HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

AUGUST 24, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual and in person Board meeting on Tuesday, August 24, 2021. This meeting was recorded.

An Executive Session was held on August 10, 2021 and prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel, collective bargaining and litigation matters. 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 6:04 p.m. by Jeff Winkle, Board President.

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

Daniel Caton

Lesia Dobo

Matthew Erickson

Lori McKittrick

Darren Newberry (Via Zoom)

Kathryn Oblak

Daniel Santia

Jeffrey Winkle

Lindsay Zupsic

Also, in attendance were: Dr. Robert Kartychak, Acting Superintendent, Mr. John Salopek, Solicitor; Brooke Baker, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Michael Allison, Principal; and visitors.

Mr. Winkle asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #1

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the July 19, 2021, July 29, 2021, and August 9, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS

MOTION #2

By Dan Caton, seconded by Dan Santia, 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 July, 2021, 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 July, 2021, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Financial Statements

1. Recommendation to accept Financial Statements for the month of July, 2021, as presented, and make said statements a part of these minutes.

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 S. Trillium Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Mrs. Pistorius stated that she understands that the mask requirement is the big issue for this evening. However, she would also like to know how the District plans to help students recoup learning that they may have lost during hybrid instruction last year. She also asked if the Employee Covid Policy pertains to an employee needing to isolate due to close contact with another employee. As the policy currently reads, if a District employee, who is fully vaccinated for COVID is required by the District Superintendent to quarantine or isolate because of a close contact with a student (who has tested positive for COVID or has been identified as a probable COVID case) during the course of the Employee’s employment with the District, the Employee shall not be required to use sick days, personal days or vacation days in order to have a continuation of the payment of the Employee’s wages or salary. Dr. Kartychak stated that it only pertains to contact with a student. Staff will maintain their distance. Mrs. Pistorius asked several questions regarding how the District is tracking Covid, at what category will the Board reevaluate the mask requirement, how frequently the Administration and Board will assess data and what factors would result in a specific building closure. Mr. Winkle thanked her for her questions and asked that she forward them to Dr. Kartychak for specific answers.

Jamie Sheffield, 102 McKibben Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Presented the Board with an Affidavit of Maladministration, based on her belief that the District did not provide adequate education during the hybrid model of instruction and the mask requirement.

Valerie Hilton, 917 Cherry Street, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Hilton presented the District statistics as to why masks should not be required for young children and asked the Board to leave the decision on masks up to the parent.

Lynne’ Biller, 4008 Galo Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Biller said that the District must trust parents to decide what is best for their child. During the hybrid model of instruction, parents were required to teach their child what was missed during instruction. She did not believe that the hybrid model provided adequate instruction. Education must be the priority of the District. Some children are falling too far behind.

Sarah Fischer, 3016 North Trillium Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Fischer said that her daughter expressed to her that she was not comfortable wearing a mask. She would like to see the District reverse their mask mandate policy. If students participating in sports don’t wear masks, why should children in the classroom.

Megan Smith, 3003 Crissman Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Smith is also a parent who does not support the mask mandate. She believes it is like a muzzle for children and said that her children will not be wearing a mask to school.

Deanna Hiltz, 1045 Sweet Brier Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Hiltz had questions about the Hopewell Area Aqua Club (HAAC). Mr. Winkle said that he was not aware of their specific policies, but if she contacted Dr. Kartychak or Mr. Short, they would be able to get the answers she was looking for.

Ms. Hiltz also gave a positive opinion on the mask mandate. As the parent of child with health issues, she felt it was important to keep all students safe and able to attend school.

Tyler Ball, 3302 Monte Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Mr. Ball feels that the Board and Administration does not know what is best for his child and that parents should be able to decide if their child should wear a mask.

Jason and Jennifer Miller, 2241 Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, PA

Mr. and Mrs. Miller are opposed to the mask mandate and believe that parents should decide the health and safety of their children. They stated that their children will not be wearing masks. They believe that the District has overstepped their authority for such a requirement.

Amy Kelly, 1203 Connecticut Street, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Kelly thanked the Board for requiring masks. She believes that the most important thing for children is to be in school. She said that she believed that if a student has special needs, they need to reach out to the District to see what accommodation could be made.

Cindy Crenshaw

Ms. Crenshaw applauded parents for speaking up for their children. She also said that she does not support the Employee Covid policy and would like to see cameras in each classroom.

Jennifer Parrish, 5053 Hamilton Drive, Aliquippa, PA

Ms. Parrish is also a parent that does not believe that masks should be mandated for students. She equated the policy to child abuse.

Ms. McKittrick said that she is in total support of the mask mandate. She would error on the side of caution. At this time, audience members were shouting over her so she could not finish her statement.

Mr. Newberry, who was out of town, said that he was sorry that he could not be at the meeting in person. He said that he understands that masks are not ideal, but the priority of the District was to have students in school five days per week and masks provided the best chance for continued in-school learning.

Mr. Winkle continued with committee recommendations and discussion.

**Educational/Curriculum/Instruction by Matthew Erickson, Chair**

MOTION #3

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the Senior High School Mid-Term and Final Exam schedule for the 2021-2022 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #4

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to approve the Agreement with Beacon Light Behavior Health System (Custer City Private School) to provide educational services while students are placed at the Beacon Light facility for the 2021-2022 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #5

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the 2021-2022 Junior High School Club Sponsorships and Department Chairs. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #6

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to approve the 2021-2022 Senior High School Club Sponsorships and Department Chairs. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #7

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the grade level chairpersons for grades kindergarten through 4th grade. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #8

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the following students from Geneva College to complete their student teaching beginning September 14, 2021 through December 22, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

1. Kaylee McCall, under the guidance of Susan Burak;
2. Angelia Duncan, under the guidance of Michele Grandovic;
3. Emma Boyer, under the guidance of Aubre Lindner;
4. Julia Riggle, under the guidance of Lauren Werner; and
5. Marissa Lund, under the guidance of Sarah Bober

MOTION #9

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve free school privileges for Serenity and Sophia Hull to attend Hopewell School District for the 2021-2022 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #10

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the Agreement with Southwood Psychiatric Hospital to provide services to students on an as needed basis for the 2021-2022 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #11

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the updated 2021-2022 Health and Safety Plan for opening of school, per PDE requirement for school districts. MOTION carried by a vote of six to three, with Mr. Santia, Mr. Caton and Mrs. Dobo voting No.

Dr. Kartychak reported that the update to the plan included a mask requirement when Beaver County is in substantial or high rate of transmission based on the CDC transmission levels. After being out of the substantial transmission rate for two weeks, the Board may change mask requirements to optional. The District may also require masks in the event the District sees any negative impact on our schools.

MOTION #12

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the Service Agreement with the Watson Institute to provide educational, therapeutic and consulting services to the District for the 2021-2022 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Buildings and Grounds by Dan Santia, Co-Chair**

MOTION #13

By Dan Santia, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the request of the Hopewell Area Aqua Club to use the pool for practice beginning August 30, 2021 through April 1, 2022, Monday through Friday from 3:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #14

By Dan Santia to table the Facility Usage Agreement with Motorcycle Safety Academy, LLC to use District facilities for the purposes of providing motorcycle safety training and education classes, effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023.

**Finance and Budget by Lori McKittrick, Chair**

MOTION #15

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, 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 $664,462.06
2. Cafeteria Fund List of Bills in the amount of $32,097.11
3. General Fund Payments in the amount of $2,887,646.04

MOTION #16

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to approve the Agreement with Full Service Network for a five-year period beginning August 23, 2021 for the lease and support of the District’s phone system , as presented. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #17

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the Sponsor to Sponsor Agreement between the Beaver County YMCA and the Hopewell Area School District dated October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #18

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to approve the Sponsor to Sponsor Agreement between Private Industry Council and the Hopewell Area School District dated July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Personnel by Matthew Erickson, Chair**

MOTION #19

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Dan Caton, to accept the resignation for retirement of Janet Smith, Buildings and Grounds secretary, effective October 1, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance

MOTION #20

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to accept the resignation of Emily Collins, speech teacher, effective August 14, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #21

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to accept the resignation of Andrea Kypta, bus driver, effective November 15, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #22

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to approve the employment of Lisa Litzinger, substitute cafeteria, effective August 26, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #23

By Matt Erickson to table the employment of a BCIT teacher at Hopewell Memorial Junior High School.

MOTION #24

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the employment of Molly McDonald as a speech language therapist at step 1 of the Masters scale, effective August 25, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #25

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to approve the employment of the following coaches for Girls Soccer. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

1. Kyle Harriet 1st Assistant $2,500.00
2. Jose Gonzalez 2nd Assistant $3,000.00
3. Heather Sullivan, 3rd Assistant $1,500.00

MOTION #26

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the continuation of current SRO/Inter-agency agreement for 2021-2022 school year.  Discontinuation of this agreement can occur at any time by either party with 30 days’ notice. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #27

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to accept the resignation of Brenda Vebelun, bus driver/aide, effective August 16, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #28

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the PSEA Secretaries and Paraprofessionals Association for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2025. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #29

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to accept the resignation of Brenda Kostial, 5th grade teacher, effective August 19, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #30

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lindsey Zupsic, to accept the resignation of Tara Sill, physical education teacher at the Junior High School, effective August 20, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Policy by Lindsay Zupsic, Chair**

MOTION #31

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve paid leave for staff due to Covid exposure by a student in a school setting during the 2021-2022 school year, as presented. MOTION carried by a vote of eight to one, with Mr. Santia voting No.

**Transportation by Dan Santia, Chair**

MOTION #32

By Dan Santia, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the Agreement with Frye Transportation for consulting services for the training and transition of the District’s Transportation Director, effective August 24, 2021 through August 23, 2022. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Kartychak reported that teachers and paraprofessional participated in two days of in-service and are excited to be back in school. He wished those that were leaving the District well and said that they will be missed, as they encompass 90 years of experience. Dr. Kartychak congratulated Lauren Werner for completing her doctorate. He was also very proud to announce that Independence Elementary was designated a National PTA School of Excellence.

Solicitor’s Report

Nothing to report

Unfinished Business

Ms. McKittrick wanted to clarify a motion approved at the August 9, 2021 Board meeting. The motion called for the approval of the 2021-2022 substitute plan, including ten building substitutes at a rate of $125.00 per day. The actual rate paid to Kelly Educational Services is $175.00, of which $125.00 is paid to their employee.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

September 13, 2021, Regular Work Meeting, via Zoom and in person

September 27, 2021, Regular Business Meeting, via Zoom and in person.

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

Mr. Winkle adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Jeff Winkle, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary