HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

MAY 18, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conduced a virtual Board meeting on Monday, May 18, 2020 due to the closure of school during the Covid-19 pandemic.

An Executive Session was held prior to the start of the meeting to discuss legal issues. 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 7:00 p.m. by Lesia Dobo, Board President.

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

Daniel Caton

Lesia Dobo

Matthew Erickson

Lori McKittrick

Darren Newberry

Kathryn Oblak

Jeffrey Winkle

Lindsay Zupsic

Members Absent:

Daniel Santia

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, Principal; and visitors.

Anthony Ditka from Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, bond counsel, and Alisha Henry from PNC, investment banker, explained the procedures for the anticipated issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2015.

MOTION #1

Resolution No. 4-2020, authorizing the issuance of General Obligation Bonds in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $8,515,000, to refund all or portions of the School District’s outstanding General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2015 in order to achieve at least 2% net present value savings in debt service, all in accordance with the Local Government Unit Debt Act. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mrs. Conrad gave an update on the 2020-2021 budget. This presentation can be found on our website at hopewellarea.org.

Mrs. Dobo asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #2

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the April 20, 2020 Business Meeting Minutes and the May 11, 2020, Work Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS

MOTION #3

By Dan Caton, seconded by Darren Newberry, 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 April, 2020, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Treasurer’s Report

1. Recommendation to accept report of the Treasurer for the month of April, 2020, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Financial Statements

1. Recommendation to accept Financial Statements for the month of April, 2020, as presented, and make said statements a part of these minutes.

VISITOR’S COMMENTS

Since this meeting is being conducted virtually, visitors were asked to emails questions prior to the meeting.

Michael Leonard asked the following question:

*Do you anticipate re-opening school facilities after June 30th (i.e. fields, gyms, tennis court, pool)?*

Dr. Miller responded:

At this time, we are monitoring the state’s “phases’ and impact on school facilities.   As Beaver County will be in the “yellow” phase as this week, the state provided guidelines that no school activities or activities on school grounds should occur during “yellow”.  The Beaver County superintendents met today and we agreed that Beaver County schools would not allow activities on or in school facilities until Beaver County turns “green” and that the state lifts restrictions

Leigh Zmijanac asked the following question:

*At the high school level distance learning has been a failure. emails go unanswered and the students are self-teaching. Some answers to questions are look it up or watch the video. I know this was a difficult situation for everyone but this is not learning. The district can and should do better.*

*My question as a parent and a taxpayer is if distance learning must continue does Hopewell have a plan in place to give the students more structure and interaction?*

*Teaching it to yourself is not the answer. Parents should not be expected to work and take on the 2nd job of being a teacher while the actual teachers are still getting paid. Teaching high school is not my job nor should it be.*

*If pa cyber can have interactive structured classes why can’t Hopewell?*

*The lack of actual instruction is unacceptable. Watching a video and answering questions is unacceptable. E mail education is unacceptable.*

*I am asking this not just for me and my child but for other parents that have the same concerns that I do. I am also concerned for the students whose parents are not involved.*

*Our district needs to have a better plan in place*

Dr. Miller responded:

Thank you for your feedback regarding your learning experience during remote learning.  We understand that this experience was new to the district, teachers, students, and parents.  With anything new, there are challenges for everyone involved.  Understandably, these challenges have been intensified due to being in the midst of a pandemic. We especially understand that parents have had to assist their children in a new way over the past 2 months, assisting with engagement, prioritization, and often helping children understand content or new skills.

The district is currently using an asynchronous model of instruction as its primary mode of instructional delivery.  Since many of our students are sharing devices with their siblings and others are doing their assignments at different times throughout the course of the day, it makes It challenging to adopt synchronous learning, where all students are logging in for live instruction at the same time.

Many of our teachers are offering live times for check-ins to answer questions, etc. but we are not requiring that type of time schedule for our students.  We felt that a more flexible schedule would accommodate more families and students across the district.  While we understand that may not be optimal for everyone, we know that teachers at all levels are working to meet the needs of individual students.

If at any time, a family is not receiving the level of communication for their child to be effective, then we expect that they will reach out to the teacher, counselor and/or principal and we will take whatever steps are necessary to help.  In every correspondence that I am aware of, teachers have continually worked with students and families to make adaptations or provide additional supports.  Further, teacher correspondence with students and parents have been centered around support, understanding and compassion.  Teachers have waived requirements, simplified directions or expectations, or have extended deadlines.  Emails have been returned by teachers within a 24-hour period and gentle reminders when students are completing their assignments are provided to gently nudge students to refocus.

With the uncertainty of next school year, we will take your comments under advisement as we plan for a variety of instructional delivery methods we may be required to implement.

At this time, Mrs. Dobo reviewed the agenda. in its entirety.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS

MOTION #4

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve items (1) through (23) 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, with the exception of Item 2, the abstention of Mr. Winkle.

1. Continuation of the Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Hopewell Area School District and the Hopewell Education Association with respect to Online Education for the 2020-2021 School Year.
2. Continuation of Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Hopewell Area School District and the Hopewell Education Association with respect to Family Behavioral Resources.
3. Articles of Agreement with the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit to provide Discovery Education at a cost of $1.46 per student for the 2020-2021 school year.
4. Agreement with Adelphoi Education Services to provide emotional supports services to students on an as needed basis for the 2020-2021 school year.
5. Contract renewal for the 2020-2021 school year with AOT, Inc., providers of the District’s occupational and physical therapy services, as well as speech therapy services on an as needed basis.
6. Request of the Hopewell Quarterbacks and Football Boosters to use the Senior High School cafeteria to serve lunch during football camp, August 17, 2020 through August 21, 2020, if determined safe by administration due to COVID-19 concerns.
7. Request of the Hopewell Quarterbacks and Football Boosters to conduct 50/50 raffles at each of the varsity, junior varsity and 7th-8th grade football games, if determined safe by administration due to COVID-19 concerns.
8. Request of the Hopewell Quarterbacks and Football Boosters to use the concession stand and spirit shop at Tony Dorsett Stadium during the following events, if determined safe by administration due to COVID-19 concerns:
9. All Home Varsity, Junior Varsity and 7th and 8th grade games; and
10. Thursday evenings during football season to provide dinner for players and coaches.
11. Agreement for Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. to conduct one Head Start Classroom at Hopewell Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year, subject to PIC receiving appropriate funding.
12. Supply bids for the 2020-2021 school year for the following departments:
    1. Athletics $1,544.84
    2. Art $13,538.17
    3. Custodial $28,787.19
    4. Industrial Arts $314.65
    5. Physical Education $1,504.71
    6. Science $2,766.15
    7. Reprographics $5,990.10
13. Plancon Part K refinancing documents with regard to Lease number 022395, Accelerated Redemption of Series A of 2002.
14. 2020-2021 Pay Schedule, as presented (**Attachment**)
15. Authorization to award electricity supply contract to Energy Harbor (formerly First Energy) for 36 months beginning January, 2022, at a price of 5.042/kWh.
16. Agreement with Medic Rescue to provide emergency medical transport for the 2020-2021 school year, if services are needed, at a cost of $3,400.
17. Business Administrator to seek proposals for a 48-month Lease in a total amount not to exceed $280,000 for devices as outlined in the District’s Viking CONNECT 1:1 device program. The Lease and other documents will be presented to the Board for further approval.
18. Resignation for retirement of Terry Borkovic, change of effective date to June 8, 2020.
19. Reappointment of John F. Salopek, Esquire, Solicitor, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.
20. Reappointment of Jennifer Conrad, Board Treasurer, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.
21. Reaffirm the District’s Non-Discrimination Policy as required by Title VI and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1975. Further, said policy to be advertised in the Beaver County Times.
22. Resignation of Rebecca Fischer, substitute nurse, effective June 8, 2020.
23. Accept bid and purchase five (5) 72-passenger buses from Wolfington Body Company, Inc. in the amount of $86,101.00/each for a total of $430,505.00. Delivery will occur between July 1 and August 17, 2020. Funds to be taken from the capital reserve account in the 2020-21 school year for the lease or entire payment.
24. Reject all bids dated May 8, 2020, for one 48/54 flexible passenger Wheelchair lift bus.
25. Sale of various school buses/cargo van (list attached) in “as is and where-is” condition by sealed bids advertised appropriately to employees of the School District or such other bidding parties but without the cost of further public advertising. The sealed bids shall be received by 2:00 p.m. in the Business Office on Friday, June 19, 2020. The sealed bids shall be opened and tabulated by the Business Administrator for presentation to the Board at the meeting on June 22, 2020, with final approval of the sale at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS

MOTION #5

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Matthew Erickson, 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 $302,965.04
2. Cafeteria Fund payments in the amount of $79,220.90
3. General Fund payments in the amount of $1,940,364.76

MOTION #6

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the adoption of the Hopewell Area School District proposed 2020-2021 General Fund budget, which projects revenues of $40,009,730.00 and appropriations of $43,422,382.00. The difference of $3,412,652.00 will come from the Fund Balance. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #7

By Darren Newberry, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the 2020-2021 Beaver County Career and Technology Center General Operating Budget in the amount of $6,136,989.00. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Superintendent’s Report

Over the past 6 weeks, Administration has been grappling with the daunting task of planning for end of the year events in the midst of a pandemic.  We continually wrestle with our sadness and disappointment in cancelling or revising plans for capstone events for students, especially our seniors. From concerts, to the musical to Prom to field trips to commencement, everything has been impacted.  Safety of all students, staff, and families have been our priority and focus, along with following the guidelines established by the state, PDE, CDC, and Department of Health.

On everyone’s mind at this time is the planning for a Commencement Ceremony for our seniors.  We are still hopeful that we will be able to have a traditional commencement ceremony on July 18 where our students can celebrate together on the field of the Tony Dorsett Stadium.  Nothing would make the administration, teachers and staff, happier than to celebrate our students in a traditional ceremony.  Now that the state has announced that Beaver County will be identified as “yellow”, we believe this is a true possibility.

We are also, however, creating a virtual commencement that will be broadcast virtually on Friday June 5, 2020 beginning at 7 PM. On Thursday May 21, 2020 - we will film each graduate walking across the stage and they will receive their diploma cover.  As the graduate exits the stage a formal photo will be taken and this picture will be included in the virtual graduation. Parents and family can attend this to take pictures themselves as well as to be part of formal pictures taken by the professional photographer.

In the virtual commencement, each student will be honored with their Name, Diploma Photo, Senior/Candid Photo from yearbook, and future plans.

We are also preparing for a Senior Parade on Saturday, June 6, 2020.  Organized by our Independence Fire Department, seniors will be able to drive in their cars with a police and fire escort around the Hopewell community for a community celebration of their accomplishment.

Much time and effort has been invested to provide seniors a celebration of their accomplishments, while keeping the students and their families safe. We understand that our plans do not represent the Commencement we WANT to have, but our plans celebrate our seniors, provide a celebration in a safe environment adhering to the CDC and state guidelines, and providing a commencement ceremony with a strong possibility of having a live event.

Solicitor’s Report

Mr. Salopek thanked the Board for his reappointment as solicitor and for their continued support.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

June 8, 2020: Work Meeting, Central Administration

June 22, 2020: Business Meeting, Central Administration

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

Mrs. Dobo adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Lesia Dobo, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary