

November 9, 2020

The board meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, November 9, 2020, via virtual zoom meeting. 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, Mrs. Maryann Kovalewski (via phone), 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. Patrick Sharkey, Ms. Jill Shipman, Mary Kay Bukeavich, Shea Aten, Michael Celli, tax payers, teachers

Moment of Silence

Flag Salute

Presentations:

- Nutrition Group – Mary Kay Bukeavich: Nutrislice/online menu, classroom celebrations. Renee Jilinski - Flyers to be sent home with the students within the next 1-2 weeks. Works in conjunction to the Wellness policy. Thanked the wellness committee. Public comment: When flyers are sent home, add instructions on how to add money to the student's account.
- Cyber – Renee Jilinski: PowerPoint presentation given. Cyber costs rising. Current cost for non-special education is \$12,781 and for special education its \$27,672. 2020-2021 school year, 176 students are in outside cybers and 479 students are in the Berwick Cyber Academy. PASBO predicts for Pennsylvania, charter school tuition will increase by \$475 million in 2021-2021. BASD: 2020-2021 budget for cyber tuition is \$775,000. It is based on present enrollments in outside cyber charters. There will be a shortfall of \$1,906,460. Wendy Kupsky - I have a meeting tomorrow with our IU. Our resolution is on tonight's agenda. Other district's costs for cyber schools were given to the Board.

Susy Wiegand - Cyber reform needs to be addressed before we go bankrupt.

Reading of the Minutes:

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Brenda Post, we dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting on October 12, 2020 as everyone had received copies prior to the meeting. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - none and no abstentions.

Financial Report:

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

Budgetary Transfers:

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Keith Hess, we approve the budgetary transfers on pages 25-32. 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, Maryann Kovalewski, Susy Wiegand

"Nays" – None

"Abstaining" – None

Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report: Wendy Kupsky

- Congratulations to both the Girls Volleyball team and the Girls Soccer team – District 2 Championship wins. We will post on the website on how to get tickets for both events.
- President Elect Joe Biden will be addressing agenda for K-12 education and will need cooperation from Congress. It will significantly be impacted by COVID.
- PA Lawmakers are to return tomorrow to work on the rest of the budget. The current State Budget is through November 30, 2020. They only approved a six month budget.
- Psychological benefits of being in school. The Centers for Disease Control and Dr. Fauci are saying that in-person learning is important for children because of the psychological benefit but of course it needs to be done safely.
- There are concerns with the gains in reading and math due to the shutdown that started in March. We are evaluating our reading curriculum and making sure that our students are getting the most out of our instruction. We had an in-service day on Friday and during that in-service day we provided more training on virtual learning. We have had some great feedback from the teachers that it was very valuable and worth the time. Much of our focus is going to be on how we can teach the students during this trying time in these different types of platforms. Research shows that students will likely be returning with only two-thirds of the gain that they would normally have in reading and less than that in math.
- Broadband expansion update – They are working in all the different counties and townships. As towers go online, they are trying to get ISP's done and hooked up immediately. They will notify us when it becomes available. It must be rolled out by December 30, 2020. We are on the list to get more service.
- Encourage students to come to our cyber. We will continue to discuss with our secondary level on what we can do to offer virtual synchronous learning and then so it can be recorded.

- As we approach the holidays, I want to remind everyone to practice safe hygiene and follow the CDC guidelines. As families get together, please continue to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

Question: How long does my 1st grader have to bring the computer back and forth to school?
Wendy Kupsky - Discuss that with your building principal.

Agenda

General:

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

- G-1 Approval to set the date for the combined reorganization/board meeting for December 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.**
- G-2 Approval of the revision to Policy #246 Student Wellness. (enc.)**
- G-3 Approval of the first reading of Policy #702.1 Crowdfunding. (enc.)**
- G-4 Approval of the resolution calling for Charter School Funding Reform. (enc.)**
- G-5 Approval of the agreement with Kidventures Therapy, Inc. to provide Physical Therapy services. (enc.)**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski and Jon Morell, we approve Items G-1 through G-5 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Personnel:

Approve Items P-1 through P-11 With One Motion

- P-1 Approval for employee #1768 to take Emergency Paid Sick Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act from October 14, 2020 through October 27, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-2 Approval for employee #1768 for Family Medical Leave (FMLA) from October 28, 2020 through January 19, 2021. (enc.)**
- P-3 Approval for employee #2886 to take Emergency Paid Sick Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act from October 7, 2020 through October 12, 2020. (enc.)**

- P-4 Approval to accept the resignation of Suzanne Francioni as substitute paraeducator, effective October 23, 2020. (enc.)**
- P-5 Approval of Theresa Christian as BASH TV coordinator for the 2020-2021 school year. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$500.**
- P-6 Approval to accept the resignation of Joseph Kovalewski as Assistant Junior High Track Coach. (enc.)**
- P-7 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.**
- Larisa Geissler Shannon Withey**
- P-8 Approval of Pavan Gadam as Girls Volunteer Assistant Basketball Coach.**
- P-9 Approval of Domenique Verrastro as an exclusive district substitute teacher, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$20.00 per hour.**
- P-10 Approval of Amanda Savage as an exclusive district substitute teacher, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$20.00 per hour.**
- P-11 Approval to hire Jonathan Fedor as full-time custodian, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$12.00 per hour.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Jon Morell, we approve Items P-1 through P-11 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye” except abstentions from Maryann Kovalewski on P-6 and Sandra Slavick on P-10. “Nay” - None

Reports:

Committee Reports:

Susy Wiegand – We met as a Committee as a Whole on November 2, 2020.

Vo-tech – Keith Hess

Minor renovation project. Possibly being \$9-15 million and our portion would be 21% of that number.

Susy Wiegand - Whenever they come with numbers. We would like to see who will be participating.

Sandra Slavick - I was in that meeting also and they were going to meet with the Superintendents and have a discussion first.

Keith Hess - The other question is enrollment. Do we like the enrollment to stay the same or to increase enrollment?

Maryann Kovalewski - I think we would be wise to wait until we see the numbers. There may be more money available depending upon the position of the Federal Government which from my understanding is going to be very supportive of vocational education. I think we need to wait and see how they are going to allocate the funds.

Keith Hess - We don't want to wait and lose the \$1 million the State gave us.

Wendy Kupsky - Are they going to add more classroom space?

Sandra Slavick - I think the \$1 million we can use for repairs and renovations.

Keith Hess - It needs sufficient upgrades.

Renee Jilinski - Check BoardDocs tomorrow for the updated wellness policy. The new crowdfunding policy will be on BoardDocs in December.

Old Business:

Maryann Kovalewski - How are we doing with the request I made with having a committee to meet and see what additional trainings and planning time we could have for the teachers?

Wendy Kupsky - I go to the buildings at least once a week. I walk the buildings and talk to the teachers. I have met with Mr. Phillips. We have agreed to a once a month meeting. The building representatives have a meeting within their building and then they bring it to Mr. Phillips and then Mr. Phillips, Mr. Seely, Mrs. Hegland and I meet together to discuss any additional trainings and any additional things that need to happen. We continue to be virtual on Friday's at the secondary level and our elementary teachers continue to teach five days a week.

Maryann Kovalewski - Do we know how much planning time Vo-tech is giving their teachers?

Wendy Kupsky - I do not. I'm trying to focus on what we are doing in our district and what seems to be working for us. The communication that we are doing seems to be working.

Susy Wiegand - We are providing training.

Maryann Kovalewski - When a student or a staff member tests positive, are those classrooms given a deep cleaning?

Wendy Kupsky - The process is as soon as I am notified of a student that has been positive in the district, I have been going and meeting with each of those teachers personally to tell them the last date and time the student was in their classroom. Typically, what happens is the student was present five to six days ago. The classrooms have already been cleaned. The classrooms are cleaned daily; then on the weekend, they are deep cleaned with the extra time. Typically, you are notified five days later and the rooms have already been cleaned. I send an email out to the teachers in that building, then I posted it on the website. I then do a robo call to that building and let them know about the case.

Maryann Kovalewski - I am glad additional cleaning is being done.

New Business:

Ronald Robsock – Pfizer COVID vaccine (90% effective).

Public Comment:

Michael Celli – Class size concerns at the elementary level.

Robert Croop – I will check tomorrow.

Wendy Kupsky – We don't have any more space for extra classrooms. The recommendation from the CDC is to go to a hybrid model like we are currently doing at the secondary level.

Summarization of Executive Session: Susy Wiegand

Two personnel items.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board