

# WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2020-5869

## Minutes August 10, 2020

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 4:48 p.m. in a virtual meeting via Zoom with Mr. Redner, Board President, presiding.

### CALL TO ORDER

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

Board Members Present  
via Zoom:

Mrs. Harenza, Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Pottieger, Mr. Redner, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Waxler, and Mrs. Ziolkowski.

Administrative Staff  
Present via Zoom:

Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Cafoncelli, and Mr. Arnst.

Attendees:

Sheri Piveteau, recording secretary. 11 members of the public logged in.

### MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Redner announced upcoming meetings

- School Board Business Meeting – August 24, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
- Committee of the Whole Meeting – September 14, 2020, 4:45 p.m.

All listed meetings are held in the Community Board Room of the Jr./Sr. High School unless otherwise noted.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **ROUTINE APPROVALS**

### MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. McCaffrey, second by Mrs. Ziolkowski, the Board approved the following minutes:

- June 8, 2020 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Yeas: Harenza, McAvoy, McCaffrey, Phillips, Pottieger, Redner, Taylor, Waxler, and Ziolkowski.

Absent: None.

Nays: None. Motion carried.

### **COMMITTEES**

Mr. Redner shared the order of the meeting would be changed and would begin with Facilities to conclude with Curriculum and Technology.

#### **A. FACILITIES**

1. **Athletic Booster Shed** - Mr. Cafoncelli explained the Booster Club had approached him with the idea for additional storage for athletic equipment, accessible to lacrosse and football

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players. Mr. Cafoncelli said he worked closely with the boosters and stated this also solves a problem raised by the Fire Marshall as the equipment, currently stored in the hallway, was at times close to impeding egress out of the building. The shed would be placed inside the fence between the stadium and the practice field. Cost total is \$2,400 fully installed, including prep and building on the site, and is a full donation from the boosters. Mr. Cafoncelli is requesting Board approval. All costs including permits, shed and installation costs are included in the donation. It was agreed the item will move to the August 24 agenda.

2. **PTA Shed Donation (WHEC)** – Mr. Cafoncelli explained this has been a work in progress over the last year or so with the PTA. The PTA requested to install a small shed at the Hills Elementary near the kindergarten playground. Mr. Cafoncelli stated this is also a team effort to work together to solve a problem regarding playground equipment which is currently being stored in the vestibule at the locations where the students and teachers leave the building to go to recess. The shed will relocate these items to a better storage space and is a complete donation by the PTA including permit, installation and delivery, totaling \$2,500. Mr. Cafoncelli explained this is an 8x10 shed, similar to a storage shed that had previously been in the same location and was removed due to age. The feasibility study was checked to ensure the shed location would not interfere with any future expansion. Mr. Cafoncelli is recommending the item to the Board for the life and safety aspect and to have a storage area where all of their materials can be kept. He is requesting to have this item put on the next board agenda on the 24th.

All agreed and thanked the PTA and the Athletic Boosters for the donations for the two sheds. The item will be placed on the August 24th Business Meeting Agenda.

3. **Tennis Court Trees Planting** – Mr. Cafoncelli explained the Red Oak trees at the District tennis courts were taken down a year ago as the trees were large and overgrown, had dropped acorns and were considered to be “dirty” trees for that space. The Borough agreed to take them down and there was some cost sharing with the District. Mr. Cafoncelli stated it is time to replant. He has been in contact with the Wyomissing Arborist and based on recommendation and with agreement between Mr. Cafoncelli, the Borough Manager, and the Arborist, they chose the Willow Oak which is a narrow tree and will not branch out over the courts. The tree has no acorns

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and the leaves are much smaller. This choice keeps with Wyomissing tradition staying in the same species and is deemed a good choice protecting the District's investment in the tennis courts.

Discussion and questions regarding cost to the district, the current tree on Parkside and the possibility the Willow Oak may have acorns dropping in the fall. Mr. Cafoncelli explained there is no cost and stated, the cost sharing was for the removal of the Red Oaks as that was a district request. Mr. Cafoncelli will clarify that the Willow Oak does not have acorn droppings before moving forward with the planting. Mr. Cafoncelli stated the tree on Parkside was part of the initial discussion when the others were taken down but it was determined the tree was still healthy and with proper maintenance would be okay.

No other questions or comments. This item does not require Board approval.

**B. FINANCE**

1. **Charter School Costs – PDE 363** - Mr. Boyer spoke regarding finance items and stated the District was in the period finishing up the year moving into the audit. In July they completed PDE 363 form which helps determine district tuition costs for Charter/Cyber schools. Mr. Boyer stated the District had a 3.3% increase in the Regular Education tuition cost over 2019 and stated the tuition to be \$14,268.94. Mr. Boyer also stated Special Education tuition had a 4.14% increase to \$32,637.10, and noted that every student that withdraws and goes to cyber/charter from our district; this is the tuition rates the district pays. Question to confirm the Special Education tuition. Mr. Boyer shared this was a little lower than projected, so that is good, but we will have to see how it goes with this year for numbers of students choosing cyber/charter schools.
2. **Service Agreement with Herbein + Company** – Mr. Boyer shared this item would be on the agenda August 24 and typically gets renewed for one year. He would like to recommend to renew for 3 years, stating they were doing a great job for the District, cost is reasonable, and that way we would not be bringing it back each year for approval. The agreement would be year 1 this year for 2020-21 school year and conclude on June 30, 2022. Mr. Boyer stated that no price was given what the amount would be and that this would be on the agenda for the 24<sup>th</sup>.

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Comment agreeing the 3-year renewal seemed an obvious good choice. Question to ask if the price could be locked in for the next 3 years. Mr. Boyer will ask if they could lock in the base prices, stating add-on's and additional schedules are additional fees.

3. **Update on debt issuance** – Mr. Boyer provided an update sharing the District recently went through the ratings call and came in at AA negative stable which is where the District was at the start of the year. Mr. Boyer stated there was no drop or decrease, and in this economic environment that is a good ratings call. Mr. Boyer shared that Ken Phillips and Lauren Stadel were happy with that as well, and that this will help the District going forward with bond issuance. Mr. Boyer reviewed they are moving forward with two issuances; a bank note that had a great percent with less than 1% interest, and a bond issuance that went out with 1.29% on average, as far as the yield. Mr. Boyer shared the bond closing will happen on September 8<sup>th</sup> and that Ken and Lauren will be present on August 24<sup>th</sup> to provide an update to the Board on both items and to answer questions. Mr. Boyer concluded by saying next steps are with Crabtree and Rohrbach, moving forward with different projects. Mr. Boyer stated there would be tuition contracts for Special Education and ESY agreements on the Agenda on the 24<sup>th</sup> along with Herbein and Company. No Questions or comments.

**C. CURRICULUM  
AND TECHNOLOGY**

1. **Flexible Instruction Days** – Dr. Woodard spoke and provided some background on Flexible Instructional Days stating this was a program available to all public school entities as an alternate approach to delivering instruction if something were to occur to prevent instruction being delivered in a customary manner. Taking the pandemic aside, this is intended for snow days and hazardous conditions, or law enforcement emergency personnel advising us to not allow students into the buildings, or if there was damage to the buildings, etc. Those are some of the reasons we would utilize the Flexible Instructional Days. The Flexible Instructional Day allows for instruction to be online, offline, or a combination of both.

Dr. Woodard stated this was new last year and a few districts in surrounding counties had completed the application process and were approved to implement Flexible Instructional Days. She explained this year it is becoming much more common and although we are not starting the year in a typical fashion, if we were able to open at 100 percent and had a snow day, the Flexible Instructional Day could be delivered and our students

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could utilize their technologies, our teachers could teach progressively, and the day could count as an instructional day and not be deemed a “snow day”.

Dr. Woodard further explained, the District must go through an application process, part of which is sharing this information with the Board and then completing the application and submitting to the Department of Education no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>. We would be notified no later than November 1<sup>st</sup> if our application is approved. The number of Flexible Instructional Days that could be instituted may not exceed 5 days per school year and we are not allowed to utilize the Flexible Instructional Days until they have been approved.

Dr. Woodard stated they were thinking more along the lines of weather related emergencies and explained the nice thing about this is, if we were able to return to normal at some time this year, the district may implement the Flexible Instructional Program for the 2020-21 school year and also two subsequent years, as the Flexible Instructional Days are granted for 3 years. Once that 3-year timeframe is up we need to renew the application again for approval.

Dr. Woodard continued to say, the District has to fill out assurances and narratives that help to describe procedures that we would follow to notify stakeholders to institute Flexible Instructional Day processes, and what the responsibilities and procedures are for students and staff, and for tracing attendance. Dr. Woodard commented, this seemed very daunting a year or two ago but as we are preparing for a hybrid model and virtual instruction, this aligns very nicely. We have the 1:1 iPad for each student K-12 and we have the content available online and the capability for WebEx and Screen Castify to record lessons, so the time is now to begin this application process. Dr. Woodard said the application process also includes exemplars of sample lesson plans designed to progress the learning of our students during Flexible Instructional Days. Dr. Woodard said it is important to know that ideally this is really to progress the learning from the day before onward, and should be seamless.

Dr. Woodard concluded, saying that Board approval is needed to show support of the application for the Flexible Instructional Days in our District and she requests the item for approval on the August 24 Agenda.

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Question to clarify that implementing a Flexible Instruction Day does not disrupt the cycle days. Dr. Woodard confirmed the learning would be seamless and progressive. Dr. Woodard plans to have a FAQ document that will be provided to the Board in a Friday update as well as some of the narratives.

Mr. Render asked for anyone opposed to move the item forward to a voting meeting. None opposed. Item will move forward to August 24 Board Meeting.

2. **Hybrid / WAVE Update** – Dr. Woodard spoke to share some figures and statistics from responses to google forms regarding preferences made by families for their students in choosing WAVE or the Hybrid plan and stated, the District received 1,455 responses out of 1,882, indicating 77% of our students are accounted for. Dr. Woodard explained we still need responses from some, and we are continuing to make calls to those targeted families. If you are listening, please call your building and make your preference so we can plan for this upcoming school year.

Dr. Woodard continued to say, at this point we have received indication that 153 students at the Hills have chosen the WAVE program representing 23% of the enrollment. We have 380 students who have selected Hybrid and 134 still need to respond. At WREC, 67 - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are electing WAVE which represents 22% and is very similar to K-6. Dr. Woodard said this is kind of what they had expected.

Dr. Woodard reported, At JSHS, 104 students selected WAVE representing 11% of the enrollment and they were still waiting for 246 students or 27% to elect their choice of virtual or hybrid. Dr. Woodard concluded by saying the sooner we have those responses the better as we fine tune the courses and rosters to be sure we have the appropriate numbers in our classrooms to abide by the hybrid phase criteria.

Question asking for Hybrid numbers for West Reading and JSHS. Dr. Woodard stated 184 students at WREC selected Hybrid and 567 at JSHS selected Hybrid and said, looking as a District, K-12 we have 1,131 students selecting Hybrid and 324 students who have selected WAVE.

Dr. Woodard also shared that some of the work needing to be done is to be sure we have the proper numbers in classes for the A-K students attending on Mondays and Tuesdays and the L-Z students attending on Thursdays and Fridays to ensure we

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are providing the hybrid criteria. Dr. Woodard stated she is working with Mr. Arnst to manipulate that data and it looks promising. She realizes families are anxious to receive their information and welcome letters, but the information must be fine-tuned before sharing.

Dr. Woodard also explained she is developing a plan for hybrid and WAVE learners to increase the time for synchronous learning, the LIVE student to teacher learning, improving on the program that had been in place in the spring.

Dr. Woodard reviewed some of the schedules planned for an elementary day and week explaining the importance of balancing synchronous and asynchronous learning and recognizing the value of LIVE learning. She further explained they are building plans for synchronous learning within the Hybrid plan, offering times throughout the day the student can connect with their teacher and classmates LIVE. Dr. Woodard stated she realizes there are times that students may not have the ability to access synchronously, so she has to make sure the plan achieves a balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning. The goal is to have regular contact between students and teachers creating consistency for their learning. The Wednesday opportunity is also an opportunity for teachers and students to touch base with questions and answers and receive clarification.

Dr. Woodard explained the teachers will focus their instructional practices on the six professional development days, August 18, 19 and 25-28, to be able to use and work with newer tools and instructional practices that were piloted in the spring, as well as focus on SEL professional development.

Comment commending the benefit of regular contact between students and teachers and recognizing the amount of work needing to be accomplished to prepare for the start of the school year relative to teaching Hybrid and virtually.

Question regarding setup for iPads for students and preloaded content. Mr. Arnst confirmed all devices will be pre-loaded with all required content, including core applications, account setups and email, and will be ready to go. Additionally, students will have the ability to request support through their devices and have access to programs and application tutorials, such as Google Classroom.

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Dr. Woodard shared that August 18 is the District opening day and will be held virtually and stated, following tradition, we will be recognizing staff career milestones and new teachers as well as hearing a message from Mr. Scoboria and a key note speaker, Dr. Adolph Brown, speaking virtually from Virginia. Topic is *All Means All, Cultivating Inclusion, Unlearning Implicit Bias and Inspiring Equity*. Dr. Woodard stated, amidst all of these challenges, we recognize the equity piece as something of our focus. Dr. Woodard invited the Board to join and stated the link would be shared in the Friday update.

Comment regarding the key note speaker to share enthusiasm with the choice having heard him speak at another function. Dr. Woodard agreed, stating the District was lucky to have been able to book him for the engagement.

Mr. Scoboria shared an update on some recent developments involving athletics and sports, stating the PIAA made a ruling suspending the activities for 2 weeks. Mr. Scoboria shared there will be more information on the 21<sup>st</sup> following a meeting, and that the Berks League is meeting tomorrow and may have additional information at that time.

Mr. Scoboria stated that more importantly, PDE and DOH released new guidance to all school districts using a metric which is divided into three levels. Low, moderate and high and he explained the levels are devised based on two statistics. One is *new cases over the last 7 days per 100 residents* and the other is the *positivity rate* of those being tested.

Mr. Scoboria stated the information was received late in the morning and in the afternoon a chart was released indicating which level of the three each county was in. Berks County was in the moderate level. Based on recommendations from PDE and DOH, districts have two choices, either blended or virtual. WASD had approved a blended/hybrid model on July 27<sup>th</sup> and therefore falls within those recommendations, which are not mandates. Mr. Scoboria shared that he was following the reports closely and that he will participate in meetings with Berks County Superintendents. Mr. Scoboria also talked about a possible county impact on some school districts that have made a selection of their educational model which may now fall outside of those recommendations and they may be revisiting that as a district. Mr. Scoboria stated the District has been working with the employees who have indicated they may have medical needs that prevent them from working in the hybrid model. Mr. Scoboria continued to say, the Human

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Resources office is working with those employees to see if accommodations can be met and eliminate any misunderstandings or collect documentation that would show the employee cannot work in that environment. He explained further about some of the options available to teachers and staff.

Mr. Scoboria concluded saying he will follow events closely and see if there is a greater impact in the next day or two. He will provide additional updates to the Board and more information will follow to parents and staff on what came out today.

Mr. Redner spoke on behalf of Board Members thanking Mr. Scoboria and the team for their work through all of this and stated he understands, as a Board they will be updated with more information, and they are comfortable that our hybrid model falls within the guidelines. Mr. Redner said they will wait to see what changes, and he collectively thanks all as we continually maneuver through the new guidance's.

Mr. Scoboria also thanked the Admin Team, staff and others and shared that they have been working closely with the Association and Mr. Ackerman and will continue that dialogue that has been very helpful.

There were no further questions or comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Pottieger, seconded by Mrs. McAvoy adjourn at 5:55 p.m.

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Board Secretary