

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual and in person Board meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021. This meeting was recorded.

An Executive Session was held prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel matters. This announcement is being made to be in compliance with Act 84 of 1986, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law, as amended.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Jeff Winkle, Board President.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Oblak. Roll call by the secretary followed. Those Directors in attendance were:

Daniel Caton
Lesia Dobo (Participated by video conference)
Matthew Erickson
Lori McKittrick
Darren Newberry
Kathryn Oblak
Daniel Santia
Jeffrey Winkle
Lindsay Zupsic

Also, in attendance were: Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent, Dr. Jacie Maslyk, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. John Salopek, Solicitor; Jennifer Conrad, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Michael Allison, Robert Kartychak, Kylee Babish and Gary Hutsler, Principals; and visitors.

"Good News" reports were presented by Dr. Maslyk, Dr. Kartychak, Ms. Babish and Mr. Hutsler. Copies of each report are attached to these minutes.

Mr. Winkle asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #1

By Darren Newberry, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the January 25, 2021 and February 8, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMSMOTION #2

By Darren Newberry, seconded by Dan Caton, to approve items (1) through (3) as presented in accordance with School Board's agreement for grouping items in a single motion. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Tax Collectors' Report

1. Recommendation to accept report for taxes collected for the month of January, 2021, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Treasurer's Report

2. Recommendation to accept report of the Treasurer for the month of January, 2021, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Financial Statements

3. Recommendation to accept Financial Statements for the month of January 2021, as presented, and make said statements a part of these minutes.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

Effective January 1, 2021, community members have the ability to sign up to be recognized during the Visitor's Section of a live Zoom meeting. The individual must also have a device that specifically states his/her name in order to be recognized. Written questions will no longer be accepted. When recognized, the individual will need to state his/her name and address and will have 3 minutes to make a statement and/or ask a question to the Board. The time will begin when the individual begins speaking. This time limit will include a possible response by the Board.

A response may be given during the meeting, however, it is also possible that no response be provided during the virtual meeting. The Board will instruct the Superintendent, the Business Administrator and/or the Solicitor to either respond to the inquiry or do further research and report back to the Board and/or the resident. For any question that requires a response, the District will contact the individual directly to respond or will share responses at the following Board meeting.

Additionally, if a community member wishes to speak during this additional time, the community member must request to speak in the chat box. The Board President will ask for comments in the order in which the community member requested to speak. The individual must have a device that specifically states his/her name in order to be recognized. When recognized, the individual will have 3 minutes to make a statement and/or ask a question to the Board. The time will begin when the individual begins

speaking. This time limit will include a possible response by the Board. A maximum of thirty minutes total will be reserved during the meeting for community members who request to speak in the chat room.

Time was allotted for requests to speak from the “chat room” at the end of the meeting.

Bethany Pistorius, 2008 S. Trillium Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Mrs. Pistorius discussed her frustration with the current administration. She doesn't feel that the District is headed in the right direction and sees little accountability by the Board. She stated that there continues to be issues with consistency with curriculum and that there are widespread connectivity problems. Mrs. Pistorius does not feel that the District is competitive with other local districts and reported that the District's rank among all Pennsylvania school district has declined.

Heather Shadish, 5011 Stags Leap Lane, Coraopolis, PA 15108

Mrs. Shadish is a teacher in the District. Mrs. Shadish thanked Dr. Miller and Dr. Maslyk for the leadership and support. She has been afforded opportunities to collaborate with other educators and has tried different approaches to educating her students. Both she and her students have been inspired to push boundaries and seek diverse ways to improve learning.

Victoria Gill, 1025 Sweet Brier Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Gill asked what the plans were for 4th grade orientation and introducing them to the Junior High School. She asked how parents can help prepare their children for this transition.

Dr. Miller stated that she and the principals have been working on 4th and 8th grade orientation to their new buildings. She also said that administrators have been working on plans to have summer school for those students who have fallen behind and would benefit from additional instruction. She said that this information would be explained in future Board meetings.

Aubrey Bruzzese, 796 Monaca Road, Aliquippa, PA

Aubrey is a senior at Hopewell High School. Miss Bruzzese is advocating for the District to have a prom in the spring. She said that she had reached out to Board members and administration but had not received information regarding prom. She had been told that prom was cancelled for this school year and wanted to know why since the musical and winter sports were allowed to continue. She presented the Board with several options for venues and vendors that would observe CDC guidelines and reviewed them with the Board.

Mr. Winkle said that a decision to cancel prom had never been made. He said that he appreciated Miss Bruzzese's efforts on behalf of her classmates. Mr. Winkle said that discussions were ongoing.

Vivian Lumbard, 2867 Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Lumbard reported that the CDC had issued new guidelines regarding Covid-19. She asked if the District intended to follow these new guidelines. She asked why teachers had not yet been vaccinated. She also stated that she heard that there existed a hostile work environment and asked for an independent investigation into the matter.

Crystal Kohler, 796 Monaca Road, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Kohler asked what the plan was for students returning to school full time.

Mr. Winkle said that the Board and Administration had been discussing the issue since September. There is a plan in place, but since Beaver County remained in the substantial rate of transmission, hybrid learning would continue.

Kristen Nan, 103 Lantern Lane, Aliquippa, PA

Mrs. Nan is a teacher in the District. She read a letter in support of the leadership and support of Dr. Miller and Dr. Maslyk.

Nate Miller, 1229 Royal Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Nate is a senior at Hopewell High School. Nate continues to advocate for a prom this spring. He started a Go Fund Me so that his classmates, with the support of their parents, could sponsor a private event rather than one sponsored by the District. After hearing earlier in the meeting that the Board had not made any decision about whether to hold prom or not, he asked them to expedite their decision so that appropriate reservations could be made.

Mr. Newberry said that the District would like to do something with respect to a prom, but they had not made a decision on what that would be. The Board continues to discuss the issue. Mr. Winkle stated that the Board is not prepared to give an answer this evening.

A parent from the audience asked if there were any repercussions if students and parents moved forward with the prom without District consent. Mr. Newberry said that he didn't think there were any. Another parent asked if there was a 100% chance the District would sponsor the prom. Mr. Winkle said that he couldn't guarantee that. Ms. McKittrick asked if they could wait for an answer until the next Board meeting and guaranteed an answer at that time.

Kendra Gill, 369 Longs Run Road, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Gill asked when the District would return to 5 days in person learning. She believes that school is a safe place for children and asked why the District hasn't followed other Beaver County school District in this direction. She would like to see the Class of 2021 have a normal graduation.

Mr. Winkle stated that since Beaver County remains in the substantial rate of transmission, the District will remain hybrid. Mrs. Oblak stated that she has grandchildren in a neighboring District and since they have returned to full time instruction, school has had to close due to spread of the virus. Mrs. Oblak believes it is important to follow the required guidelines.

Matthew Berg, 1208 State Route 18, Aliquippa, PA

Mr. Berg expressed his frustration that students were not in school full time. He asked the Board to explain their rationale for this decision.

Mr. Newberry stated that other Districts are not following the required guidelines and that since Beaver County is still in the substantial rate of transmission, Hopewell would remain hybrid.

Karen Przybysz, 4479 State Route 151, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Przybysz said that she agreed with those 100% that students should be in school full time. Parents should be given the option to decide what they think is best for their children.

Mr. Winkle said that the District continues to follow the required guidelines.

Becky Adams, 122 Christy Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Adams spoke to Dr. Miller asking if she continues to talk to Beaver County superintendents, as she said that she had done at the beginning of the school year to discuss Covid. She said, if you are, why are they back in school and Hopewell is not. Ms. Adams expressed her opinion that parents should decide if they want their children to return to school full time. She asked what the expectations were for teachers for synchronous learning. She said that her child in high school did not have live virtual instruction one day last week. She reported that her child's grades have gone down since the start of hybrid and virtual learning.

Dr. Miller stated that not all local districts have returned five days per week.

Lawrence Ingram, Abbie Lane, Aliquippa, PA

Mr. Ingram, on behalf of he and his wife, expressed their belief that children should be in school five days per week. He believes that the decision should be made based on the school rate of transmission rather than Beaver County as a whole. He stated that he believes the District is failing our children and that, according to the website, their scores are substantially lower. He complimented Miss Bruzzese and Mr. Miller on their leadership. He also believes that parents should be given the option to decide how often their children attend school.

Mr. Winkle continued with committee recommendations and discussion.

Educational/Curriculum/Instruction by Matthew Erickson, Chair**MOTION #3**

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the request of Kim Lauer, art teacher at the Senior High School, to create a Ceramics elective beginning the 2021-2022 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #4

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the 2020-2021 Tuition Agreement with Pittsburgh Public Schools, effective September 1, 2020. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #5

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the revised 2020-2021 calendar for K-4 to continue Act 80 half days on March 29, April 26 and May 24 for trainings, professional development and kindergarten registration and screenings. However, Students in grade 5-12 will have full virtual instructional days on March 29, April 26 and May 24. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Correa, Director of Technology, discussed the Viking Connect 1:1 device replacement. His report is attached.

Athletics by Dan Caton, ChairMOTION #6

By Dan Caton, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the termination of the co-op agreement with the Aliquippa School District with respect to Boys' Volleyball. MOTION carried unanimously by a vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #7

By Dan Caton, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the Boys' Volleyball co-op agreement with South Side beginning the 2020-2021 season. MOTION carried unanimously by a vote of all Directors in attendance.

Buildings and Grounds by Darren Newberry, ChairMOTION #8

By Darren Newberry, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the request of Central Valley School District for students from the Central Valley Middle School swim team to utilize the pool for practice for the 2020-2021 season. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

Finance and Budget by Lori McKittrick, Chair**APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS****MOTION #9**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve items (1) and (2) and to ratify item (3) as presented, in accordance with School Board's agreement for grouping items in a single motion. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

1. General Fund payments in the amount of \$486,018.10
2. Cafeteria Fund payments in the amount of \$69,510.47
3. General Fund payments in the amount of \$2,280,306.18

MOTION #10

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to accept the proposal from Hawley Consulting Group for a postretirement medical valuation for the District under GASB 75 at a cost of \$4,200.00. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #11

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to accept the proposal from Hosack, Specht, Muetzel & Wood, LLP, Certified Public Accountants for the audit of the District's financial statements for the years ended June 30, 2021, 2022, and 2023 at a cost of \$20,950, \$21,575, and \$22,200, respectively. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Personnel by Matthew Erickson**MOTION #12**

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to accept the resignation of Jennifer Conrad and the termination of the shared services agreement between Hopewell Area School District, Jennifer Conrad, business administrator, and Laurel School District, on June 30, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #13

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to accept the resignation of Dayne Smith, Varsity Boys Volleyball coach, effective January 29, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #14

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the employment of Rob Hall, Varsity Boys Volleyball coach, effective for the 2021 spring season, at a stipend of \$3,859.00, subject to completion of the season and proration of the salary in the event that the spring sports season is shortened. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #15

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Dan Caton, to approve the employment of Terry Borkovic as 2nd Assistant Girls Volleyball Coach, effective February 16, 2021, at a stipend of \$2,779.00, subject to completion of the season and proration of the salary in the event that the spring sports season is shortened. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #16

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the spring coaches and salaries, subject to completion of the season and proration of the salary in the event that the spring sports season is shortened. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #17

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Dan Santia, to accept the resignation of Kylee Babish, Junior High School Assistant Principal, effective on or about March 26, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Dr. Erickson thanked Ms. Babish for the amazing job she did at the Junior High School, both as a teacher and as an administrator.

MOTION #18

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Darren Newberry, to accept the resignation of Kelsey Steele, Latin teacher, effective February 26, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #19

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the employment of Kathy Yerep, part-time long-term substitute teacher at the Senior High School, effective February 24, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #20

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the employment of Nadine Kennelly, substitute cafeteria worker, effective February 23, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Superintendent's Report

Nothing to report.

Solicitor's Report

Nothing to report.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Santia stated that the students need to be in school full time.

Mr. Caton agreed, however, thinks Covid has affected many families and that caution should be taken before any changes are made.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

March 8, 2021 Regular Work Meeting, via Zoom and in person
March 22, 2021, Regular Business Meeting, via Zoom and in person

Executive Session

An Executive Session was held following the meeting to discuss personnel matters. This announcement is being made to be in compliance with Act 84 of 1986, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law, as amended.

MOTION by Dan Santia, seconded by Dan Caton, that the meeting be adjourned. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Winkle adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Jeff Winkle, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary