

July 12, 2021

The combined work session/board meeting of the Berwick Area School Board was held on Monday, July 12, 2021, in the Line Street Administrative Office. 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 Kupsy, Attorney Bull, Mrs. Renee Jilinski, Mrs. Janet Kovach, Mr. Steven Christian, Mr. Robert Croop, Mrs. Wendy Daily, Mrs. Pamela Hegland, Mrs. Jennifer McHale, Ms. Amy Melchiorre, Mr. Joseph Bo Orlando, Mr. Randy Peters, Mr. Patrick Sharkey, Ms. Jill Shipman, Bill Phillips, Theresa Wark

Moment of Silence

Flag Salute

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 June 14, 2021, 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

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Ronald Robsock and Carol Bodwalk, we approve the financial 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 page 11. Motion carried. All members voting "Aye". "Nay" - None and no abstentions.

Presentation of the Bills:

On motion of Sandra Slavick, seconded by Keith Hess, we pay the bills as listed.

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

"Nays" – None

"Abstaining" – None

Motion carried.

Business – Renee Jilinski

If no objections, I will be sending out to Berwick Borough the final billing for the crossing guards for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. We only sent them out until February of 2021. I will send out for the last couple of months.

Unemployment compensation fraud has been hitting the State over the last months since they rolled out their new unemployment system. We have had 15 individuals within the district that are current employees that have been effective at this time. I have contacted both the union and non-union members giving them the appropriate steps to take because it is considered identity theft at this time as reported by the State. The district itself reports the fraud and then the employee as well, once it is confirmed fraud, they also have to report it to the State. They may want to take extra measures to protect their information and bank accounts. By the end of the week, I will be placing some information on our website since it is becoming more popular with more and more claims showing up. In the last five business days, we have had 15 claims. It is across the State not just the Berwick Area School District.

Superintendent's Report: Wendy Kupsky**Health and Safety Plan**

Since May, we have been getting information from PDE that we would have this plan and it would have to be approved by July 30th. PDE notified us last Friday at 7pm of the new CDC guidelines. No committee was required this year. There were no requirements except answering the questions. Some of the Stakeholders met and provided good input and feedback. We had meetings with the President and Vice President of the teachers union up until the end of the school year. We agreed to meet before the school year starts. PDE repeatedly says it has to be based off of local decisions, data and local input. A great sounding board was Dr. Roger Crake. This plan outlines the Berwick Area School District's strategy in comparing responses to and recovering from the pandemic including specifically COVID-19. This will serve as a guide for our district to support prevention and mitigation procedures in line with the most up to date guidance from the CDC and PA DOH. I have a meeting with DOH. It will be held tomorrow. Per the CDC guidelines, there are recommendations, no mandates except for public transportation. The mask recommendation is for all unvaccinated students and staff during indoor activities. Based on our local data 50% are vaccinated. Level of transmission in Columbia County is low risk. Level of transmission in Luzerne County is moderate risk. The district will continue to follow mandated guidelines that are set forth by CDC and PA DOH or PDE. At this time, public transportation is the only Federal mandate that is requiring masks still. We will have to mandate masks on our buses. This plan also ties us with our ESSERS money. We have to have an approved plan to get our ESSERS funding. In accordance with the CDC recommendations and the importance of in person learning physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, students should be socially and/or physically distanced. Their recommendation is three feet. We are still looking at what the contact tracing will be. I have not been notified that contact tracing has changed. Contact tracing was at six feet. Hand washing, we are still going to have the wipes and hand sanitizers. We are going to continue encouraging coughing in your elbow and washing hands frequently. We are going to have the same requirements for the cleaning materials. We are following the CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the schools. I met with Mr. Culver and we decided to change up the cleaning, so with part of the ESSERS money, we will continue to use the Jam Pro Cleaning Company. We are going to contract with them for four more spots. It will help us get through the pandemic with the extra cleaning. It frees up our district

employees to then be assigned to jobs that are specific to our school district like athletic facilities. We are not hiring; we are going through the company. Classroom and common areas will be ventilated with additional circulation of outdoor air when possible, using windows, doors and/or fans. Increase frequency of the AC filters. We have to use 20% for loss of learning and we are planning on writing the rest into the ventilation systems. We already started that process. We signed the LOC in April and now we are moving forward. It's a multi-year process.

Maryann Kovalewski – We have to keep that ventilation system clean.

Wendy Kupsky – Contract tracing. The building principals and the nurses have been trained and the process has been working well. We contact DOH every time. We will continue to do the tracker on our website. Symptom screening by parents will be done at home before school each day. We are not going to do the temperature checks upon entry to school. Each grade level will have a thermometer if needed for symptoms. All staff will screen for symptoms before coming to work. Will not need to fill out the symptom screen. Individuals becoming ill or showing symptoms during the day should be isolated to the greatest extent possible. Testing is available at the Berwick Hospital and Dr. Alley's office for staff, students and community members. There is a grant opportunity for testing but we don't have the information on that yet. Based on local data, screening testing for high contact activities such as extracurricular activities may be necessary. In the guidelines, one of the things that they are suggesting is for high contact sports; you do pre-testing on a weekly bases. It is not mandated and I did not include it. It is just a suggestion. That is something for discussion for the Board. For outdoor activity, they say you do not need to wear a mask. It is mandated, so I did not require it. We are currently waiting on PDE. We have to be vigilant at watching our numbers. If our numbers go up, we will have to meet again. We will have to then review the plan. We have to watch our local data.

Jon Morell – This is a living document. It can change.

Wendy Kupsky – Correct. We don't have our own DOH in our counties so we have to follow the State directives. I did try to promote a vaccination site but we were told to go to Central. We do have working relationships with Berwick Hospital, Giant pharmacy and CVS pharmacy to provide vaccines. Extra precautions with students with disabilities. We did have the students in every day. Servicing students in low incidence programs can be problematic. For these reasons, extra precautions will be implemented. Staff should thoroughly wash hands or use sanitizer immediately before and after working with a student. Bathrooms and changing tables should be disinfected before and after student use. Limit students to one at a time. We have three certified school nurses. They have been instrumental in providing information from DOH. In addition to the Berwick Hospital, Geisinger has provided a liaison for assistance and guidance. The Berwick Hospital has really stepped up and supported us in offering any services that we might need.

Theresa Wark – Questioned about kids with asthma.

Wendy Kupsky – This plan is tied to your ESSERS money. We assigned three elementary teachers (K-4) for online learning. Teachers will not be doing double duty type teaching. If it gets to the level where there are too many students, then that will have to be a conversation that we have. We will have to close the doors because we can't accept any more. We have to watch the numbers. We have to watch the delta variant. If the numbers go up we need to make changes in our mitigation efforts. At the middle school level, teachers met with the principals and a group of teachers volunteered to do cyber. At the high school, it would only be a period. We can't provide synchronous learning for 9-12. The scheduling does not allow for it. Teachers like the google classroom and they want to continue sharing that. An absence will be a true absence.

They are not streaming into the classroom. The child can access the google classroom and all of the assignments.

On motion of Keith Hess, seconded by Brenda Post we add the addendum to the agenda. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

None

Agenda

General:

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

G-1 Approval of the first reading of Policy # 115 Career and Technical Education. (enc.)

G-2 Approval to accept the grant in the amount of \$15,000 from the Berwick Health and Wellness Fund of the Community Giving Foundation. The funds will be used for the School-Based Prevention Education Services.

G-3 Approval to accept the grant in the amount of \$35,607 from the Berwick Health and Wellness Fund of the Community Giving Foundation. The funds will be used for the Counseling Services.

G-4 Approval of the agreement with Next Century, Inc. from August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022. (enc.)

On motion of Jon Morell, seconded by Brenda Post we approve Items G-1 through G-4 With One Motion.

Maryann Kovalewski – G-4 Next Century, Inc.?

Wendy Kupsy – That is the Cyber Academy. Anne Thomas has multiple certifications. She is contracted with this company so we don’t have to hire.

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

Academic Affairs:

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

AA-1 Approval of the Dual Enrollment Agreement with Lackawanna College from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. (enc.)

AA-2 Approval of Middle School Keyboarding class for the 2021-2022 school year. (enc.)

On motion of Maryann Kovalewski, seconded by Brenda Post and Jon Morell we approve Items AA-1 through AA-2 With One Motion.

Jon Morell – Keyboarding class?

Robert Croop – It will be 6th, 7th and 8th grade. It will be a related arts class. It will be one period, 0.5 credit course and every day for ½ year.

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

Personnel:

Approve Items P-1 through P-7 With One Motion

P-1 Approval of the status change of Heejung Kang from substitute paraeducator to part-time paraeducator. Compensation will be at the rate of \$14.36 per hour.

P-2 Approval of the below listed elementary team leaders. Each elementary team leader will be compensated \$1,650.00 for the 2021-2022 school term.

<u>Salem</u>		<u>West Berwick</u>		<u>Nescopeck</u>	
K - 2	MariJo Rupp	K - 2	Jessica Gross	K - 2	Rachael Buchman
3 - 4	Shelby Crawford	3 - 4	Megan Culver	3 - 4	Christine Powlus

P-3 Approval of the below listed Secondary Department Heads for the 2021-2022 school year. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$2,900.00.

Science	Stephanie Rothery
Math	Victoria Witner
Business	Julie Cerasoli-Kishbaugh
Related Arts	Ronald Swingle
English (Language Arts)	Joanna Calarco
Foreign Language	Annette Isenberg
Special Ed.	Marisa Newhart
Social Studies	Michelle Matash
Library	Heather Henry

P-4 Approval of Michelle Grazio as Department Head for Health Services for the 2021-2022 school year. Compensation will be at a stipend of \$2,900.00.

P-5 Approval to hire Brian Valentine as full-time maintenance technician, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$14.25 per hour.

P-6 Approval to hire Tammy Stroebel as full-time custodian, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$11.35 per hour.

P-7 Approval to hire Joseph Fedor as full-time custodian, pending receipt of appropriate paperwork. Compensation will be at the rate of \$11.35 per hour.

On motion of Maryann Kovalewski, seconded by Brenda Post we approve Items P-1 through P-7 With One Motion. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

ADDENDUM

General:

G-5 Approval of the Health and Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. (enc.)

On motion of Ronald Robsock, seconded by Sandra Slavick we approve the Health and Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 school year.

Maryann Kovalewski – My only concern is the delta variant and the masking issue because of our ventilation system. I agree we need to get our kids back into the classroom and keep them there.

Motion carried. All members voting “Aye” except Maryann Kovalewski. “Nay” – Maryann Kovalewski and no abstentions.

Personnel:

P-8 Approval of the following Berwick Area Senior High School Marching Band staff positions for the school year 2021-2022.

Anthony McDonnell-Johnson - Marching Band Director	\$3,000
Pepin Klinger – Assistant Band Director	\$1,500
Felicia Canouse - Color Guard Instructor	\$1,500

On motion of Carol Bodwalk, seconded by Maryann Kovalewski we approve the above listed Berwick Area Senior High School Marching Band staff positions for the school year 2021-2022. Motion carried. All members voting “Aye”. “Nay” - None and no abstentions.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Maryann Kovalewski – Safety issue of July 4th fireworks. Received calls from residents around Crispin Field complaining about the fireworks thinking they were the school districts fireworks. Concerns about debris from flying embers. Debris was found on school property vehicles, buildings and equipment. I am concerned about our property. Litter was on the district property grounds. Neighbors are complaining about what is falling on their yards. I’m concerned about what could have happened. In September of 2019, the Borough did bring in a fireworks expert who said there is no safe place within the borough with which they can have fireworks.

Carol Bodwalk – I drove by this evening and the debris still lays over the ground. Whomever signed the contract needs to rake and clean up the debris on our property.

Wendy Kupsky – When I was notified this morning, I went down and I communicated with the maintenance guys. They said for the last five years it has been like this. It take over a half a day

to clean it up with 3-4 guys. The debris is cardboard pieces and is part of it for as long as he can remember. He said they do pick up a lot of it.

Maryann Kovalewski – My concern is the fire.

Joseph DeMelfi – This is a Borough initiative?

Maryann Kovalewski – Yes.

Joseph DeMelfi – I think someone needs to go to the Borough that is concerned. We should contact the Borough to clean it up.

More discussion followed.

Public Comment: None

Summarization of Executive Session: Susy Wiegand
Contract, personnel and litigation.

Next Meetings:

Committee of the Whole – August 2, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Board Meeting – August 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Susy Wiegand - We will have an executive session following the meeting to do an evaluation.

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Janet K. Kovach, Secretary to the Board