

Minutes
Board of Education Meeting
April 6, 2020
7:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: David Crim, Linette Dooley, Christopher Lent, Michael Maziarz, Joseph Napolitano and Kathy Tolsdorf

Board Members Absent: James Chakulski, Jr. and Linette Dooley

Others Present:

Assistant Principal Karen Cavuto, Finance Director Beverly Ciurylo, Superintendent Maria Geryk, Principal Alyssa Gwinnell, Brenda Morey and Special Education Director Barbara Wilson

I. Call to Order

Chairman Lent called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Comments from the Audience (Bylaws of the Board #9300)

Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes.

Alyssa Gwinnell said she would like to thank everyone for their support and work during this brand new endeavor. Families of Columbia have also shown appreciation.

IV. Action Items

(Consent) A consent agenda is presented by the Chairman at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the assembly.

- a. Approval of March 3, 2020 Regular Board of Education Minutes
- b. Payment of Bills
- c. Approval of the Recommendation of the Stipend Negotiating Team

Mr. Crim MOVED, Ms. Tolsdorf SECONDED to approve a. Approval of March 3, 2020 Regular Board of Education Minutes; b. Payment of Bills and c. Approval of the Recommendation of the Stipend Negotiating Team

MOTION CARRIES 5:0

V. Action Items (Discussion and Action)

Chairman Lent said the Board had recommended \$184,000 Capital Budget at the March meeting.

- a. Motion to revoke approval of the 2020-2021 Capital Budget

Ms. Tolsdorf MOVED, Mr. Maziarz SECONDED to revoke approval of the 2020-21 Capital Budget.

Discussion:

Chairman Lent said a subsequent motion will be to amend and submit to FIPAC later this week.

MOTION CARRIES 5:0

- b. Motion to reduce Capital Budget by \$94,000 by removing the following:
 - i) Truck for \$25,000
 - ii) Swing Set for \$12,000
 - iii) Security Cameras for \$17,000
 - iv) Walls between two classrooms for \$10,000
 - v) Sinks for \$30,000

Ms. Tolsdorf **MOVED** and Mr. Crim **SECONDED** to reduce the Capital Budget by \$94,000 by removing i) Truck for \$25,000; ii) Swing Set for \$12,000; iii) Security Cameras for \$17,000; iv) Walls between two classrooms for \$10,000 and v) Sinks for \$30,000.

Discussion:

Responding to Ms. Tolsdorf's clarifying question about replacing the sinks, Superintendent Geryk said these will be done now as we have the available funds as this time.

MOTION CARRIES 5:0

- c. Motion to approve the revised 2020-2021 Capital Plan for \$90,000

Mr. Maziarz **MOVED**, Mr. Napolitano **SECONDED** to approve the revised 2020-2021 Capital Plan for \$90,000.

MOTION CARRIES 5:0

- d. Motion to approve the purchase of supplemental science textbooks for the middle school for up to \$16,000

Ms. Tolsdorf **MOVED**, Mr. Napolitano **SECONDED** to approve the purchase of supplemental science textbooks for the middle school for up to \$16,000.

Discussion:

Superintendent Geryk said the middle school science teacher/curriculum leader did analysis. A review of curriculum materials was done, proving them to no longer be accurate. These proposed text books are consistent with standards and inquiry-based model. She supports this purchase.

MOTION CARRIES 5:0

- e. Motion to approve purchasing the following
 - i) Up to \$25,000 for a truck
 - ii) Up to \$60,000 to complete sink replacements
 - iii) Up to \$17,000 for security cameras

- iv) Up to \$10,000 for building classroom walls
- v) Up to \$12,000 for a swing set

Mr. Maziarz MOVED, Ms. Tolsdorf SECONDED to approve purchasing I) Up to \$25,000 for a truck; ii) Up to \$60,000 for complete sink replacements; iii) Up to \$17,000 for security cameras; iv) Up to \$10,000 for building classroom walls and v) Up to \$12,000 for a swing set this budget year.

Discussion:

Mr. Maziarz says he believes these are all necessary upgrades and are for teachers and students.

Ms. Tolsdorf said that, in the case of security cameras, these were originally budgeted with the assumption we would get a grant, but that did not come through. Superintendent Geryk responded yes, and this completes the project for us. Ms. Tolsdorf said she believes this all makes sense as these are legitimate needs and this is an efficient use of the budget.

Chairman Lent said the purchase of a truck has been removed from our Capital Budget request for several years. He supports this purchase at this time.

MOTION CARRIES 5:0

VI. Reports of Board Committees

Policy

Budget

Teaching and Learning

Superintendent Geryk said there are no updates for subcommittees right now, given the current situation.

VII. Correspondence/Communications

- a. COVID 19 docs

Superintendent Geryk said she receives updates from the commissioner of education and the governor as well as some interpretation of those executive orders from attorneys at Shipman and Goodwin.

Chairman Lent said he requested a summary of executive orders. A summary was shared with superintendents.

- b. Chronicle Article regarding Teacher Caravan

Superintendent Geryk said Jessica Neumuth recommended this Care-Avan for staff to go around and welcome students to a new way of school. Teachers, paraprofessionals and other folks within

the school went to populated areas with beeping of horns, etc. It was amazing and was well received by families. Superintendent Geryk extended an extra special thank you to Mel, our lead bus driver.

- c. MOU CTA
- d. MOU Non Cert

Superintendent Geryk said MOUs were signed with both certified teachers and non-certified staff. Many school districts created MOUs to make sure people are not concerned about not having paychecks. This was a very collaborative process.

VIII. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings

a. Future Meeting Dates:

- Monday, May 4, 2020, 6:30 p.m., BOE Subcommittee Meeting, HWP, LMC
- Monday, May 4, 2020, 7:30 p.m., BOE Regular Meeting, HWP Cafetorium
- Wednesday, April 8, 2020, 7:00 p.m., FIPAC Special Meeting (No Budget Workshop), Town Hall
- Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 7:00 p.m., FIPAC Special Meeting (Budget Workshop), Town Hall
- Wednesday, April 22, 2020, 7:00 p.m., FIPAC Special Meeting, Possible Public Hearing on 2020-2021 Budget, Town Hall
- Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 7:00 p.m., FIPAC Special Meeting with Budget Workshop/Public Input if not held 4/22/20, Town Hall
- Wednesday, May 6, 2020, 7:00 p.m., Special FIPAC Meeting with Budget Workshop, Town Hall

IX. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Geryk started by extending a huge thanks to staff and families during this time.

EASTCONN has done a wonderful job of providing student meals to all students who reside in Columbia. Meals are provided on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. in the HWP School front vestibule. Mondays they receive 2 breakfast meals and 2 lunch meals; Wednesdays they receive 3 breakfast meals and 3 lunch meals; and on Fridays they receive 3 breakfast meals and 3 lunch meals.

She receives updates from Eastern Highlands Health routinely, receiving information of COVID 19 cases and recommendations.

She meets by Zoom or phone at least weekly with her superintendent colleagues from Region 19 and Bolton.

There will be discussions about bus contracts. She will keep the Board in the loop.

While starting a distance learning experience for students quickly has been extremely challenging, we she is pleased to share that our programming is up and running. To date, we provided 179 devices so that staff and students were able to engage in teaching and learning (12 to staff, 17 to students). We expect another wave of requests to come through as students are beginning to engage in their work.

We began providing remote educational opportunities for our students on Wednesday, March 25. We are using Seesaw as a platform for our elementary teachers and students. This is a new platform for us; however, we are pleased that our staff worked exceptionally hard to get this structure into place for day one. For our middle school teacher's ad students, the primary platform is through Google Classroom, which our students have been using prior to our closure. There are a few staff who will use Seesaw as well.

Our link to distance learning for children is still working out the kinks. New guidance comes in regularly. She is impressed with how this has been handled in a short period of time.

X. Comments from the Audience

Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes

Alyssa Gwinnell thanked all staff and families for how they have handled these new challenges with such patience and understanding.

Barbara Wilson said she is impressed with the special education staff. They stepped up by checking in with families, modifying students' work, and being available throughout the day. She is proud of the team we have and thanks them.

Superintendent Geryk said, first and foremost, she is hoping everyone is healthy and taking care of themselves. People are juggling a lot at this time.

XI. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks

Ms. Tolsdorf said Alyssa Grinnell's calls are calming. She also said EASTCONN doing meals is much appreciated.

Mr. Maziarz said he wants to thank Alyssa Gwinnell and the teachers. From a parent's perspective, the communication has been excellent. What the teachers are doing is above and beyond. As a parent and member of the community, it is important that you are also healthy and well. His kids were very excited when they saw the Care-Avan go by.

Chairman Lent said Alyssa Gwinnell, Karen Caputo and staff demonstrated how members of this district can be. A month ago, we were talking about updating policies and three weeks later we are talking about distance learning. He believes Superintendent Geryk is demonstrating through leadership. He receives a lot of communication from CAFE. Superintendent Geryk has it all under control. He thanked her for being such a big help and so reassuring.

Superintendent Geryk thanked Chairman Lent, saying we have a great team. Responding to Ms. Tolsdorf's question, Superintendent Geryk said Seesaw is a forum between teachers, students and parents.

Approved 6/1/2020

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Mr. Crim said the teacher parade was for more than students. On a road that typically has high traffic, it has been rather desolate lately. The parade lit up the neighborhood. His family was excited to see it go by. Superintendent Geryk said staff participating in the parade were fully as excited as families were.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Crim MOVED and Mr. Maziarz SECONDED to adjourn.
MOTION CARRIES 5:0

The Board adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher Lent, Chairman