

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
OF THE  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
MT. LEBANON SCHOOL DISTRICT

October 19, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors was held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, October 19, 2020, in the Mt. Lebanon High School Auditorium. Due to Allegheny County Health Department's prohibition of indoor gatherings of more than 25, public participation will be remotely through Zoom.

Ms. Olbrich called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS CONCERNING ACTION ITEM TO FILL VACANT SCHOOL BOARD SEAT

Four (4) residents spoke before the Board about the following:

Appointment of new school board member  
Supports Leslie Long, Shirley McElhattan and Dave Franklin  
Supports Andrew Freeman

It was moved Cappucci and seconded by Strotmeyer that the Board appoints Andrew Freeman to fill the position vacated by Michael Riemer, effective immediately, until the term expires on December 6, 2021.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer,  
Wyland, Olbrich  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Mrs. Jeanine Szalinski administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Freeman, who then took his seat at the board table. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Hugh Beal, Mrs. Elaine Cappucci, Dr. Aviva Diamond, Ms. Valerie Fleisher, Mr. Andrew Freeman, Dr. Justin Hackett, Dr. Stephen Strotmeyer, Mr. Jacob Wyland, Ms. Sarah Olbrich  
Absent: None

ATTENDING:

Dr. Timothy Steinhauer, Superintendent  
Mr. Thomas Peterson, Solicitor  
Administrative Staff: Ms. Cissy Bowman, Dr. Ronald Davis, Dr. Heather Doyle, Mr. Robert Geletko, Dr. Marybeth Irvin, Mr. Richard Marciniak, Ms. Tenecia Ross, Mr. Christopher Stengel, Mrs. Deanna Hess

MINUTES

It was moved by Strotmeyer and seconded by Diamond that the Board approves the minutes of Policy Committee Meeting held on September 14, 2020, the Discussion Meeting held on September 14, 2020, the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee Meeting held on September 21, 2020, and the Regular Board Meeting held on September 21, 2020.

MOTION APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE WITH MR. FREEMAN ABSTAINING

## BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Olbrich thanked all who applied for the open seat on the school board. All the candidates should be commended for their desire to contribute to the Mt. Lebanon community through public service. An engaged community reflects a thriving community. Ms. Olbrich congratulated Andrew Freeman was the new board member. On behalf of the Board, she expressed thanks and appreciation for his service and look forward to working with him.

The Board will be voting this evening to refinance the General Obligation Bonds, series of 2013, which were issued as part of the high school renovation. With this action, the District is looking at an estimated savings of 15.59% or \$5,120,537 taken over the next seven years as a debt service payment reduction. This is a significant savings that will benefit our community for many years. The Board was also pleased that the Moody's rating Aa1 continues to be strong and puts the District in a solid financial position.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steinhauer reported that the administration fielded several questions and concerns from a few community members regarding our response to COVID-19 cases in the district.

Although the Pennsylvania Department of Education/PA Department of Health provided some initial guidance on how to respond to COVID cases in school districts across the Commonwealth, their written guidance has always directed local school districts to consult their local health departments in making these types of decisions.

Specifically PDE said "When a case of COVID-19 is identified in a school setting, public health staff from DOH or the County or Municipal Health Department (CMHD) will work with school administrators to provide guidance and advice related to cleaning and disinfecting, contact tracing and quarantine recommendations, and closing certain areas of the school or the entire school building if necessary. When an entire school is recommended to close, lengths of closure time will vary by level of community transmission and number of cases. This allows public health staff the necessary time to complete case investigations and contact tracing, and to provide schools with other appropriate public health advice like cleaning and disinfecting." Decisions on whether to quarantine, or not quarantine students and staff, to close schools or remain open, are made in direct consultation with the Allegheny County Health Department. As you can imagine, each situation is unique. It involves a very specific set of circumstances.

For each and every positive COVID-19 case in the District, Deanna Hess, District Health Services Supervisor, consults with the Allegheny County Health Department. They discuss all aspects of the case so there is a clear understanding of the context and circumstances surrounding each case. Any decision to quarantine, suspend activities, and/or close a school is done in consultation and at the recommendation of the ACHD.

The superintendent asked the community to please help and assist the District in keeping our schools open and our school community healthy. Be sure to self-screen each day before coming to school; stay home when sick; wear a mask; wash your hands often; maintain physician distance; avoid large gatherings; do not come to school or activities while awaiting COVID test results; cooperate in the contact tracing process; and notify the school nurse or principal if you test positive.

A COVID-19 Dashboard, posted on our website, accurately reflects COVID cases among our students and staff. In addition, our COVID -19 Communications page includes every school email sent to our parents informing them of positive cases in their schools or activities. This is not

easy, this is not normal, the decisions we make have significant consequences. COVID-19 presents challenges and circumstances that have to be carefully and thoughtfully addressed.

Dr. Steinhauer reported that seven Mt. Lebanon High School seniors have been selected as National Merit Semifinalists in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Competition. They are among the highest scoring entrants in Pennsylvania.

In addition, there are 14 students recognized as Commended Students in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. A full list is available on our website. The superintendent congratulated the following Mt. Lebanon High School 2021 National Merit Semifinalists: Benjamin Brown, Caroline Kenney, Charlotte Parsons, Aryan Prasad, Chloe Spikula, Allison Stein, and Peter Swindal.

Dr. Steinhauer was pleased to announce that the District continues to rank at the top of the region, state and country in the Niche.com rankings. The Niche website rates schools across the state and nation using data from the U.S. Department of Education, surveys, and reviews.

In the 2021 Niche Rankings, the District is ranked as the 28th Best School District in America; the 5th best in PA; the 2nd best in the Pittsburgh Area, and the 2nd best in Allegheny County. All of our schools are ranked in the top 1% in the entire country. In addition, we have posted additional indicators that rank our performance in school safety and other categories. The superintendent congratulated and commended our administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and this school board in achieving such remarkable results on the latest Niche.com rankings.

## BOARD REPORTS

Policy Committee – Dr. Diamond reported that the Policy Committee met on October 12, 2020 to review policies CGD, Federal Fiscal Compliance; CGDA, Conflict of Interest-Federal Programs; and CGDB, Travel Reimbursement-Federal Programs. Minor changes were made to the policies that did not require Board approval.

Environmental Sustainability Board – Ms. Olbrich reported that the Environmental Sustainability Board is work with the Municipality on climate action plan and managing the tree canopy.

Municipal Liaison – Dr. Hackett reported that the Municipality is in the first week planning the new budget. Topics at the last meeting included a sump pump ordinance, overnight parking regulations, and the installation of pickle ball courts. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is looking for volunteers to serve on the committee.

Parkway West – Mr. Beal reported that the Parkway West Board met on October 6. Dr. Copeland discussed the course selection for students and the graduation survey. There are 12 school district sending students to Parkway. 100% of the staff returned to teaching in the hybrid mode. Budget planning is keeping budget increases to a minimum.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force – Dr. Hackett reported that a meeting of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee was held before this evening’s meeting. Dr. Heather Bennett, the current Director of Equity Services at PSBA, was introduced as the committee’s co-facilitator.

## NEW BUSINESS

It was moved by Beal and seconded by Fleisher that the Board approves, ratifies, and accepts the following financial reports: (Copy in official minutes)

- a. Treasurer’s Report dated September 30, 2020,
- b. List of Bills dated September 30, 2020 and October 14, 2020, and
- c. List of Tax Refunds dated September 30, 2020.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
 Against: None  
 Abstain: Freeman  
 MOTION APPROVED

It was moved by Wyland and seconded by Cappucci that the Board approves the attached resolution which authorizes the incurring of nonelectoral debt by the issuance of taxable general obligation bonds, in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed forty-two million five hundred thousand dollars (\$42,500,000) to refund prior bonds of the school district; covenanting to pay, and pledging unlimited taxing power for the payment of, the bonds; establishing a sinking fund and appointing a sinking fund depository’ establishing the form, maximum interest rates, maturity dates, and other provisions for the payment of the bonds; covenanting to accept a proposal for the purchase of the bonds; authorizing a filing of required documents with the department of community of economic development; authorizing an escrow agreement and the purchase of escrow investments; ratifying and directing certain actions of officers; and making certain other covenants and provisions in respect of the bonds. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
 Against: None  
 Abstain: Freeman  
 MOTION APPROVED

It was moved by Cappucci and seconded by Diamond that the Board approves the agreement with Jordan Tax Service for the collection of delinquent real estate tax in substantially the form presented at this meeting and that an authorized representative of the District is hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver the agreement as approved by the Superintendent and Solicitor. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
 Against: None  
 Abstain: Freeman  
 MOTION APPROVED

It was moved by Diamond and seconded by Strotmeyer that the Board approves the October 8, 2020, list of personnel changes, as revised October 15, 2020 and October 19, 2020. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
 Against: None  
 Abstain: Freeman  
 MOTION APPROVED

It was moved Diamond and seconded by Fleisher that the Board approves the list of additional bus drivers for 2020-2021 as listed. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer,  
Wyland, Olbrich  
Against: None  
Abstain: Freeman  
MOTION APPROVED

It was moved by Fleisher and seconded by Beal that as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the following members of the Student Assistance Teams are memorialized by the Board of Directors for the 2020-2021 school year:

**Central Office Representative:** Dr. Ronald Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education; Dr. Marybeth Irvin, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education  
**Allegheny Children's Initiative Liaisons:** Jeaneen DeWitt

**Mellon Middle School Student Assistance Program Team:** Christopher Wolfson, Principal; Ben Canan, Assistant Principal; Do Sabol, School Nurse; Heather Rehrig-Poremba, School Psychologist, Kara Gillespie, Counselor; Amy Whealdon, Counselor; Ann Brenneman, Teacher; Erica Harrington, Teacher; Eve Kollar, Teacher

**Jefferson Middle School Student Assistance Program Team:** Dr. Sarah Shaw, Principal; Katelyn Deet, Assistant Principal; Lauren Suess, School Nurse; Erika Vasquez, School Psychologist; Allison Levison, Counselor; Pete Berg, Counselor; Janice Cherry, Teacher, Kristen Hertzog, Teacher; Gwen Kassep, Teacher; Ashlee Beckett, Teacher; Beth Luptak, Teacher; Ed Petsko, Teacher; Stephanie Ross, Teacher; Molly Wetmore, Teacher; John Young, Teacher

**Mt. Lebanon High School Student Assistance Program Team:** Joel Thompson, Principal; Carlie McGinty, Unit Principal; Lorien Moyer, Unit Principal; Dan Ridge, Unit Principal; Chad Johnston, Counselor; Tara Leja, Counselor; Casey Bowles, Counselor; Joy Rullo, Counselor; Shelly Saba, Counselor; Beth Schneider, Counselor; Jerad Smith, Counselor; Jan Billotte, Teacher; Todd Forsyth, Teacher; Tim Kirsch, Teacher, Darren McGregor, Teacher; Mike Melynk, Teacher; Heather Pessy, Teacher; Ann Sartorio, Teacher; Rich Schmitt, Teacher; Kajsa Siewczak, Teacher; Stu Snodgrass, Teacher; Joe Tighe, Teacher;

**Foster Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Jason Ramsey, Principal; Sara Campos, Counselor; Shaina Vasinder, School Psychologist; Hilarie Bauer, School Nurse; Sharon Phillips, Teacher; Crystal Hinton, Teacher

**Hoover Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Dr. Nicole Giehll, Principal; Kimberly Gamble, Counselor; Shaina Vasbinder, School Psychologist; Hillaire Bauer, School Nurse, Katie Cornell, Teacher; Stephanie Hull, Teacher

**Howe Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Dr. Michelle Murray, Principal; Han Karbowski, Counselor; Sheila Carr, School Psychologist; Karlie Gerhart, School Nurse; Margie Digiorno, Teacher; Laurie Watkins, Teacher

**Jefferson Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Brett Bielewicz, Principal, Shira Akamatsu, Counselor; Lauren Suess, School Nurse; Gary Hutsler, Teacher; Kim Salvador, Teacher

**Lincoln Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Ronald Kitsko, Principal; Cathay McClain, Counselor; Sheila Carr, School Psychologist; Karlie Gerhart, School Nurse; Lisa Locke, Teacher; Kathryn Seiferth, Teacher;

**Markham Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Jocelyn Artinger, Principal, Christie Ketterman, Counselor; Shaina Vasbinder, School Psychologist; Hilarie Bauer, School Nurse; Kelsey Barringer, Teacher; Frank Gigler, Teacher; Paula Cherian, Teacher

**Washington Elementary School Student Assistance Program Team:** Dr. Melissa Nelson, Principal; Lori Morin, Counselor; Heather Rehrig-Poremba, School Psychologist; Do Sabol, School Nurse; Kim Scheble, Teacher

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
Against: None  
Abstain: Freeman  
MOTION APPROVED

It was moved by Wyland and seconded by Cappucci that the Board approves the Mt. Lebanon Extended Day Program and Kindergarten amended hybrid model learning lease in the form presented. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
Against: None  
Abstain: Freeman  
MOTION APPROVED

It was moved by Cappucci and seconded by Wyland that the Board awards Bid No. F20-001, Ice Melt for 2020-2021 School Year, to Pitt Specialty Supply, at their bid price of \$6.37/bag as the lowest responsible bidder meeting specifications. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Hackett, Strotmeyer, Wyland, Olbrich  
Against: None  
Abstain: Freeman  
MOTION APPROVED

#### COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Nine (9) residents spoke before the Board about the following:

District delays in getting students back in school full time puts them behind  
Plans need to be made to get students back in school 5 days a week  
Applaud choice of Andrew Freeman to fill vacant seat  
Process for selecting the candidate  
Questioned if anyone on the board pays attention to what other districts are doing  
Reopening plan should be an item on the agenda every month  
Wants in-person, 5 day a week education  
Would like to see a timeline for reopening on the agenda  
Criticism of the how the Strategic Plan was written  
Would like to understand the plan better  
Had suggested changes to Policy BEDH  
Questioned why District is using ACHD matrix instead of PDE  
Implored Dr. Steinhauer to make reopening decision according to PDE  
Model COVID dashboard like other districts  
Be consistent in establishing policy according to PDE  
COVID dashboard does not display well on phone  
Don't take for granted the questions asked by residents

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Beal and seconded by Strotmeyer to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Cecile D. Bowman, Secretary  
Board of School Director

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