

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
OCTOBER 24, 2023

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual and in person Board meeting on Tuesday, October 24, 2023. This meeting was recorded.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Daniel Santia, Board President.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Santia. Roll call by the secretary followed. Those Directors in attendance were:

Carla Buxton
Daniel Caton
Matthew Erickson
Victoria Gill
Anissa Klessner
Jeanette Miller
Bethany Pistorius
Daniel Santia

Members Absent
Lindsay Zupsic

Also in attendance were: Dr. Jeffrey Beltz, Superintendent, John Salopek, Solicitor; Christina Lane, Special Counsel; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Rob Kartychak, Edward Katkich, Lou Ceccarelli, Gary Hutsler, and Donna Steff, Principals; Dennis Barber, Director of Technology and visitors.

Dr. Kartychak recognized Ethan Pletcher, who made it to the Commendation round of the National Merit Scholarship.

Good News In Our Schools were presented by Dr. Kartychak from the Senior High School, Mr. Ceccarelli from the Junior High School and Mrs. Steff from the Elementary Schools.

An Executive Session was held prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters. An Executive session was also held on October 16, 23 and 24, 2023 to discuss legal matters. This announcement is being made to be in compliance with Act 84 of 1986, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law, as amended.

MOTION #1

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, to approve the agenda as written.

Mr. Santia asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #2

By Victoria Gill, seconded by Carla Buxton, to approve the September 26, 2023 and October 10, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

Effective October 12, 2021, a maximum of thirty minutes total will be reserved during the Board meeting for community members who request to speak. At any time, the Board may allow additional time for the visitors portion of the Board meeting.

Whether the community member is participating virtually, or in-person, the community member will:

- State their name and township
- Have up to three minutes to make a statement and/or ask a question to the Board
- Only be able to speak once during the visitors portion of the board meeting
- Have their time begin when the individual begins to speak

It is recommended that community members wishing to speak during the visitors portion email the Board Secretary prior to the board meeting, however the online chat will be monitored during the visitors portion of the meeting for anyone wishing to speak.

A response may be given during the meeting, however, it is also possible that no response be provided during the Board 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.

No visitors wished to address the Board.

Educational/Curriculum/Instruction by Matthew Erickson, Chair

MOTION #3

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the request from Dr. Kartychak for the FCCLA Club to attend the annual FCCLA State Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania on March 18-20, 2024. This is at no cost to the District: MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #4

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved free school privileges for Blake Styfurak through the Hopewell Area School District for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #5

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved the request of Lisa Cedro to take students to Italy in June of 2025. This is at no cost to the District. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #6

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the request of Mr. Katkich for the Junior High School Student Council to attend Education Days at Cedar Point on May 29, 2024. This is a no cost to the District. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #7

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved the request of Dr. Kartychak for Mrs. Cedro to take her Italian students in levels 3 & 4 to Tecnocap Industries in Glen Dale, West Virginia on November 17, 2023. Transportation costs are being paid by the Italian Consulate. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Athletics by Mr. Caton, ChairMOTION #8

By Dan Caton, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the request of South Side Area School District for Jozlyn Marnhout to practice and compete with the varsity swim team as an independent swimmer representing the South Side Area School District. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Buildings and Grounds by Victoria Gill, Co-ChairMOTION #9

By Victoria Gill, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the request of David Bufalini to use the Senior High School Auditorium for the Holly Jolly Christmas concert on December 2, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #10

By Victoria Gill, seconded by Dan Santia, approved the request of David Bufalini to use the Senior High School Auditorium December 16-19, 2023 for rehearsal for the Taylor Family Christmas Show. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #11

By Victoria Gill, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the request of Dr. Kartychak for the FCCLA to use the Senior High School Auditorium Lobby on December 9, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for a Princess Tea fundraiser. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Finance and Budget by Jeanette Miller, Co-ChairMOTION #12

By Jeanette Miller, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, 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 List of Bills in the amount of \$1,284,035.38
2. Cafeteria Fund List of Bills in the amount of \$63,924.28
3. Payments to be ratified in the amount of \$334,674.76

Legislative by Jeanette Miller, ChairMOTION #13

By Jeanette Miller, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the Hopewell Board of School Directors Reorganization meeting on December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Administration Board Room. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Personnel by Matt Erickson, Co-ChairMOTION #14

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the 2023-2024 winter coaches and salaries. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #15

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the termination of Della Martin as a substitute bus driver effective August 24, 2023. Ms. Martin did not work during the 2022-2023 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #16

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, accepted the resignation of Anita Dempsey, substitute bus driver, effective October 9, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #17

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the employment of Lisa Sinclair, substitute bus driver, effective October 11, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #18

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the change of employment status for Kimberlee Halfhill, from substitute driver to full-time bus driver, effective October 9, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #19

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the employment of Heidi Dierdorf, cafeteria substitute, effective October 11, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #20

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the employment of the following coaches and stipends for Middle School Girls Basketball: . MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

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| a. | Mike Sundy, Head Coach | \$2,500.00 |
| b. | Charles Toal, Assistant Coach | \$2,500.00 |

MOTION #21

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the employment of Carli Pauvlinch, long-term substitute physical education teacher at the Junior High School and Hopewell Elementary School, effective October 23, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #22

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Jeanette Miller, accepted the resignation of Gary Hutsler, Elementary Assistant Principal, effective December 18, 2023. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #23

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved the request of Carl Platko for a leave of absence from the position of bus utility attendant from October 30, 2023 through January 23, 2024. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #24

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved the appointment of Carl Platko, Acting Director of Transportation, at a rate of \$261.54 per day without benefits, effective October 30, 2023 through January 23, 2024. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Other Business

At the October 10, 2023 Board meeting, community members raised concerns regarding District policy with respect to transgender students using the bathroom with which gender they identify. Dr. Beltz explained that the District was following the law as it pertains to this issue. Community members asked for clarification of policy and procedures at the next Board meeting.

In that regard, the District asked that Christina Lane, a partner in the firm of Maiello Brungo & Maiello, explain the law, both state and federal, that Pennsylvania school districts must follow with respect to the protection of student rights.

Dr. Beltz outlined procedures students must follow when identifying as transgender and their choice to use the bathroom to which gender they identify. This procedure includes self-identification and meetings with family, building administration and counselors. After the lengthy procedures are followed, a student is allowed to have access to the bathroom of his/her choice. Dr. Beltz reiterated that student safety is a primary focus for all students. The District will continue to consult with its attorneys to stay up-to-date with any related court cases and federal and state laws associated with the use of school facilities by transgender students.

Visitors Comments Regarding Other District Matters

At this time, community members voiced their opinions with respect to this issue. Several members of the community advocated on behalf of transgender students and their rights to be treated fairly, with dignity and to feel safe in the school environment. Also, several members of the community voiced their opinion that this policy represents a significant safety threat and made students feel uncomfortable.

Upcoming Board Meetings

November 14, 2023, 7:00 p.m. – Board Room and Virtual

November 28, 2023, 7:00 p.m. – Board Room and Virtual

MOTION by Matt Erickson, seconded by Victoria Gill, that the meeting be adjourned.
MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Santia adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Daniel Santia, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary