

February 8, 2021

The work session/board meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, February 8, 2021, via virtual zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 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 Kupsy, Mrs. Renee Jilinski, Attorney Bull, Mrs. Janet Kovach, Mr. Steven Christian, Mr. Robert Croop, Mr. Benton Culver, Mrs. Wendy Daily, Mrs. Pamela Hegland, 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, teachers

**Moment of Silence**

**Flag Salute**

**Presentations:**

Wendy Kupsy – Supporting Mental Health components of what we have available for all students.

Pamela Hegland

- SEL: Second Step K-8<sup>th</sup> curriculum. *Social, emotional and wellbeing of children. Gym classes, teachers, guidance and in health classes.*
- School Based Behavioral Health Team. *This will start this month.*
- Kamp for Kids Klosets. *This started in January.*
- Backpack program weekend food program K-12. *This is for all students. Currently 295 students are participating. Food pantry.*
- United Way: Milk distribution. *On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 800 gallons of milk were distributed at the high school and middle school parking lot. There were over forty volunteers including Berwick representatives and members of the high school wrestling team. The milk was donated from Weis Market.*
- Nurse's Pantry. *Trying to keep children healthy and in school. Assess to commonly needed items to help students stay in school.*
- United Way: Year two of the Highlights magazine summer learning workbook initiative. *K-2 grades will receive a workbook before summer break. If the child returns the completed workbook to the next year's teacher, he /she will be awarded an ice cream coupon.*

**Reading of the Minutes:**

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Brenda Post, we dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings on January 11, 2021 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 18-19. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

**Presentation of the Bills:**

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

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.

**Business:** Renee Jilinski

Defer to the Superintendent’s Report.

**Superintendent’s Report: Wendy Kupsky**

- President Biden is pushing to reopen schools and having students back into the buildings. His proposal is to offer as much funding to school districts as possible. We need to wait and see where the budget settles. He is strongly pushing the minimum wage and the serious impact that could have on the community.
- Governor Wolf announced his proposed budget. It is very supportive of the education initiative.
- Cyber expenses. Currently we have 143 students that are attending outside cyber programs. It is costing the district \$2.2 million. This is because of the outdated law that is failing the children, the parents and the tax payers.
- There is a new resolution the Governor is proposing that could save school districts over \$229 million a year and it could protect tax payers by aligning charter school funding to the actual cost. As a school district, we did approve the resolution. We do support this move. If you know of anyone attending outside the school district, please have them contact myself, the building principal or Mrs. Daily to discuss what the concerns are and what we can do to bring the students back here to Berwick to meet their needs. We are going to make phone calls to the parents so we can plan for next year.

- Our focus for next year will be to offer asynchronous and synchronous cyber education for students K-12. Right now, we offer synchronous learning to elementary and asynchronous learning to the secondary levels.
- Snow days: We have used three so far. We have two more built into the schedule. The last day of school is still May 28, 2021.
- 2021-2022 calendar proposal: August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> teacher in-service. First day of school for students August 23, 2021. Last day of school June 3, 2022. This is still preliminary right now.
- We need to be prepared on a Graduation date. Some of our biggest snow storms come in March.
- Delay days: I wanted to explain on what happened on Friday. Friday was a virtual day. On Fridays, grades 5-12 are already virtual. If it was a delay day the secondary would have lost instructional time since they were already home. We switched over at the elementary level to be a virtual day. By doing so, it provided much more of an instructional time for everyone in the school district. At this point in time, Fridays would only be the feasible day to do that.
- February is Black History Month. The buildings will be posting things on the website.
- We will need to have discussions on when we can open up for in-person board meetings.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items: None**

## **Agenda**

### **General:**

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

- G-1 Approval to accept a donation from SAFELITE Fulfillment, Inc. in the amount of \$500.00 for the Girls Volleyball Team.**
- G-2 Approval of the first reading of Policy 220 Student Expression/Distribution and Posting of Materials. (enc.)**
- G-3 Approval of the first reading of Policy 913 Nonschool Organizations / Groups / Individuals. (enc.)**
- G-4 Approval of the first reading of Policy 915 School-Related Organization. (enc.)**

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski we approve Items G-1 through G-4 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

### **Academic Affairs:**

- AA-1 Approval to add Practical Math to the course selection for the 2021-2022 school term.**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Sandra Slavick we approve to add Practical Math to the course selection for the 2021-2022 school term. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

**AA-2 Thirty-day review of the below listed proposed textbooks adoption:**

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|---|--|
| • <b>Glencoe Algebra I</b><br>225 editions  | <b>McGraw Hill Education</b><br><b>\$18,535.50</b> |
| • <b>Glencoe Algebra II</b><br>170 editions | <b>McGraw Hill Education</b><br><b>\$14,004.60</b> |
| • <b>Glencoe Geometry</b><br>200 editions   | <b>McGraw Hill Education</b><br><b>\$16,476.00</b> |

On motion of Maryann Kovalewski, seconded by Carol Bodwalk we approve the thirty-day review of the above listed proposed textbooks adoption. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Robert Croop – The books we currently have were purchased in 2007 and are falling apart. We have been looking at this for several years now but have not been able to budget it. We have looked at the online. It’s a little bit cheaper but after six years you have to renew everything. We don’t see us financially getting ahead on that since these books have lasted us since 2007. We will look at the numbers and see if we can bring down the number we need.

In the future, we will also have to look into the science, social studies and language books. We have many textbooks that are well over ten years. We have a three-four year plan right now. We are working with the department heads to take care of the greatest needs first.

Maryann Kovalewski – This is necessary. There will be addition needs in other content areas.

**Budget & Finance:**

**BF-1 Approval of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit General Operating Budget for the 2021-2022 school term. Berwick Area School District’s estimated share is \$62,525. (enc.) (ROLL CALL VOTE)**

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski we approve the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit General Operating Budget for the 2021-2022 school term. Berwick Area School District’s estimated share is \$62,525.

Joseph DeMelfi – What increase was that from last year?

Renee Jilinski – I don’t have the exact increase. The amount depends on the services we use at the IU. It’s just an estimate. We have budgeted this in the past.

Susy Wiegand – I think last year, it was in the sixty’s as well. We have cut back quite a bit.

Maryann Kovalewski – It used to be several hundred thousand dollars. We have pared that down.

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

“Nays” – None  
 “Abstaining” – None

Motion carried.

**Personnel:**

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

**(Remove P-4)**

- P-1 Approval of the list of spring coaches for the 2020-2021 sports season, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. The stipend will be paid consistent with the 2020-2021 budget. (enc.)**
- P-2 Approval of the resignation of Amber Srednicki as a day to day substitute teacher, effective January 13, 2021. (enc.)**
- P-3 Approval for employee #2568 to take Emergency Paid Sick Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act from December 8, 2020 through December 21, 2020. (enc.)**
- ~~P-4 Approval to add Theresa Auletta 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.~~**  
*Removed from agenda. Took another position.*
- P-5 Approval for employee #2354 to take unpaid days from January 25, 2021 through February 5, 2021. (enc.)**
- P-6 Approval of Gabe Oliver as Boys Volunteer Assistant Volleyball Coach for the 2020-2021 season, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork.**
- P-7 Approval of Robert Harter as Boys Volunteer Assistant Track and Field Coach for the 2020-2021 season, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork.**
- P-8 Approval of Diane Croop and Jennifer Evans as mentor teachers for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. Compensation for each will be at a stipend of \$800.00 prorated.**
- P-9 Approval to hire Mike Downs as Maintenance Technician, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$14.25 per hour.**
- P-10 Approval for employee #2790 to take unpaid Family Medical Leave (FMLA) from May 5, 2021 through May 28, 2021. (enc.)**
- P-11 Approval to accept the resignation of Briar Briggs as full-time custodian, effective February 5, 2021. (enc.)**

**P-12 Approval to accept the resignation of Fred Kramer as part-time custodian, effective February 6, 2021. (enc.)**

On motion of Brenda Post, seconded by Keith Hess we approve Items P-1 through P-3 and P-5 through P-12 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

**P-13 Approval to accept with regret the retirement of the following personnel: (enc.)**

**Keith Seely, effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year**  
**Beth Montana, effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year**  
**Tammy Hoffman, effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year**  
**Wendi Bulkley, effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year**

On motion of Sandra Slavick, seconded by Ronald Robsock we accept with regret the retirement of the above listed personnel.

Maryann Kovalewski – When you look at the list of retirees, there are many decades of devoted service. We would like to say “Thank You” to them. They will be missed.

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

**Reports:**

**Committee Reports:**

**Academic Affairs:** Robert Croop

- Right now the main focus is on the budget and what the student needs are for next year. We are looking at the grants that are out there.

**Athletics:** Bo Orlando

- No committee meeting. Trying to survive the winter with the COVID season. District playoffs are approaching.

**Budget:** Renee Jilinski

- We met right before the board meeting and executive session to go through the status of the budget. Next meeting will tentatively be February 24<sup>th</sup>. The extreme preliminary status with the tax increase, we would be looking at \$1.9 million deficit and \$2.6 million without a tax increase but there are a lot of moving parts to the budget. There are a lot of conversions regarding the grant, additional funding and what the school year will look like next year. We continued to focus on the cyber charter with the outside rate trying to reduce that expenditure because that is driving the increase in the budget with \$1.4 million alone. There are a lot of external factors that need to be considered yet in order to really start to make movement on what a real preliminary number for the budget will be. In two weeks, we will have more of an update as we have those meetings.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Benton Culver

- Fighting COVID in the buildings.
- Budget

- New hire as maintenance tech will be added to our staff starting tomorrow.
- Custodial staff: We are two full-time positions short and one part-time position short. We have advertised for the open positions. We are struggling to get the numbers we need.
- We started an agreement with Jan-Pro Custodial to provide three trained custodians to help out at the middle school. They will be cleaning approximately thirty classrooms. It is covering some of the overtime. It's not covering everything. We are able to use the ESSER Grant funds to make it a pet project to see if this is the decision that we will make in the future. It's difficult to get people to apply for the positions, have reliability and making sure we are doing what we should be doing day in and day out in our buildings.
- Jan-Pro is a Co-Stars cooperative purchasing entity. All prices have been publicly bid at the state level so there is no need to bid that. I have contacted over a dozen companies over the past month to see if we could get support in our buildings.
- We are continuing with Hillyard. It has been going really well.
- We applied for a Grant for equipment. No response back yet.
- Helping winter sports.

**CSIU** – Susy Wiegand

- They are extending to get more services. They would like us to look at them.

**Vo-Tech** – Keith Hess

- We met last month. They did a presentation of the 2019-2020 audit report. Open house virtually and by appointments. We presented the 2021-2022 budget which we will be voting on next week to send it to the sending districts for approval. That should be on our March agenda. Benton entered the Lycoming CTC. They requested to be removed from the Columbia Montour Vo-Tech geographical region. The State sets up the CTC School for each region. We are looking for more information from our solicitor on this. The project is in a holding pattern right now.

Wendy Kupsky – I asked the committees to schedule sub-committee meetings because of the snow and because we are in the budget process. Those will be posted and advertised.

Robert Croop – We started our kindergarten registration. It will be all online this year. That is on the home page on our website. If parents have questions, they can call Child Accounting and they will be able to help out with that. If parents need help, they can set up a time and be helped through the process.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

Maryann Kovalewski – Two possible CTE's that we could explore. (Medical Sciences and Environmental Sciences) Something for us to consider.

Carol Bodwalk – District website, could we add a tab for music and the arts? Can we make a banner on our district website instead of searching? Band is listed as an activity. It should be combined and listed with the Music and Arts. It needs to be upgraded and addressed.

Wendy Kupsky – We are currently working on our website. I want to explore a different website that is more user friendly. There is an expense that is attached to that.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Summarization of Executive Session:** Susy Wiegand

Two personnel items.

Board members viewed a video that was made for the School Board in recognition of School Board recognition month which was held in the month of January. It was done by the West Berwick Elementary School.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board