

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR WORK MEETING  
MARCH 8, 2021

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

An Executive Session was held on March 1, 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 7:03 p.m. by Darren Newberry, Board Vice 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  
Lori McKittrick  
Darren Newberry  
Kathryn Oblak  
Daniel Santia (Via Zoom)  
Lindsay Zupsic

Members Absent  
Matthew Erickson  
Jeffrey Winkle

Also present were: Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent, Mr. John Salopek, Solicitor; Jennifer Conrad, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Michael Allison, Principal; Carlos Correa, Director of Technology; 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. Free school privileges for Adelin Garcia Sanchez to attend Hopewell Junior High School for the 2020-2021 school year, pending receipt of required documents.
2. Return to 5 day in-person learning beginning March 29, 2021 for students in grades K-6 and April 6 for students in grades 7-12. **(Roll Call)**

Mr. Newberry stated that the Board and Administration have been working since the beginning of the school year to develop a plan for full-time in school instruction so that everyone would be ready when the appropriate time arose for implementation. The Board and Administration have listened to all stakeholders

and have taken into consideration all suggested guidelines, and parent, student and teacher concerns. Dr. Miller explained that since the rate of transmission has dropped, the return to full time instruction will be March 29, 2021 for students in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Students in grades 7 through 12 will return on April 6, 2021. Vaccination of staff, through the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit, will begin on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 through Saturday, March 13, 2021. Students and parents who do not feel comfortable returning to school, may choose to transfer to the District cyber program. The deadline for families to decide which educational model to follow is March 19, 2021. Once the decision is made, students must continue in that program through the end of the school year. Dr. Miller stated that she and the principals, especially at the elementary level, will carefully monitor class size. All staff will support students transitioning back to school. Safety precautions are of the utmost importance. Classrooms and cafeterias will have plexiglass dividers, social distancing will be followed to the greatest extent possible in classrooms as well faculty and students wearing masks.

Ms. McKittrick shared that she had been hesitant to support a return to 5 days of instruction due to health risks to staff. However, with the recent ability for staff to be immunized, she is more comfortable in supporting the return to in person learning.

3. Updated PDE Health and Safety Plan to reflect changes regarding return to in-person learning.

Dr. Miller stated that any necessary changes would be made to the Plan, it would then be sent to the State for approval and then posted on the District website.

4. Update: Senior High School Prom.

Mr. Allison reported that he had updated the Senior Class President and the Junior Class officers regarding the Prom, which is May 7, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency Airport. He explained that the Hyatt will follow all Covid guidelines. Mr. Allison will report back to the Board when all final arrangements have been made.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Mr. Newberry, Chair; Mr. Santia, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Request of Brad Robison and Beaver County Flag Football to use Tony Dorsett Stadium on Saturday's from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. beginning April 10, 2021 through June 5, 2021.

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

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. To exonerate Mary Ellen Oros, Independence Township Tax Collector from the collection of and the Hopewell Area School District from the payment of the 2020-2021 School District real estate tax (in the penalty amount of \$26,971.02) on Tax Parcel No. 66-213-0184.000, being a portion of the Independence Elementary School property having an address of 103 School Road containing 3.42 acres and a portion of the School Building, as a result of the transfer of the property from the State Public School Building Authority back to the Hopewell Area School District by the Deed recorded on April 18, 2019 and for the Board Secretary to give notice to Mary Ellen Oros of the approval of this Motion. **(Roll Call)**
2. To exonerate Diane Palsa, Hopewell Township Tax Collector from the collection of and the Hopewell Area School District from the payment of the 2020-2021 School District real estate tax (in the penalty amount of \$346.27) on Tax Parcel No. 65-015-0300.000, being a portion of the Junior High School property having an address of Route 51 containing 0.385 acres of land, including part of the tennis courts, as a result of the transfer of the property from the State Public School Building Authority back to the Hopewell Area School District by the Deed recorded on April 18, 2019 and for the Board Secretary to give notice to Diane Palsa of the approval of this Motion. **(Roll Call)**
3. To exonerate Diane Palsa, Hopewell Township Tax Collector from the collection of and the Hopewell Area School District from the payment of the 2020-2021 School District real estate tax (in the penalty amount of \$937.46) on Tax Parcel No. 65-015-0300.001, being a portion of the Junior High School property having an address of Laird Drive containing 1.7955 acres of land, including part of the parking lot, as a result of the transfer of the property from the State Public School Building Authority back to the Hopewell Area School District by the Deed recorded on April 18, 2019 and for the Board Secretary to give notice to Diane Palsa of the approval of this Motion. **(Roll Call)**

Mr. Salopek explained that when he was doing research last year on oil and gas leases for the District, it was discovered that these properties had been transferred to the State Public School Building Authority over 40 years ago. In years past, school districts could not borrow money, so properties were transferred to the State Public School Building Authority as collateral to borrow on the behalf of school districts. The debt on these properties has been paid off for many years and should have been transferred back to the District. When the properties were transferred back to the School District on April 18, 2019, the assessment office eliminated the tax exemption on those properties, as is normally done. The school district missed the time to appeal the change in status in 2019. The school district filed for the exemption in 2020.

4. Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program for eligible retiring teachers as set forth in the form of the 2021 Letter of Retirement and Acceptance, dated March 8, 2021, to be distributed to the teachers. (**Roll Call**)

Ms. McKittrick explained that the program was a collaborative effort with Raymon Smith and Jennifer Henry, members of the HEA, and Mrs. Zupsic. The plan would provide a monetary incentive of \$80,000.00 over three years to eligible teachers. The District would save approximately \$27,000.00 per year for a teacher that would be replaced and \$130,000.00 a year for a teacher that would not be replaced. In order for the program to proceed, nine eligible teachers would need to take part in the program. The deadline to accept the proposal is April 23, 2021.

5. Lease of 250 – 8<sup>th</sup> Generation iPads from Apple in the total cost of \$94,487.50 to be paid out of ESSR funds, with any revenue generated by device by-backs to offset first year costs. The annual lease payment will be \$31,886 for three years. (**Roll Call**)
6. Purchase of 190 Chromebooks from HP in the total cost of \$68,400 to be paid out of ESSR funds, with any revenue generated by device by-backs to offset first year costs. (**Roll Call**)

**Legislative: Mrs. Oblak, Chair; Mr. Newberry, Co-Chair**

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Appointment of Dan Santia, to the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit Board of Directors.

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

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Resignation of Carrie Ann Wise, Mechanic, effective March 3, 2021.

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

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

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. 2021-2022 School Calendar.
2. 2021-2022 Senior High School Curriculum Guide.
3. 2021-2022 Junior High School Curriculum Guide.

4. 2020-2021 Senior High School Final Exam schedule.
5. Dana Maule, a student at Point Park University, to complete her practicum hours for her reading certification at Hopewell Elementary School beginning May 10, 2021, under the guidance of Lauren Opalanko.

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

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Revision to Girls' Softball coaches and salaries to include Sean Veights, at a stipend of \$800.00, subject to completion of the season and proration of the salary in the event that the spring sports season is shortened. The stipend for Holly Baughman, 3<sup>rd</sup> assistant coach is reduced to \$1,200.00, subject to completion of the season and proration of the salary in the event that the spring sports season is shortened.

**Finance:** Ms. McKittrick, Chair

1. 2021-2022 Pay Schedule, as presented. (**Attachment**)
2. 2021-2022 Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit general operating budget in the amount of \$1,490,231.00. (**Attachment**)
3. Request of Take Hold PA Acquisition IV, LLC, to purchase parcel 65-184-0103.000 located in Hopewell Township out of the Beaver County repository. All delinquent taxes for the 2019-2020 tax year and prior years are exonerated.
4. Advertisement for receipt of bids for supplies and/or equipment for the 2021-2022 school year.
5. Disposal of approximately 130 wireless access points to Teksavers, Inc. at a price of \$1,200.00, less shipping.

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

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Contract with Michelle Miller, Ed.D., Superintendent, for a three-year term, beginning July 1, 2021. (**Roll Call**)
2. Employment of David Woolsey, substitute custodian, effective March 23, 2021.
3. Employment of Shawn Friend, substitute custodian, effective upon receipt of current clearances.

4. Employment of Jackie Carroll, substitute custodian, effective upon receipt of current clearances.
5. Employment of Malcolm Meredith as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Boys Volleyball coach at a stipend of \$2,500.00, effective March 23, 2021, subject to completion of the season and proration of the salary in the event that the season is shortened.

### 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.

### **Vivian Lumbard, 2867 Brodhead Road**

Mrs. Lumbard continues to advocate that the District follow CDC guidelines and remain in the hybrid learning model. She is concerned that the District is returning to 5-day in person learning too soon and have not considered all opinions and recommendations.

### **Deanna Hiltz, 1045 Sweet Brier Drive**

Mrs. Hiltz asked why there wasn't an option to remain in the hybrid learning model. She is concerned about the increased class size in 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Margaret Ross Elementary School. She wanted to know why the District has decided to disregard CDC guidelines with respect to in-person learning. She questioned if the safety protocols would be enough to protect students. She also inquired about inclusivity of all students in the District.

**Stacy Ritchart, 1042 Sweet Brier Drive**

Mrs. Ritchart stated that she was glad to see the District moving forward with in-person learning. She is concerned about class size once students return from the hybrid learning model.

Both Dr. Miller and Mr. Newberry stated that class size will be addressed once parents have made the decision on whether they will return to in-person learning or will choose cyber. Mr. Newberry stated that any class over 25 will be split after March 19, 2021.

**Bethany Pistorius, 2008 South Trillium Drive**

Mrs. Pistorius is concerned about core issues facing the District, including issues with transparency when the Administration and Board members are asked specific questions, consistency with respect to curriculum and instruction and accountability. She believes that in order for the District to move forward, the Board needs to strictly enforce accountability or replace the current administration.

Mr. Newberry responded that he continues to disagree with Mrs. Pistorius' assessment of the administration and continues to support the administration. He shared that the Board and administration work in the best interest of students.

**Tracie Ostoffie, 2104 Forge Drive**

Ms. Ostoffie asked if the Junior Class has teacher sponsors and, if not, would that affect the prom.

Dr. Miller stated that Mr. Allison has posted the position, but has yet to fill the vacancy.

Mr. Allison said that even without sponsors, everything is moving forward with respect to the prom and that he will see that everything gets done.

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

**Education/Curriculum/Instruction by Ms. McKittrick, Co-Chair****MOTION #1**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve free school privileges for Adelin Garcia Sanchez to attend Hopewell Junior High School for the 2020-2021 school year, pending receipt of required documents. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #2**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the return to 5 day in-person learning beginning March 29, 2021 for students in grades K-6 and April 6 for students in grades 7-12. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #3

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the updated PDE Health and Safety Plan to reflect changes regarding return to in-person learning. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Buildings and Grounds by Mrs. Dobo**MOTION #4

By Lesia Dobo, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the request of Brad Robison and Beaver County Flag Football to use Tony Dorsett Stadium on Saturday's from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. beginning April 10, 2021 through June 5, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Finance and Budget by Ms. McKittrick, Chair**MOTION #5

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lindsay Zupsic, to approve the exoneration of Mary Ellen Oros, Independence Township Tax Collector from the collection of and the Hopewell Area School District from the payment of the 2020-2021 School District real estate tax (in the penalty amount of \$26,971.02) on Tax Parcel No. 66-213-0184.000, being a portion of the Independence Elementary School property having an address of 103 School Road containing 3.42 acres and a portion of the School Building, as a result of the transfer of the property from the State Public School Building Authority back to the Hopewell Area School District by the Deed recorded on April 18, 2019 and for the Board Secretary to give notice to Mary Ellen Oros of the approval of this Motion. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

**APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS**MOTION #6

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve items (1) and (2) 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. To exonerate Diane Palsa, Hopewell Township Tax Collector from the collection of and the Hopewell Area School District from the payment of the 2020-2021 School District real estate tax (in the penalty amount of \$346.27) on Tax Parcel No. 65-015-0300.000, being a portion of the Junior High School property having an address of Route 51 containing 0.385 acres of land, including part of the tennis courts, as a result of the transfer of the property from the State Public School Building Authority back to the Hopewell Area School District by the Deed recorded



on April 18, 2019 and for the Board Secretary to give notice to Diane Palsa of the approval of this Motion.

2. To exonerate Diane Palsa, Hopewell Township Tax Collector from the collection of and the Hopewell Area School District from the payment of the 2020-2021 School District real estate tax (in the penalty amount of \$937.46) on Tax Parcel No. 65-015-0300.001, being a portion of the Junior High School property having an address of Laird Drive containing 1.7955 acres of land, including part of the parking lot, as a result of the transfer of the property from the State Public School Building Authority back to the Hopewell Area School District by the Deed recorded on April 18, 2019 and for the Board Secretary to give notice to Diane Palsa of the approval of this Motion.

#### MOTION #7

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lindsay Zupsic, to approve the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program for eligible retiring teachers as set forth in the form of the 2021 Letter of Retirement and Acceptance, dated March 8, 2021, to be distributed to the teachers. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

#### MOTION #8

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the lease of 250 – 8<sup>th</sup> Generation iPads from Apple in the total cost of \$94,487.50 to be paid out of ESSR funds, with any revenue generated by device by-backs to offset first year costs. The annual lease payment will be \$31,886 for three years. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

#### MOTION #9

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the purchase of 190 Chromebooks from HP in the total cost of \$68,400 to be paid out of ESSR funds, with any revenue generated by device by-backs to offset first year costs. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

#### **Legislative by Mrs. Oblak, Chair**

#### MOTION #10

By Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Dan Caton, to approve the Appointment of Dan Santia, to the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit Board of Directors. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Personnel by Mrs. Oblak, Co-Chair**

**MOTION #11**

By Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to accept the resignation of Carrie Ann Wise, Mechanic, effective March 3, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Unfinished Business**

None.

**Upcoming School Board Meetings**

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

MOTION by Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Lesia Dobo, that the meeting be adjourned. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Newberry adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Darren Newberry, Board Vice President

Nancy Barber, Secretary