hockey coach, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork.**
- P-14 Approval to grant the retirement request from Julie Klingerman, without establishing a practice or precedent, and to provide all contractual benefits consistent with this request, effective immediately. (enc.)**
- P-15 Approval for employee #2895 to take unpaid Family Medical Leave (FMLA) from August 13, 2020 through August 28, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-16 Approval of the below listed Elementary Team Leaders for the 2020-2021 school term. Compensation will be based upon the collective bargaining agreement.**

Salem**West Berwick****Nescopeck****K - 2 MariJo Rupp****K - 2 Jessica Gross****K - 2 Rachael Buchman****3 - 4 Ashton Duke****3 - 4 Megan Culver****3 - 4 Christine Powlus**

- P-17** Approval of the list of exclusive district substitute teachers for the 2020-2021 school term, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$20.00 per hour. (enc.)
- P-18** Approval to hire Karissa Welch as full-time Health Room Tech, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$16.18 per hour.
- P-19** Approval to hire Larry Moyer as full-time second shift custodian, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of 11.35 per hour.
- P-20** Approval to hire Kelly Kishbaugh as part-time physical therapist, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Ms. Kishbaugh will be working 108 days during the school year. Compensation will be at the rate of \$32.00 per hour.
- P-21** Approval to hire Andrea Evenson as part-time paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$13.12 per hour.
- P-22** Approval to hire Roslyn Crawford as part-time paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$13.36 per hour.
- P-23** Approval to hire Candice Wojton as part-time paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$12.96 per hour.
- P-24** Approval of the list of substitute teachers for the 2020-2021 school term, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$15.71 per hour. (enc.)

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve items P-2 through P-24 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - none and no abstentions.

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve the addendum. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - none and no abstentions.

Addendum

General:

Approve Items G-3 through G-6 With One Motion

- G-3** Approval of the update to Policy #249 Bullying/Cyberbullying. (enc.)
- G-4** Approval of the first reading of Policy #815.1 Livestream Video on School District Property. (enc.)
- G-5** Approval of the School Crossing Guard job description. (enc.)

G-6 Approval of the revision to Policy #233 Suspension and Expulsion. (enc.)

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve items G-3 through G-6 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - none and no abstentions.

Additional Items:**General:****G-7 Approval of the agreement with Next Century, Inc. from August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. (enc.)**

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve the agreement with Next Century, Inc. from August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - none and no abstentions.

Personnel:**P-25 Approval to hire Briar Briggs as full-time second shift custodian, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$13.00 per hour.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we hire Briar Briggs as full-time second shift custodian, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$13.00 per hour. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - none and no abstentions.

Wendy Kupsky – G-1 is not the plan, it is the resolution so that if we close then we are able to provide virtual instruction. We need a motion for the reopening plan. Those are two different things.

Maryann Kovalewski – I will rescind my no vote for G-1. I change that to a yes vote.

Wendy Kupsky – That is to get to the 990 hours and 900 hours of instruction and 180 days.

Joseph DeMelfi – How soon will you notify parents with the Group A and Group B?

Wendy Kupsky – The secondary principals are working on that as we speak.

G-8 Approval of the reopening plan as presented tonight, as of today.

On motion of Carol Bodwalk, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve the reopening plan as presented tonight, as of today.

ROLL CALL VOTE: “Ayes” – Keith Hess, Jon Morell, Carol Bodwalk, Sandra Slavick,

Joseph DeMelfi, Brenda Post, Susy Wiegand

“Nays” – Maryann Kovalewski

“Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Public Comment:

Dr. Alley – I have been in contact with Mrs. Grazio to have the testing expedited. You can do the tracing that way. You don't announce that someone is positive. We are stream lining the process with people who don't pass the screening or a teacher who has a concern. It's not for everyone to get a test.

Wendy Kupsky – What happens if a parent is not off Friday? I do know that the YMCA was looking into being able to provide some options for those students that parents are concerned about not being able to stay home. I'm not saying that this is ideal. It's best for kids to be in school every day all day. We feel this is best for the safety, wellness and education of our students in our community. If everything goes well, after 45 days, we can come back full-time.

Robert Croop – There are questions about recording Friday's lessons for students that cannot attend at that time due to parents work schedule so they don't miss that day of class. We will work with our teachers and administrators on that. Starting tomorrow, we will start planning that out. We are only looking at Friday because we do come in with some issues if teachers are teaching with other students, then there are privacy issues. We will look at just Friday being taped not the other days.

Wendy Kupsky – We proposed having eight students in person and eight students virtually, the teachers and the team felt it would be difficult to be managing kids in the classroom and kids doing virtual all at the same time. That is why we are providing instruction to the teachers on how to instruct virtually. It's different.

Wendy Kupsky – Kids will be taking a break from wearing their mask when six feet apart and seated at their desk but wearing a mask and being six feet apart is best.

Jon Morell – Not all kids in the room will be taking a break from their mask at the same time. It will be a limited amount of kids taking a break from their masks at one time. They will remask and then another group will be able to take their masks off.

Wendy Kupsky – It will be a rotating schedule.

Jon Morell – If you have specific questions, administrators are available to call and get answers to their specific question so you are comfortable or as comfortable as you can be when you're sending your kids to school.

Susy Wiegand – We apologize if we didn't answer all your questions tonight. Please contact your building principal so your questions can be answered.

Summarization of Executive Session: Susy Wiegand

We had a meeting prior to this meeting and prior to the July 20, 2020 meeting. Discussed union negotiations which is continuing to happen.

Question: With the first day of school beginning on Thursday, does this have an impact on kids that won't have school at all that week?

Sandra Slavick – I think the second group should come in Friday.

Wendy Kupsky – Yes. I think that is what was said. The Monday/Wednesday students will come in on Friday. The best answer is, we are aware of it and did discuss it.

Gregory Michael – With the middle school, I believe the plan is to have Group A come in on Thursday or Friday and Group B the other day. I plan on having Group A and B in the building on the first two days of school for students. The following Monday will begin the regular Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedule. That is what I am proposing. We plan on providing a 5th grade orientation but it is not going to be like normal due to the circumstances. It is going to be in the building. We do not plan on inviting parents or visitors into the building.

Amy Melchiorre – We will do the same thing at the high school the first few days of school. We have class meeting with the freshman every year but it will be more extensive. We already have videos already posted about their schedules. Currently, there is a lot of information on our website under guidance.

Robert Croop – We can clarify that and make sure that is sent out to all the parents prior to the first day of school. Please continue to check your building website. We will be posting pictures. Some are going to do virtual tours. Kindergarten is planning their orientation.

Keith Hess – What about food distribution for our secondary students for the days that they aren't going to be in school?

Wendy Kupsky – Yes. I don't want that to be the discussion maker for Group A or Group B students. All students in the district are free. The cafeteria ladies have that all packed and prepared for when the kids are going. When it is your off day, food will be sent home for the off days.

Susy Wiegand – If there are questions, please call the schools and talk to your principal. Thank you for your attendance.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board