

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
MARCH 11, 2025

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual and in-person Board meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. This meeting was recorded.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Dan Santia, Board President.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Santia.

Roll call by the secretary followed. Those Directors in attendance were:

Anitre' Bell (via Zoom)

Carla Buxton

Daniel Caton

Victoria Gill

Anissa Klessner

Jeanette Miller

Bethany Pistorius

Daniel Santia

Members Absent

Lindsay Zupsic

Also in attendance were: Dr. Jeffrey Beltz, Superintendent, Nancy Barber, Board Secretary; Dr. Joel Roth, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; and visitors.

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

MOTION #1

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the agenda as written.

Stephen Niedenberger from Hosack Specht Muetzel & Wood reviewed the June 30, 2024 audit report.

At this time, Dr. Beltz began his review of those items that would be voted on later in this meeting.

**Education/Curriculum/Instruction:** Mrs. Zupsic, Chair; Ms. Bell and Mrs. Klessner, Co-Chairs

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Cyber Services Agreement with the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit in conjunction with the Seneca Valley School District for a 5-year term beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

Mrs. Miller asked if District teachers would still be the teachers of record for the Edgenuity program.

Dr. Beltz responded, yes.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Mr. Caton, Chair; Mrs. Miller, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Proposal from Triangle Roofing, Inc. for the roof drain replacement at the Junior High School in the amount of \$18,600.00.
2. Request from Our Lady of Fatima School cheerleaders to use the pool at the Junior High School on March 28, 2025 from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

**Personnel:** Mrs. Buxton, Chair; Mrs. Pistorius, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Resignation of Rose George, substitute bus driver and bus trainer, effective February 28, 2025.
2. Employment of Shaina Swiontek, special education classroom paraprofessional at the Junior High School, on or about March 24, 2025, pending receipt of all clearances.
3. Employment of Brandiese Farley, cafeteria, pending receipt of all clearances.

At this time, Dr. Beltz began his review of those items that would be voted on at the March 25, 2025 Business meeting.

**Education/Curriculum/Instruction:** Mrs. Zupsic, Chair; Ms. Bell and Mrs. Klessner, Co-Chairs

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Hopewell Area School District Comprehensive Plan for September 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028. (**Roll Call**)

Mrs. Miller asked whether anyone had requested to review the District's comprehensive plan. Dr. Beltz responded that no requests had been made.

2. Contract renewal for the 2025-2026 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.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Mr. Caton, Chair; Mrs. Miller, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Resolution No. 3-2025 Declaration of Taking. The Hopewell Area School District having met all due diligence and statutory requirements in seeking to negotiate a sale with the property owner and all efforts of outreach have failed hereby resolve to take the property located at 1207 Longvue Avenue, Aliquippa, PA 15001 (Parcel ID # 651940110000) by eminent domain pursuant to the school district's statutory authority. Said Hopewell Township property will be utilized for school purposes to include school building alterations, additional parking, and vehicle traffic considerations. (**Roll Call**)

Mrs. Gill inquired about the anticipated timeline for the eminent domain purchase, asking for clarification on how long the process might take.

Dr. Beltz responded that he was unsure of the timeline, as the District is still in the early stages of the eminent domain process.

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

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. 2025-2026 Pay Schedule, as presented (**Attachment**)
2. 2025-2026 Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit general operating budget in the amount of \$2,340,106.00. (**Attachment**)
3. Exoneration of the following property tax collectors for uncollected 2024 taxes: Diane Palsa, Hopewell; Debra Shaffer, Independence; and Linda McCoy, Raccoon Township.

**Personnel:** Mrs. Buxton, Chair; Mrs. Pistorius, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. 2025-2026 Pay Schedule, as presented (**Attachment**)
2. 2025-2026 Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit general operating budget in the amount of \$2,340,106.00. (**Attachment**)

3. Exoneration of the following property tax collectors for uncollected 2024 taxes: Diane Palsa, Hopewell; Debra Shaffer, Independence; and Linda McCoy, Raccoon Township.

### VISITOR'S COMMENTS

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 of residence
- 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.

Susan Mosholder, a bus driver, submitted her resignation due to ongoing student misbehavior on the bus and concerns over having her disciplinary actions questioned by a parent and the school principal. She emphasized that her top priority is student safety and expressed that misbehavior has become a significant distraction while driving. Ms. Mosholder urged the administration to allow bus drivers to manage discipline on their own buses without interference from administrators or parents.

Diana Burlon inquired about the District's success in recruiting new bus drivers. After hearing Ms. Mosholder's concerns, she asked what steps the District could take to encourage better student behavior on the bus. She also shared that her children are afraid to ride Bus 5, reporting that the driver has been observed running stop signs and passing by students waiting for the bus. Additionally, she asked Dr. Beltz whether the District conducts exit interviews when employees leave the District.

Dr. Beltz answered that the District does not conduct exit interviews.

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

**Education/Curriculum/Instruction by Anitre Bell, Co-Chair**

**MOTION #2**

By Anitre Bell, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved the Cyber Services Agreement with the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit in conjunction with the Seneca Valley School District for a 5-year term beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Buildings and Grounds by Dan Caton**

**MOTION #3**

By Dan Caton, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the proposal from Triangle Roofing, Inc. for the roof drain replacement at the Junior High School in the amount of \$18,600.00. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #4**

By Dan Caton, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the request from Our Lady of Fatima School cheerleaders to use the pool at the Junior High School on March 28, 2025 from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Personnel by Carla Buxton, Co-Chair**

**MOTION #5**

By Carla Buxton, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, accepted the resignation of Rose George, substitute bus driver and bus trainer, effective February 28, 2025. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #6**

By Carla Buxton, seconded by Anissa Klessner, approved the employment of Shaina Swiontek, special education classroom paraprofessional at the Junior High School, on or about March 24, 2025, pending receipt of all clearances. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #7**

By Carla Buxton, seconded by Anitre Bell, approved the employment of Brandiese Farley, cafeteria, pending receipt of all clearances. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Other Business

Mrs. Pistorius commented that the high school musical, *Anastasia*, will be performed this Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. She noted that the cast and crew are exceptionally talented and have dedicated significant effort to the production. She encourages everyone to attend and enjoy the performance.

Mrs. Miller expressed her intention to schedule a meeting with the Transportation Department at the end of the school year. The meeting will focus on reviewing current processes and gathering feedback on the department's operations.

Mrs. Klessner shared that she and her family happened to be bowling at the same time as the varsity bowling team's banquet. She remarked that the team is a wonderful group of students and noted that 11 out of the 25 team members have a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Dr. Beltz thanked the community for their support last weekend when the transformer at the Senior High School caught fire. He specifically expressed his gratitude to the Hopewell, Ambridge, and Aliquippa fire departments for their swift and excellent response. He also acknowledged the many other departments in the area, as well as Medic Rescue, for being on standby in case additional assistance was needed.

Upcoming Board Meetings

March 25, 2025, Regular Business Meeting, Central Administration Board Room and virtual.

MOTION by Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Carla Buxton, that the meeting be adjourned. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Santia adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Daniel Santia, Board President

Nancy Barber, Board Secretary