

WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2021-5933

Minutes January 11, 2021

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 4:46 p.m. in the JSHS Library with Mrs. McAvoy, Board Member presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Following the pledge of allegiance, Mrs. McAvoy asked if anyone would be recording the meeting. Mr. Arnst indicated he will be recording the meeting.

Board Members Present: Mrs. Harenza, Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey (Zoom), Mrs. Phillips (Zoom), Mr. Pottieger, Mr. Redner (Zoom) Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs. Ziolkowski (Zoom).

Board Members Absent: Mrs. Waxler

Administrative Staff Present: Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Cafoncelli, and Mr. Arnst

Attendees: No members of the public attended.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. McAvoy announced upcoming meetings

- Facilities Committee Workshop – January 20, 2021 – 3:30 p.m. Community Board Room
- School Board Business Meeting – January 25, 2021 - 6:00 p.m. JSHS Library
- Committee of the Whole Meeting – February 8, 2021 – 4:45 p.m. JSHS Library

PUBLIC COMMENT None.

ROUTINE APPROVALS

MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mrs. Harenza, second by Mr. Pottieger the Board approved the following minutes:

- November 9, 2020, Committee of the Whole Minutes

Yeas: Mrs. Harenza, Mrs. McAvoy, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Pottieger, and Mr. Redner.

Absent at time of vote: Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Ziolkowski

Absent from meeting: Mrs. Waxler.

Nays: None. Motion carried.

COMMITTEES

Mr. Scoboria welcomed everyone and provided a few updates regarding the virtual week, stating they had received positive feedback from parents. Mr. Scoboria thanked everyone for their patience and flexibility working around the different model last week.

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Mr. Scoboria commented on the return of extra-curricular activities and said it was great to see the students back and participating. He urged everyone to check out the District website for the links for live streaming opportunities to follow the students and teams.

Mr. Scoboria shared that WASD school nurses, as healthcare personnel, have access to the vaccine, and explained that he is waiting for more information on vaccines for school personnel; working with Tower Health and Penn State Health. Mr. Scoboria will update and share that information as it becomes available.

Mr. Scoboria reviewed information shared in a press conference last week and stated, we know the numbers are continuing to rise, but at this time, the DOH and PDE have changed their recommendation to encourage all districts to have in-person learning, especially at the elementary level. Mr. Scoboria explained WASD is already matching that recommendation with our hybrid learning model, while also following the PDE/DOH guidelines and providing 6ft. social distance.

Mr. Scoboria noted the many communications put out by his office and stated we will continue to communicate and update our dashboard so the members of the public can stay informed. Mr. Scoboria highlighted the items on the agenda for the evening.

**A. CURRICULUM
AND TECHNOLOGY**

Dr. Woodard explained the Curriculum agenda included the Science Department Textbook Adoption Presentation. She said she has met with Dept. Chair, Mr. Nugent, and they have recognized the need for updates to textbooks as some of the textbooks and digital licenses were set to expire. Dr. Woodard shared they looked at the different proposals the Dept. had received from different vendors, as well as some of the courses that are being rewritten and adjusted as per the Program of Studies. They reviewed funds and determined it would be wise to bring forward three (3) different licenses and textbooks, to review that information, and use some funds for this year to cover the costs of these texts to spread out some of the financial impact. She said a lot of work was done ahead by the Dept. Chairs, and Dr. Woodard thanked them and the teachers involved for their time and effort. Dr. Woodard stated the other items on the agenda covered the good news about the mental health grant and the related community mental health night.

1. Science Department Textbook Adoption Presentation

Dr. Woodard shared Mr. Nugent had talked with the faculty members who are in charge of these courses. The Earth and Space Science lead teacher is Dr. Yoder. Dr. Woodard said they have been working over the last year or so with Mr. Redcay to change the 8th grade course, anticipating pending

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changes to the expectations of 8th grade science per the state. The state is in the early stages of making those revisions, but Dr. Woodard believes they will align very closely with the next generation science standards NGSS text. Dr. Woodard feels we could improve our scope and sequence of our 8th grade science courses by merging two separate semester courses into one full year and said it was mentioned through the Program of Studies, but comes up again through the textbook adoption piece. Dr. Woodard stated they would look at creating a new course combining Earth and Space with some Chemistry and Physics principles. Dr. Woodard said those pieces have been missing in 8th grade science and they want to be better aligned and better prepared for the PSSA's in 8th grade. Dr. Woodard explained that Dr. Yoder reviewed several different vendors and settled on the text *Elevate Science*, which includes an 8-year license and can be used for both Advanced and Academic Earth and Space Science. The cost would be \$22,170.37. Dr. Woodard reviewed the reasons they chose this text stating it is appropriate reading level for grade and aligned to NGSS standards, the online text is available and compatible with iPads, there is online supplemental materials available and they provide many hands-on activities and experiments. The text comes with literacy connections and the overall program encourages empowerment in students to become scientifically curious, more self-directed, and accountable for their learning. Dr. Woodard offered a copy of the text to Board Members for review.

Dr. Woodard explained they additionally looked at Chemistry, and stated we have multiple levels of Chemistry and all students are using the same book. She said they looked at how reading levels vary with students and that they felt student needs were not being met. They explored concepts, and the differing student interest levels in Chemistry and looked for a text that was less formulaic, more relatable, and one that could be used for both Chemistry and Academic Chemistry. Dr. Woodard said they found *Living by Chemistry, 2nd Edition* (updated in 2018) which includes a 6-year license. They would receive 50 copies of the text along with the 100 digital copies at a cost of \$14,077.02. Dr. Woodard explained the reasons for the choice of this text stating again it is appropriate reading level for grade and aligned to NGSS standards, it is compatible with iPad and used by all levels of Chemistry, the online component includes full interactive eBook and digital assignments that are iPad compatible and integrates with Schoology, the text

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includes real-world contexts that capture students' interests and attention, and the teacher ancillaries provide differentiated instruction components and include an electronic test bank.

Dr. Woodard continued the next slide of the presentation sharing they've been talking about rolling out an honors level Anatomy and Physiology course for 2021-22 for two years now. The current text is outdated, and contains outdated examples and references. Dr. Woodard stated the quote includes a 6-year license and the cost is \$11,923.06. This would include the teacher workbook and the digital copies of the text *Essentials of Human Anatomy and Physiology, 12th Edition* (2018). Dr. Woodard reviewed the reasons the book was chosen as it is appropriate reading level for grade and aligned to NGSS standards, fully compatible with iPad and used by all levels of Anatomy and Physiology, E-text has expanded study tools for advanced learners, virtual laboratory exercises are provided with the online learning environment, the text and resources pair well with existing materials and models, and there are extensive online teacher resources and a test generation bank.

Dr. Woodard stated the total expense for all three texts is \$48,170.45, and requested Board approval to place the item on the next agenda to purchase. Dr. Woodard shared, as they go through course selection, they may be able to fine tune the number of texts required. She emphasized the importance of the digital licenses.

2. Hope Squad/Mental Health Grant Update

Dr. Woodard shared the great news that WASD has been awarded the Cook Center for Human Connection Suicide Prevention Grant to establish a Hope Squad in the JSHS. Dr. Woodard thanked Dr. Jones for his support and enthusiasm in the program. Dr. Woodard stated, mental health is challenging for many people right now and we want to do whatever we can to help our students and teachers understand potential warning signs and be able to help students if they need it. Dr. Woodard shared, we were thrilled to be able to apply for the grant stating it is researched based and those students who are on the Hope Squad will be able to be trained and participate and make a difference in the school and for their peers. Dr. Woodard explained we do need to have a partnership with a mental health agency and we do currently have that in place with the Center for Mental Health, which is associated with Tower Health. Dr. Woodard reviewed the

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plans for training and identifying students to be on the Hope Squad, and some of the requirements of the grant award, such as sharing information on our website, and hosting two yearly parent engagement sessions. Dr. Woodard explained we are going to host a family mental health night, which is not part of the grant requirement, but can be used as one of the yearly parent engagement sessions required by the grant. Dr. Woodard stated, the grant was written for 7th-12th grade students, and mostly reserved for the older students, but the hope is that as younger students move through the program they will get better and better each year, growing with the different curriculum.

3. **WASD Community Mental Health Night Overview**

Dr. Woodard shared the Community Mental Health virtual event will be held Wednesday, January 27th, will be a free event, and will include leading family therapists to help parents with important topics such as, identifying anxiety, understanding internal family systems, coping with grief and parenting with a purpose. Dr. Woodard said there will be a lot of information provided, with a question/answer period and she is looking forward to, and excited about, this great opportunity.

B. FINANCE

1. **2021/2022 Budget Overview/Update**

Mr. Boyer shared a brief budget overview and update, recapping from November when he presented a first look at the budget and when the Board voted not to take the special ed. exceptions, resulting in a maximum 3% tax increase allowed. He said the current millage rate is 31.906 which is a 1.5% tax increase over the 2019-20 millage rate, and explained, a full 3% tax increase would put us at a millage rate of 32.863 and would equate to approximately a \$766,000 increase in tax revenue. Mr. Boyer noted, one full mill equals \$801,000, therefore we would not be able to raise taxes a full mill. Mr. Boyer shared, our current assessed valuation slightly decreased and the offset is about \$2,600 in tax revenue. Mr. Boyer said that is generally positive news and is ever changing. He said we have a few tax assessment appeals that we are looking at, and how that affects our current assessment going forward, we will have to wait and see. Mr. Boyer also noted, a 3% tax increase equals \$144/year on a property assessed at \$150,000.

Mr. Boyer continued with a review of where we are as far as the next look. He explained in November we projected

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revenues of \$38 million and projected expenditures of \$39.3 million, leaving a \$1.2 million deficit before tax increase. He stated, that was preliminary, running the numbers, and said right now we are going in the opposite direction, stating in January we are looking at projected revenue of \$38.2 million due to earned income tax. Revenue is coming in higher for 2020-21 and that is good for the end balance of this year and better than what we projected. He said we have \$39.9 million in expenditures which is \$600,000 higher than projected. Mr. Boyer explained that is due to Cyber charter and BCTC, and explained BCTC is projected on a 3-year rolling average, student population fell a little lower this year and is pushing our portion of that budget a little higher. Cyber charter enrollment increased slightly due to COVID. Those students could come back or stay a few years, and that is one of the issues in the budget. Mr. Boyer said he did increase that budget line by \$300,000 and said Cyber charter is based on budget –whenever budget increases, tuition also increases.

Mr. Boyer continued, stating the deficit went from \$1.2 million to \$1.7 million, but said this number is still a good work in progress. He shared this budget does not include a tax increase right now - 0% tax increase and \$1.7 million deficit. Mr. Boyer explained, this budget also does not include any new positions, LTS positions or changes based on retirement, stating it is based on the current compliment of 308 positions the District has. He said the budget does include the full amount of debt service and referred to the presentation in March by Mr. Phillips, RBC Capital Markets. Mr. Boyer stated, we are budgeting the full amount of old debt service and that variance is about \$1.2 million, which, in one year, we could have that much money and could use to reduce expenditure or we can choose to move those funds as surplus into our capital reserve. He said there are decisions to be made in March or April, saying this is one of the options the Board has other than raising taxes. He said this budget also still includes \$250,000 of contingency funds.

Mr. Boyer stated there is still much work to do and he feels really good that we will have a balanced budget for the Board when Administration presents it in May.

2. **Fund Balance ending 6/30/2020**

Mr. Boyer explained the Fund balance increased from June 30, 2019 from \$8.9 million to \$9.1 million on June 30, 2020 and the District ended the year with a surplus of \$279,000.

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Mr. Boyer spoke about the assigned deficit of \$1.7 million and how those numbers can change depending on how we end on June 30, 2021, stating, they could be affected by earned income tax, and there are real estate transfers that happened that are one-time revenue coming in that will affect the bottom line in 2020/21. Additional revenues came from the County of Berks with COVID relief funds that offset expenditures. Mr. Boyer said, as we keep working towards projecting out and have a better number in February, we can make some more decisions.

Mr. Boyer said one item we will have to work on is the finalization of the 6/30/2020 fund balance, stating this is something we do every year. This amount can be changed at any point throughout the year and is just a finalization of the fund balance as of June 30, 2020. Mr. Boyer shared a slide depicting an example and explained the different fund amounts, which include Non-Spendable and Restricted funds, Committed funds including Capital Projects Reserve, PSERS, Curriculum Enhancements, and Vehicle / Equipment replacement, and assigned and unassigned balances. Mr. Boyer said, in review, the fund balance did increase from the 2018/19 fiscal and for year ending 2019/20 is just under \$9.2 million, and stated, these numbers are only for approving the 2019/20 financial statements.

Mr. Boyer reviewed the next steps saying in February, they will review the updated budget, discuss personnel, enrollment, and review capital projects. In March we will review the updated budget again, and in April review updated budget and narrow down the tax increase percentage. In May, we will adopt the Proposed Final Budget, which must be available for public inspection for 30 days prior to final adoption, which must occur by June 30, 2021.

3. **Exoneration Request**

Mr. Boyer reviewed an exoneration request for a tax payer which would require Board approval on the next Agenda. Mr. Boyer shared, the tax payer is requesting exoneration of the 10% penalty and any fees. Mr. Boyer explained there is still time to pay, and the Board typically does not approve exoneration requests, stating they do not usually move beyond Committee level. Mr. Boyer said there is nothing particular about this request that would differ from other requests previously reviewed.

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4. **Frontline: Time and Attendance Discussion**

Mr. Boyer stated information regarding Frontline would be on the agenda in January. He explained Frontline is a time and attendance system for teachers related to substitutes and said, the District partnered with Frontline to handle some of the professional development stating if a teacher is going to a seminar or something of that sort, they put their professional learning hours in that system. Mr. Boyer said we would like to add a time/attendance piece to that to streamline how our teachers and all of our staff request time off, eliminating the need to enter the information in multiple places and also save time with support staff, as information can be exported directly into the financial software. The cost of approx. \$7,000 would be built into the IT and Business Office budgets. He would like to bring the item forward to the Board for approval on the January 25th Agenda.

C. **FACILITIES**

1. **Construction Update – Mr. Cafoncelli**

Mr. Cafoncelli reviewed the timeline stating the first milestone was back in October with the Schematic Design Presentation which included an overview of the entire project. Upon Board approval, the project was moved forward with Option 4 from the feasibility study, which covered changes to JSHS, WHEC, and a small portion of WREC and the Field House with much of the construction to occur over two (2) summers to minimize the impact on students. Mr. Cafoncelli shared a Board workshop was held on November 18, 2020, with Mr. Vukmanic where they discussed details and what was going to happen in each building. With Board feedback they moved to faculty reviews from JSHS. Mr. Cafoncelli shared that on December 3rd they had a positive meeting with building engineers and the Fire Marshall – there was no red flags and they supported the project. They met with Trane on the 9th to coordinate HVAC systems to ensure compatibility. There will be a presentation on the 20th with another Board workshop.

Mr. Cafoncelli highlighted some of the future milestones such as an additional JSHS faculty review, and creation of a student subcommittee to possibly have students help with design of the library. Mr. Cafoncelli stated they would finalize the construction documents for Board approval in April and advertise for bids and bring those to a May Board meeting and would plan to start construction in June 2021.

After bids are accepted, the District will work with the project manager and principals to develop a timeline to ensure student

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programs can continue. Mr. Cafoncelli shared that bids are awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. Taylor second by Mr. Pottieger to adjourn at 6:18 p.m.

Board Secretary