

August 10, 2020

The combined work session/board meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, August 10, 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, Mr. Ronald Robsock, Mrs. Sandra Slavick

ABSENT: None

Also **PRESENT:** Mrs. Wendy Kupsky, Attorney Bull, Mrs. Renee Jilinski, Mrs. Janet Kovach, Mr. Steven Christian, Mr. Robert Croop, Mr. Benton Culver, Mrs. Wendy Daily, Mrs. Pamela Hegland, 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

Flag Salute

Reading of the Minutes:

On motion of Brenda Post, seconded by Sandra Slavick, we dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings on July 20, 2020 and July 27, 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: Renee Jilinski

Presentation of the Bills:

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we pay the bills as listed.

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

"Nays" – None

"Abstaining" – None

Motion carried.

Business: Renee Jilinski

- Working with the Auditors to begin the AFR and close out the financials for the end of the school year.
- We are finalizing operations in the cafeteria for the upcoming school year as well.

Superintendent's Report: Wendy Kupsky

Last Friday, I was sworn in at Judge Knecht's office. Tomorrow will be my official start date as the Superintendent of the school district. Mr. Culver and I did a walk-through in three of the buildings today. We saw many teachers in the buildings working in their classrooms. Teachers that I talked to were excited and anxious to see their students come back for the 2020-2021 school year. They are making preparations for the students academically and making it safe to attend school, based on the CDC guidelines and the pandemic. We are still planning on moving forward with elementary coming in every day and secondary coming in every other day. Students are still starting on August 20th. Each building should have a virtual tour posted on their building website. Kindergarten is still moving ahead with a kindergarten orientation. From my stand point, I support athletics and any type of extracurricular activity. I think now at this time, it is essential for kids to be moving physically. We are going to work with them educationally; working with their minds. Physical activity and movement is equally as essential to a person's well-being, as long as we can do it safely. I support athletics as long as it is done safely. I am not focusing on cancelling anything; things will be postponed. I believe if we can fit things in when it is safe, then those are the things that we should be doing. We may have to think outside the box. The message I continue to send to parents and our faculty and staff is: #1 I want to get the students in and I want to have them educated safely, #2 I want to focus on extracurricular and sporting and #3 Getting the fans, spectators and parents in to be able to watch their students. We know that athletics have been pushed back by two weeks. Today, some additional guidelines have come out specifically for determining instructional models during the COVID pandemic. It provides some guidelines for new cases. If fewer than 10 new cases reported in a county in the most recent seven day reporting period, the county will automatically qualify as exhibit of community transmission. Transitioning between instructional models: a county's corresponding threshold may change week-by-week as incidence and percent positivity rates rise and fall. In order to confirm stability of county transmission, when a county's corresponding threshold changes, school entities should wait to see the results from the next 7-day reporting period before considering a change to their instructional models. To ensure the most effective transition for students, it may be appropriate for a school to wait even longer, up to a full marking period, to transition to an instructional model that increases in-person instruction. Part of our plan that was proposed at the last meeting was for a full marking period and then making our decision after that.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: None.

Wendy Kupsky - We need names if you are going to comment. If you are anonymous, we are not going to respond. By policy, you have to be a resident of Berwick. I need to know who I am commenting to.

Agenda

General:

G-1 Approval of the second reading of Policy #815.1 Livestream Video on School District Property. (enc.)

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve the second reading of Policy #815.1 Livestream Video on School District Property. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

On motion of Sandra Slavick, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski, we approve to add G-2 to the agenda. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

On motion of Maryann Kovalewski, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve for the teachers to start the school year on August 17, 2020. Teacher in-service days will be August 17, 2020, August 18, 2020, August 19, 2020, May 27, 2021 and May 28, 2021. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Wendy Kupsky - Students first day of school is still August 20, 2020.

Extra Curricular:

EC-1 Approval to recognize West Berwick Elementary Parent Group as a Booster Group for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski, we recognize West Berwick Elementary Parent Group as a Booster Group for the 2020-2021 school term. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Transportation:

Approve Items T-1 through T-2 With One Motion

T-1 Approval of the listed bus stops for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

T-2 Approval of the listed bus and van drivers for the 2020-2021 school term, pending receipt of clearances and appropriate paperwork. (enc.)

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve items T-1 through T-2 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Personnel:

Approve Items P-1 through P-25 With One Motion

P-1 Approval of the list of High School Class Advisors, Coordinators and Club Advisors for the 2020-2021 school term. Due to the pandemic and uncertainty, stipends will be contingent upon school year activities executed. (enc.)

P-2 Approval of the list of Middle School Advisors for the 2020-2021 school term. (enc.)

- P-3 Approval of the list of Grade Level Leaders for the 2020-2021 school term. Compensation will be based upon the collective bargaining agreement. (enc.)**
- P-4 Approval of the list of Secondary Department Heads for the 2020-2021 school year. Compensation will be based upon the collective bargaining agreement. (enc.)**
- P-5 Approval of the list of mentor teachers for the 2020-2021 school year. Compensation will be based upon the collective bargaining agreement. (enc.)**
- P-6 Approval of Michelle Grazio as Department Head for Health Services for the 2020-2021 school year. Compensation will be based upon the collective bargaining agreement.**
- P-7 Approval of the following Berwick Area Senior High School Marching Band staff positions for the school year 2020-2021.**
- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Amanda Ziegler - Drill Writer | \$2,500 |
| Reed Lehman - Front Ensemble Instructor | \$1,500 |
| Felicia Canouse - Color Guard Instructor | \$1,500 |
| Jake Demler - Percussion Instructor | \$1,500 |
| Philip DiCriscio - Marching Band Director | \$3,000 |
- P-8 Approval to accept the resignation of Patricia Harris at part-time library aide. (enc.)**
- P-9 Approval to remove the following from the payroll records effective at the start of the 2020-2021 school term, as they no longer work for the district.**
- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Mary Ellen Eroh | Henry Ferguson-Avery | Michael Ricci |
| Heather Jones | Danielle Laubach | |
- P-10 Approval to hire the following part-time workers for the summer maintenance help program, effective July 14, 2020. Compensation will be \$8.00 per hour.**
- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Kyle Pierce | Ralph Norce | Keanu Lopez |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
- P-11 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of Barbara Keeny as part-time paraeducator, effective August 1, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-12 Approval to accept the resignation of Brandon Zlotek as an exclusive district substitute teacher, effective immediately. (enc.)**
- P-13 Approval to accept the resignation of Theresa Christian as senior video advisor, effective immediately. (enc.)**

- P-14 Approval of Robert Croop to serve as the Title IX Coordinator for the district.**
- P-15 Approval to change the status of Lori Bodnar from part-time paraeducator to substitute paraeducator. Compensation will be at the rate of \$8.72 per hour. (enc.)**
- P-16 Approval to hire the following as crossing guards, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$10.00 per hour.**

Anna Boggs

Helen Clark

- P-17 Approval to hire Lorelei Oviatt as a part-time paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$13.12 per hour.**
- P-18 Approval to hire Tara Berlin as a part-time paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$12.96 per hour.**
- P-19 Approval to hire Yulissa Ayala as a part-time paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$12.96 per hour.**
- P-20 Approval to change the status of Kylie Lewis from part-time paraeducator to substitute paraeducator. Compensation will be at the rate of \$8.72 per hour. (enc.)**
- P-21 Approval to add the following to the day to day substitute teacher list for the 2020-2021 school year, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$15.71 per hour.**

Chelsea Spring

Janet Robinson

Amanda Wozinski

- P-22 Approval of Jill Shipman to serve as the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for the district.**
- P-23 Approval of Joseph Orlando to serve as the Title IX Informal Resolution Facilitator for the district.**
- P-24 Approval of Trevor Palmatier to serve as the Title IX Decision Maker for the district.**
- P-25 Approval of David Robbins to serve as the Title IX Appeal Decision Maker for the district.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski, we approve items P-1 through P-25 with one motion. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - None and no abstentions.

Addendum:**P-26 Approval to hire Stephanie Heller as a substitute paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$8.72 per hour.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we hire Stephanie Heller as a substitute paraeducator, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$8.72 per hour. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

P-27 Approval to hire Sarah Murdock as temporary professional employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Murdock 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 Sandra Slavick, seconded by Keith Hess, we hire Sarah Murdock as temporary professional employee, effective at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Murdock will be employed as an Elementary Teacher at the Bachelor’s Step 1, based upon the collective bargaining agreement.

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

“Nays” – None

“Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

Reports:**Committee Reports:****Academic Affairs – Robert Croop**

- We have not met since the last report.

Athletic Committee – Joseph Orlando

- Two week delay of our sports. August 24, 2020 will be the first day of practice. September 11, 2020 will be the first games. Golf and tennis are starting a little early because they are noncontact. August 27, 2020 and August 31, 2020. I don’t know if it’s over yet. I have heard that PIAA has a plan that the three sports meet in the spring. January and February would be winter sports, March and April would be fall sports, May and June would be spring sports. No one has any specifics on it. It would probably be eight week seasons. It may be only league games and league championships. This is all hearsay. I don’t think we are over this yet. We have an AD meeting to redo our scheduling. We are waiting for PIAA and the Governor to make a decision.

Budget Committee – Keith Hess

- We have not met. We will meet in the near future.

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Benton Culver

- Met today.
- Hilliard program (CAT) to improve our custodial department.
- Capital projects.
- Return to school update. We got a lot of our supplies in. We are waiting on some.

CSIU – Susy Wiegand

- No meeting.

Vo-tech – Keith Hess

- Usual business with hires for upcoming year.
- We voted on our pandemic plan which is a full return for the time being, however that plan has been made to be very fluid because of the ongoing circumstances.
- Next meeting is scheduled for next week.

Old Business:

Maryann Kovalewski - When it comes to keeping kids, staff, teachers and administrators safe, I think we have to air on the side of caution. Being safe is a right or it should be a right not an accommodation. I know our situation is fluid. I still have concerns about the hybrid model. I know there is no simple solution in this situation. The numbers in Columbia County have been decreasing and they are very good. The problem is Luzerne County numbers continue to increase by double digits every day. We have 2 ½ school buildings in Luzerne County. What I am recommending/suggesting, if we do not want to delay the start of the school year by two weeks, if we do not want to begin virtual for two weeks and then reassess, what I am going to ask is that we meet as a Board every two weeks to continually assess the situation and be updated. I don't think this can wait for a month to month board report. We have to do everything that we can to keep our kids safe.

Susy Wiegand – We are going to try to go back to Committee as a Whole. We will start next month. The Committee as a Whole will be on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. This will help us with the planning. The next Board meeting will be Monday, September 14, 2020. If we have to meet before the next meeting, will can do that.

Wendy Kupsky – New guidelines today: Full In-person Model: School is open each day with in-person instruction for all students (with some students/staff in a remote setting as health and safety concerns require).

Blended (Hybrid) Learning Model: Any model in which the number of students in a school building is reduced to allow for social distancing of six feet. This may be accomplished in many ways, including split schedules, schedules that rotate by day or week, or similar approaches. For these recommendations, blended learning also includes scaffolded approaches that treat grade levels in a differentiated manner.

Full Remote Learning Model: Any model in which all students engage in all learning remotely

Wendy Kupsky – We have about 225 elementary students that decided to go cyber which reduces significantly the amount of students that are in our buildings. We are able to maintain that six feet. The reason we chose to do the hybrid at the secondary level is because we are able to maintain that six feet. The older the students get the more susceptible they may be to the virus. It's also about the teachers, faculty and the staff. It's all about social distancing and wearing the masks. That is why we chose that model.

New Business: None

Public Comment:

- Jennie Murray – Band practice vs performing before games. *We need to get the event first, then who will be allowed to be in there will be determined.*
- William Phillips – Distance of desks currently. *Some of the desks got moved around from when they were set up. Not all the classrooms are set up. Some of the desks were not moved because they didn't want to have them placed in storage. Not all desks are being used.*
- Emily Scranton – Contact tracing. *Yes, we are looking at that.*
- William Phillips – Contact tracing. *If positive, there is a process that we will follow from the CDC and the DOH.*
- Christine Knorr – Sickness and calling off. *Do your screening at home. If you are not feeling well, CDC recommends you do not come to school or to work.*
- MaryAnn Boyles – Concern about returning to classroom.
- Ron Smith – Eating in classroom. Will there be sanitizing wipes available to clean their desks when finished. *Yes.*
- Ron Smith – Student tests positive and teacher is moving from room to room. *Follow the CDC guidelines. CDC says six feet and ten minutes. Everyone should be wearing masks and maintaining six feet apart. They should be sanitizing and wiping down their desks.*
- Ron Smith – Number of students in a bathroom. *It is specific to grade level.*
- William Readler – Busing situation and social distancing. *Everyone is expected to wear a mask. Buses are being sanitized between each run. The bus companies have a plan in place. We cannot guarantee it will be one student per seat. Runs have been added.*
- Karen Floryshak – Questions about positive cases and quarantining and if teachers will be paid. *There are two parts to legislation Emergency Paid Sick and Families First Coronavirus Response Act:*
 - a. **Emergency Paid Sick Leave**
 - i. *Eligibility: All employees, regardless of the durations of their employment are eligible for this emergency paid sick leave, if they suffer from COVID 19 qualifying conditions. Full time employees are entitled to up to eighty (80) hours of paid sick leave. Additionally there is a part time employee component. There is a cap to two week payment. It is applied based on either employee OR employee caring for an individual or child.*
 - *Paid sick leave wages is limited to no more than \$511 per day up to \$5,110 per employee when the employee is subject to subjected to quarantine, self-quarantine or suffering COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis OR*

- *Paid sick leave wages is limited to no more than \$200 per day up to \$2,000 per employee when the employee is caring for an individual or child.*
- b. **FFCRA (Special FMLA):** *The Act temporarily expands the right of employees to take FMLA leave to care of their children during the COVID 19 epidemic. Begins after a 10 day waiting period*
 - i. **Eligibility**
 - *Any employee who has been employed for at least thirty (30) calendar days.*
 - *Any eligible employee who is unable to work (or telework) due to need to care for a son or daughter under 18 years of age, if the child's school, place of care or child care provider is closed or unavailable due to a COVID 19 public health emergency*
 - ii. *There is a cap to the payment.*
 - *The leave is paid at an amount of pay that is not less than two thirds (2/3) of an employee's regular rate of pay, but not to exceed \$200 per day or exceed \$10,000 in the aggregate pay. This means that most teachers would receive \$200 a day, not to exceed \$10,000 (as teachers generally make more than \$200 a day)*

These two leaves expire December 31, 2020 under present legislation.

Contact the Business Office if either is needed.

- *Do all elementary teachers have a plan if school closes again? Yes, google classroom and google meeting. Training was provided.*
- *Comment on agenda items before vote. Attorney Bull – Yes, that is the intention of the act and was the intention of the Board. Some things we could not hear. If a Board member wants to change a particular vote they can after hearing any discussion. They can ask for a revote.*
- *Shutdown – If we shut down, we will go virtual. Devices are coming in mid to late August and the next shipment will be in September to cover all the elementary students.*
- *MaryAnn Boyles – Concerned about in person instruction.*
- *Tanya Cleaver – Procedure of cleaning classrooms on a daily bases. Monitoring will be done more heavily than in the past. Sheets and training will be done. Building checks will be done on a frequent basis. We will make sure it is done including the paperwork to confirm it.*
- *Susan Eisenhauer – Testing. Plan to keep family members safe. Testing for asymptomatic can be done at Berwick, Hazleton and Susquehanna Medical.*
- *Susan Eisenhauer – Not bringing home something to our compromised families. Sanitize and wash your hands before entering into your home environment. Healthcare workers are leaving a change of clothes in the bathroom/mudroom to change into when they get home and throwing the clothes in the washing machine right there.*
- *Penny Smith – What are the CDC recommendations for parents to know to not send child to school. They are placed on each building websites. I can also mail those home with the check list. Fever, runny nose, cough, cold symptoms, sore throat, upset stomach, diarrhea are the main symptoms on the list.*

- Jocelyn Getty – Will middle school students be wiping down their desks like the high school? *Yes. They will be sanitizing before they leave to go home.*
- Protection for teachers having to go from class to class. *We are providing masks and shields for all of the teachers. Specials teachers, we are recommending single activities.*
- Kristi Kerbacher – Mask breaks. *Structured five minute breaks or whatever breaks and not the whole period of not wearing the masks. Needs to be staggered breaks.*
- Jen Evans – Cleaning of kindergarten bathrooms. Will supplies be provided? *We bought misting machines. They should sanitize their hands before going into the bathroom and after. Things in the bathroom need to be addressed. Sanitize before and after.*
- Ashley Kocher – Cleaning throughout the school day. *Wipes will be provided. If additional materials are needed, please ask. Kids have been dealing with this since March.*
- Kelly Miller – Additional safety. *Masks, shields, sanitizing and six feet apart.*
- Danielle Eyer – Health screening for cyber children. *With equipment pickup, the nurses asked if they could get some quick health screenings done then. We asked for only one parent to accompany the student. They are still our students and they have to have that part done.*
- LeeAnn Kishbaugh – 5th grade orientation and homerooms. *August 20th for Group B and August 21st for Group A. This will occur during the normal school hours. No orientation in the evening time.*
- Crystal Mickalowski – Safety of wipes. *We are making sure the wipes and everything else we are putting in the buildings are safe.*
- Kelly Noroski – In class bathrooms vs hallway bathrooms. *The Principals in the building have a plan. Depends on what works and what doesn't. We can check with the administrative team.*
- Brianna Seely – Safety of students who need restrained and obtaining social distancing. *That is a concern. If we can't maintain social distancing, the recommendation is for those kids to go cyber. We have changed that in the school code, if refusing to wear a mask. That is a mandate. That support is going to be there for the teachers to maintain social distancing.*
- Tanya Cleaver – Wipes or hand washing before lunchtime. *Physically washing hands is best before eating lunch.*
- Tami Wiehe – New recommendations that came out today. *We can stay six feet apart. We can maintain the six feet apart at the elementary level.*
- Nicole Zakrewsky – 5th graders switching classrooms. *5th graders will be transitioning throughout the day. However, all middle school students will be with the same students half of their day, each day they are in the building. They will be having transitions throughout the day moving in a cluster four out of their eight scheduled periods of the day.*
- Jen Evans – Plexiglass around their desks. *At this time, it is not in our plan. If parents or teachers are asking for special accommodations, we are open for dialog.*
- Ron Smith – Social distancing at recess. *Yes. They will be encouraged to keep their mask on. We are encouraging outside play.*

- Brian Seely – Why go every day at the elementary level? *It is the best means of education and we can do it by maintaining six feet apart.*
- Carrie Readler – Will the students be instructed on mask wearing, proper hand washing and wiping down their chair? *Yes.*
- Maryann Kovalewski – Could we have the Bulldog mascot wearing a mask doing a video on how to wear a mask, wash hands, wipe down tables and chairs?
- Karen Stimeling-Taylor – Wearing of masks. Students are encouraged to wear masks all the time. One of the times to take a mask break is outside, when they are eating and when they are seated and six feet apart.
- William Phillips – Reopening plan. Members view on returning for in person instruction? *We did a roll call vote last time on that.*
- Toni Phillips – Internet access. *Our IT person can help with students that don't have internet and it is available. Harry Mathias is working on a grant for Columbia County for connectivity where areas that don't have it. We did have a meeting with the Gans family from Hazleton with WYLN about connectivity. We are working on that.*
- Christine Knorr – Wipes and time to set to work. *We are fully aware of that. We follow the EPA. It's a balance between kill time and safety. We are making sure everything is safe. Everything is a second defense. Make sure we are washing our hands frequently.*
- Melissa Spaide – Microfiber cloths. *We are going the microfiber material route.*

If there are any more questions email Mrs. Kupsky.

Summarization of Executive Session: Susy Wiegand

- Update on teacher negotiations.

Committee as a Whole meeting will be Tuesday, September 8th. The following Monday, September 14, 2020 will be the Board meeting

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board