

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR WORK MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District met in regular session on Monday, February 8, 2021, in the Senior High School Auditorium as well as virtually, via Zoom. This meeting was recorded.

An Executive Session was held on February 4, 2021 and prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel. 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 7:02 p.m. by Jeff Winkle, Board President.

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

Daniel Caton
Lesia Dobo (via Zoom)
Matthew Erickson
Lori McKittrick
Darren Newberry
Kathryn Oblak
Daniel Santia
Jeffrey Winkle
Lindsay Zupsic (via Zoom)

Also present were: Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent, Dr. Jacie Maslyk, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. John Salopek, Solicitor; Jennifer Conrad, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary and visitors.

At this time, Dr. Miller reviewed items that will be voted on this evening.

Education/Curriculum/Instruction: Dr. Erickson, Chair; Ms. McKittrick, Co-Chair

1. Revise school calendar to make Monday, February 22 a full instructional virtual day as opposed to the scheduled half day.

Dr. Miller stated that the reason for the change was so students would have more direct instruction.

2. Free school privileges for Nicholas Rivers to attend Hopewell High School for the 2020-2021 School Year.
3. Free school privileges for Ace Zuniga to attend Hopewell High School for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Finance and Budget: Ms. McKittrick, Chair; Mrs. Zupsic, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Resolution #2-2021 establishing the compensation paid to the tax collector of Raccoon Township of \$4.50 per real estate tax parcel and \$4.50 per interim real estate tax parcel beginning a four-year term starting the first Monday of January 2022. **(Roll Call)**
2. Resolution #3-2021 establishing the compensation paid to the tax collector of Independence Township of \$4.50 per real estate tax parcel and \$4.50 per interim real estate tax parcel beginning a four-year term starting the first Monday of January 2022. **(Roll Call)**
3. Resolution #4-2021 establishing the compensation paid to the tax collector of Hopewell Township of \$4.50 per real estate tax parcel and \$4.50 per interim real estate tax parcel beginning a four-year term starting the first Monday of January 2022. **(Roll Call)**

Mrs. Conrad shared that the rates identified are the current rates and that the approved rates would be in place for the following four years.

Personnel: Dr. Erickson, Chair; Mrs. Oblak, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Employment of Janet Sakson, individual special education aide at Hopewell Elementary School, effective February 8, 2021. **(Roll Call)**
2. Employment of Nancy Haddad, long-term substitute teacher at Hopewell High School, effective February 2, 2021. **(Roll Call)**
3. Employment of Melissa Haywood, long-term substitute teacher at the Junior High School, effective February 2, 2021. **(Roll Call)**
4. Resignation of Renee Rawding, paraprofessional, effective February 5, 2021. Ms. Rawding would like to be placed on the secretary/aide substitute roster.

At this time, Dr. Miller began her review of those items that would be voted on at the February 22, 2021 Business meeting.

Education/Curriculum/Instruction: Mr. Winkle, Chair; Ms. McKittrick, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Request of Kim Lauer, art teacher at the Senior High School, to create a Ceramics elective beginning the 2021-2022 school year. (**Attachment**)

Mr. Winkle asked for additional information about the ceramics elective.

Dr. Miller said that adding the class would enable the high school to offer more opportunities for the arts. This class was previously held at the Junior High School, but is no longer offered there. The cost of materials would be off set from Junior High to Senior High. No additional staff would be needed.

2. 2020-2021 Tuition Agreement with Pittsburgh Public Schools, effective September 1, 2020.
3. Mackenzie Thomas, a student at Geneva College, to complete elementary counseling practicum hours under the supervision of Janae Batchelor.

Mrs. Dobo asked why this would not be voted on this evening, as she felt this individual was waiting for approval to start.

Dr. Miller said that it was not a problem to vote on this item this evening and asked Dr. Erickson to make the motion, when appropriate.

Athletics: Mr. Caton, Chair; Dr. Erickson, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Request of Central Valley School District for students from the Central Valley Middle School swim team to practice with the Hopewell Junior High School swim team for the 2020-2021 season.
2. Termination of co-op agreement with the Aliquippa School District with respect to Boys' Volleyball.

Dr. Miller reported that no students participated in this program for the past four years.

3. Boys' Volleyball co-op agreement with _____ beginning the 2020-2021 season.

Dr. Miller said that she was meeting with the Athletics committee in the morning and would discuss this issue with them. It is anticipated that there would be additional information at the February 22, 2021 Board Meeting.

Finance: Ms. McKittrick, Chair

1. Proposal from Hawley Consulting Group for a postretirement medical valuation for the District under GASB 75 at a cost of \$4,200.00. **(Roll Call)**
2. 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. **(Roll Call)**

Personnel: Dr. Erickson, Chair; Mrs. Oblak, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Acceptance of Jennifer Conrad's resignation letter and termination of the shared services agreement between Hopewell Area School District, Jennifer Conrad, business administrator, and Laurel School District, on June 30, 2021. **(Roll Call)**
2. Resignation of Dayne Smith, Varsity Boys Volleyball coach, effective January 29, 2021.
3. Employment of _____, Varsity Boys Volleyball coach, effective _____.

Dr. Miller shared that interviews for this position are being held this week and a recommendation by the administration and/or Athletic Committee will be forthcoming.

4. Employment of Terry Borkovic as 2nd Assistant Volleyball Coach, effective February 16, 2021, at a stipend of \$2,779.00.
5. 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. (Attachment)

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.

Bethany Pistorius, 2008 South Trillium Drive

"It's no secret I have been critical of the administration. My criticism has been based on experience, discovering lies both big and small as well as observation of what I consider to be serious mismanagement. I also know what information is 'right to know' in the state of PA including contract spans and position salaries among other information. Since I am a fairly bright person it stands to reason that right around now the board would need to begin discussions regarding the contract renewal of both the superintendent and assistant superintendent, if it has not already begun, since both contracts end on June 30th. I'm here tonight to ask the board to truly consider if our district is heading in the right direction under the current leadership. The overall rating/ranking of our district has gone down. Also, due to the mismanagement of the administration our district came close to locking the taxpayers of our township into paying for a massive, and unnecessary, complex. The district also came close to unnecessarily traumatizing 9-year olds by moving them to the junior high with very little transitional preparation time. I also encourage you to consider what actual goals have been achieved by this administration? It seems like the bulk of the administration's focus has been on technology and after all these years we have only recently achieved 1:1 devices, but cannot even support these devices in all of the buildings yet because of dead zones within some of the buildings. One of my children attends HE and over the past couple of years her teachers have had issues with connecting to the Wi-Fi from their own classrooms. I also ask you to consider, how has the administration handled the pandemic? While I understand that this is not a problem unique to Hopewell, has the education of our children gone smoothly? Has the administration adapted as needed? I certainly recall hearing issue after issue raised by parents at every board meeting. It has also been my observation that there has been very little accountability enforced by the board. While I understand that the majority of you may vote to renew both contracts, I would like to remind the public that SIX out of the NINE board seats are up for re-election this year and the board that makes the decision on the two contracts may look very different than the board that will oversee the administration for the majority of whatever length of contract you give them. I would urge you to truly consider whether or not our current leadership has earned continuing to work for our district past June 30th, and I want to encourage anyone in the community who is eligible to run for the school board and who feels strongly that a change is in order to seriously consider pursuing candidacy, as deadlines are approaching to get

on the primary ballot. Change starts with us...and for those of you on the board in Region 2...I will see you on the ballot.

Vivian Lombard, 2867 Brodhead Road

Mrs. Lombard believes that the District could do a better job with hybrid and cyber learning. She doesn't believe the District is listening to parent concerns. Mrs. Lombard said that the District had not answered her questions from the last meeting, specifically, why the District was not following CDC and Department of Health guidelines at this time, as they were doing at the beginning of the school year. She believes that the District sent students back to hybrid learning prematurely and asked what guidelines had changed since the beginning of the year. She asked Mr. Salopek what the District's liability would be if a student or staff member contracted Covid since the District was not compliant with CDC guidelines.

Mrs. Lombard said that the District had lost one of its biggest supporters in Mark Faiella, who passed away earlier this year due to Covid. Mr. Faiella's support touched every student in the District. She asked the Board to observe a moment of silence in his honor.

At this time, Mr. Winkle returned to Education/Curriculum/Instruction

Education/Curriculum/Instruction by Dr. Erickson, Chair

MOTION #1

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the revised school calendar to make Monday, February 22 a full instructional virtual day as opposed to the scheduled half day. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #2

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve free school privileges for Nicholas Rivers to attend Hopewell High School for the 2020-2021 School Year. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #3

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve free school privileges for Ace Zuniga to attend Hopewell High School for the 2020-2021 School Year. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #4

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve Mackenzie Thomas, a student at Geneva College, to complete elementary counseling practicum hours under the supervision of Janae Batchelor. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

Finance and Budget by Ms. McKittrick, Chair**APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS****MOTION #5**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lesia Dobo, 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 roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

1. Resolution #2-2021 establishing the compensation paid to the tax collector of Raccoon Township of \$4.50 per real estate tax parcel and \$4.50 per interim real estate tax parcel beginning a four-year term starting the first Monday of January 2022.
2. Resolution #3-2021 establishing the compensation paid to the tax collector of Independence Township of \$4.50 per real estate tax parcel and \$4.50 per interim real estate tax parcel beginning a four-year term starting the first Monday of January 2022.
3. Resolution #4-2021 establishing the compensation paid to the tax collector of Hopewell Township of \$4.50 per real estate tax parcel and \$4.50 per interim real estate tax parcel beginning a four-year term starting the first Monday of January 2022.

Personnel by Dr. Erickson, Chair**MOTION #6**

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the employment of Janet Sakson, individual special education aide at Hopewell Elementary School, effective February 8, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #7

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the employment of Nancy Haddad, long-term substitute teacher at Hopewell High School, effective February 2, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #8

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the employment of Melissa Haywood, long-term substitute teacher at the Junior High School, effective February 2, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #9

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to accept the resignation of Renee Rawding, paraprofessional, effective February 5, 2021. Ms. Rawding would like to be placed on the secretary/aide substitute roster. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Newberry stated that he though Mrs. Pistorius painted a very bleak picture of the district. He expressed that he did not feel that was true, saying he has two children at Margaret Ross Elementary School and speaks with administration almost daily. He stated that he has been on the Board for three years and that over the past "6-9 months" he has learned the job. He also stated "is everything perfect? No. But I don't want to see our administration change." He encouraged parents to reach out to him.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

February 22, 2021, Regular Business Meeting will be in person and held virtually.

MOTION by Darren Newberry, seconded by Kathryn Oblak that the meeting be adjourned. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Winkle adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Jeff Winkle, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary