

- CALL TO ORDER** At 7:04 p.m. the January 19, 2021 meeting of the Susquehanna Township Board of School Directors was called to order by President Jesse Rawls, Sr.
- SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS** Mr. Majid Ali, Ms. Josie Byzek, Dr. Michael Cohen, Mr. John F. Dietrich, Mr. Jesse G. Gantt, Ms. Julieann Newill  
Mr. Jesse Rawls, Sr., President, Mrs. Ilecia C. Voughs, Ms. Zoe Jackson, Student Representative, Miss Paige Mullen, Student Representative
- DISTRICT OFFICE PRESENT** Mr. Olswen Anderson, Jr., Mr. Justin Green, Mr. Mark Holman, Dr. Richard Kaskey, Dr. Douglas L. Nyce, Ms. Ann-Marie Rathmell, Dr. Tamara Willis, Superintendent, Mr. Jeff Engle, Esq., District Solicitor
- ABSENT** Mr. Scott W. Campbell
- EXECUTIVE SESSION** The President announced that executive session was held immediately prior to the meeting and on January 12, 2021, for the purpose of personnel matters.
- REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS** **Ms. Zoe Jackson and Miss Paige Mullen, Student Representatives**, reported that virtual learning has been extended to January 25<sup>th</sup>, but that winter sports have resumed with covid precautions during practices and events. They noted that the first swim meet has been held and that, as of January 4<sup>th</sup>, practices are occurring for wrestling, basketball, cheerleading and swimming. They shared that student athletes had stayed in shape through doing virtual workouts with coaches and teammates, with in person training starting on January 12<sup>th</sup>. The representatives noted that safety has been the number one priority with masks on, social distancing (as much as possible), some new match rules (such as pausing a wrestling match when a mask falls off). They noted that the first girls' basketball game was postponed due to quarantine. They reported that, in spite of it all, they are looking forward to good seasons in all sports.
- Mr. Rawls, DCTS Representative**, reported that students at the school are in the process of remodeling a home in the city of Harrisburg. He noted that students are coming in by grade on separate days, with virtual schooling on Fridays.
- Dr. Willis, Superintendent**, repeated an announcement from the last meeting, as the student representative named was not present at the time. She congratulated the senior student representative, Zoe Jackson, on her acceptance to Spelman College. Dr. Willis noted that Spelman College ranks as first in the nation among historically black colleges and universities and is the *alma mater* of such prominent leaders as Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Alice Walker, and former Georgia House of Representatives Minority Leader, Stacey Abrams. She expressed certainty that Zoe will represent the Susquehanna Township School District very well. Dr. Willis continued by noting that the district will host a dress-down day on January 28<sup>th</sup> to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in honor of our late first grade student, Grant Jones, who passed away last year. Dr. Willis noted that January is

School Director Recognition Month and that the board members have been featured on the STSD social media platforms this month. She encouraged the public to visit the STSD Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages to leave a comment to let our board members know how much we appreciate their service. She continued by sharing some updates on the district's Covid-19 dashboard that will allow the district, parents and community members to access positivity rates as well as data on our testing within the district, all in real time. She introduced Jen Halfond, School Nurse, and Mr. Justin Green, Director of Technology, to provide an overview of the new and improved dashboard. She noted it would be released on the district's website later this week.

**Mrs. Halfond and Mr. Green** described the various features of the dashboard including technical information. They noted that it allows for a deeper understanding of trends and includes automatic updates (rather than relying on manual updates), so that data may be provided in real time. They noted that the top three cards in red are aggregate numbers in the district, first being anyone who was on school property while infections, the second being those in the last 1 days, and the last being those resolved or inactive in the last 14 days. They noted that data is also disaggregated by building, total number in a month, total cases by states (both active or resolved), percentage by school building, testing numbers (including tests offered to students or staff), test performed by school nurses, seven-day totals of test performed by school nurses, number of tests still awaiting results, total positivity gauge, and total positivity rater. They noted that it should be a very helpful resource.

**Dr. Willis** concluded her report by announcing that administration will be releasing a statement regarding a recent personnel matter later this week.

## II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR JANUARY 19, 2021

### MOTION TO APPROVE

**2.A.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve the meeting agenda for January 19, 2021.

Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**2.B.** Board Member Comments

None.

## III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

### DISTRICT SOLICITOR

**Mr. Engle, District Solicitor**, spoke to members of the public who may be listening. He noted that there were specific comments submitted relative to a personnel matter and that Dr. Willis noted that there will be an announcement concerning that matter. He stated that, out of caution regarding matters of an executive nature, that privileged material may be in those comments and may cause public discussion tonight about an executive matter. He noted that, under Policy 903, the comments will be submitted directly to the administrative team. He expressed his hope that

those who may have submitted comments in the STSD's new posting application may be made aware of that.

**SPEAKER**

**Mr. Bradley Bechtel** submitted via the MS Forms posting app his opinion that the attendance policy of the district is in error. He asserted that teachers have many students with wifi issues who should not be punished for this. He noted that works next to his sone at home, hears the teacher, hears his son respond, yet notes that his son is still marked absent. He asserted that teachers are pressured by administration to mark students absent. He asserted that he should not be held criminally liable for the results of a system that doesn't work well. He concluded by insisting that his son's absences be changed to present; that doing otherwise is not fair.

**SPEAKER**

**Ms. Byzek** noted that she ran into the exact same issue earlier in the year. She noted that she had a discussion with administration and decided to enroll her son in Hanna Cyber School because she couldn't deal with him being marked absent under the circumstances.

**IV. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

**PRESENTATION**

**4.A.** Mr. Jeremy Medernach of Boyer & Ritter presented the STSD Independent Local Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2019-2020. (attached to BoardDocs)

**FOR THE RECORD**

The President thanked Mr. Anderson for his outstanding work and the unqualified or clean reports.

**PRESENTATION**

**4.B.** Dr. Nicole Smith, High School Principal, and Mr. Robert McDonald, Science Department Chair / Building Technology Coach, presented the 2021-2022 Susquehanna Township High School Course Planning Guide and High School Highlights. (attached to BoardDocs)

**V. MINUTES**

**None.**

**VI. PROGRAM**

**DISCUSSION**

**6.A.** Discuss the 2021-2022 STHS Course Planning Guide. (attached to BoardDocs)

**VII. PERSONNEL**

**MOTION TO APPROVE**

**7.A.B.C.D.E.F.G.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Mr. Ali, to approve Items 7.A.B.C.D.E.F.G.  
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**7.A.1.** Approve the resignation of Zach Shroyer as Head JV Baseball Coach at the Susquehanna Township High School, effective December 28, 2020.

**7.A.2.** Approve the resignation of Ty Henderson as Night Custodian at the Sara Lindemuth / Anna Carter Primary School, effective January 5, 2021.

**7.A.3.** Approve the resignation of Cecelia Pharris as Social Worker at the Susquehanna Township School District, effective January 21, 2021.

**7.A.4.** Approve the resignation of Alaina Rathfon as 4th Grade Teacher at the Thomas W. Holtzman, Jr. Elementary School, effective February 24, 2021.

**7.A.5.** Approve the resignation of Alexander Drolet as Night Custodian at Susquehanna Township High School, effective January 8, 2021.

**7.A.6.** Approve the resignation of Christopher Seigle as Night Custodian at the Sara Lindemuth / Anna Carter Primary School effective January 25, 2021.

**7.B.1.** Approve the retirement of Cathy Stepansky as Office Manager / Accountant at the Susquehanna Township School District, effective June 30, 2021. Ms. Stepansky has been with the district since 2000.

**7.B.2.** Approve the retirement of Diane Gilbert as Coordinator of Special Education / Student Services effective June 30, 2021. Mrs. Gilbert has been with the district since 1997.

**7.C.** Amend the transfer of Alexandria DeCicco from ELA Teacher (STEA) at the Susquehanna Township Middle School to Assistant Principal (Act 93) at the Thomas W. Holtzman, Jr. Elementary School at a salary of \$80,000, pro-rated, from effective date to be determined to effective January 13, 2021. Ms. DeCicco will be replacing Lindsay Lester.

**7.D.** Approve Mr. Bradley R. Giampietro as District Accountant/Business Office Manager at the Susquehanna Township School District Administrative Office at a salary of \$75,000, pro-rated, effective February 16, 2021. Mr. Giampietro will be replacing Mrs. Catherine R. Stepansky.

**7.E.** Amend Amber Seiler as English Language Arts Teacher at the Susquehanna Township Middle School at a salary of \$54,062.00 (M, Step 2) pro-rated, from effective date to be determined to effective February 9, 2021. Ms. Seiler will be replacing Latoya Abdullah.

**7.F.** Approve Yolanda Stanton as Autistic Support Paraprofessional (Assistant III) at the Susquehanna Township Middle School at a rate of \$14.11 per hour (Tier 1-2), effective January 19, 2021. Ms. Stanton will be replacing Rasha Jones.

**7.G.1.** Approve Chanel Hueitt as Backup Crossing Guard at the Thomas W. Holtzman, Jr. Elementary School at a rate of \$28.39 per hour for the 2020-2021 school year.

**7.G.2.** Amend Amanda Salter as Sponsor for Pamela Imler at the Susquehanna Township Middle School from a stipend of \$250.00 to \$125.00 for the 2020-2021 school year.

**7.G.3.** Approve Joan Tracy as sponsor for Pamela Imler at the Susquehanna Township High School at a stipend of \$125.00 for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

**7.G.4.** Approve Joan Tracy as sponsor for Heather Bravener at the Susquehanna Township High School at a stipend of \$250.00 for the 2020-2021 school year.

**VIII. FINANCES**

**MOTION TO APPROVE**

**8.A.B.C.D.E.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Mr. Ali, to approve Items 8.A.B.C.D.E.  
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**8.A.** Approve the General Fund Cash Balance of \$19,486,076.96. (attached to BoardDocs)

**8.B.** Approve the payment of First National General Fund Checking bills from the First National General Fund Checking as listed on the Computer Check Summary, totaling \$1,167,201.39. (attached to BoardDocs)

**8.C.** Approve the payment of Food Service bills from the Food Service Checking, as listed on the Computer Check Summary, totaling \$5,960.94. (attached to BoardDocs)

**8.D.** Approve the following Personal Tax Refund:

Taxpayer Name: Rose Kaplan

Bill #: 016362

Year: 2020

Refund Amount: \$264.60

Reason: Rose Kaplan is retired; she paid the taxes in error.

**8.E.** Approve the STSD Independent Local Audit Report for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year as presented by the district's local audit firm, Boyer & Ritter, LLC. (attached to BoardDocs in presentations section)

**MOTION TO APPROVE**

**8.F.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Dr. Cohen, to approve Item 8.F.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**Aye:** Mr. Ali, Mr. Dietrich, Mr. Rawls, Sr., Ms. Byzek,  
Dr. Cohen

**Nay:** Mr. Gantt, Ms. Newill, Mrs. Voughs

**Abstain:** None.  
**Absent:** Mr. Campbell

Motion passed 5-3, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**8.F.** Approve the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Preliminary General Fund Budget inclusive of a 3.5% real estate tax increase with aggregate revenues and expenditures totaling \$53,511,727 and \$57,314,020, respectively, and an estimated use of fund balance totaling \$3,802,293, seeking Act 1 Exceptions for special education and retirement. (attached to BoardDocs)

**MOTION TO APPROVE**

**8.G.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Mr. Ali, to approve Item 8.G.  
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**DISTRICT SOLICITOR**

**Mr. Engle** noted that this is permitted under an act passed this year, allowing school districts to waive fees through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

**BUSINESS MANAGER**

**Mr. Anderson** noted that the waivers may be made on a case by case basis.

**8.G.** Authorize Business Manager to waive the collection of taxpayer penalties on real estate taxes through December 31, 2020 based upon recent statutory authorization founded in pandemic relief for COVID-19.

Note: Action requested to allow Business Manager to assist taxpayers experiencing financial hardship regarding their capacity to finance school real estate taxes. Consultation with the district's solicitor occurred prior to presenting this request to the Board for consideration.

**IX. CONTRACTS**

**MOTION TO APPROVE**

**9.A.B.C.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve Items 9.A.B.C.  
Motion passed 7-1 (Mr. Gantt opposed), 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**9.A.** Approve the agreement between Susquehanna Township School District and J.P. Harris & Associates, LLC as attached for the collection of the District's 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 Current & Delinquent School Per Capita and School Occupation Taxes at the fee structure cited within the agreement. It is noted that this 4 year agreement is identical in cost to the existing agreement and reflects no increases in collection rates. As further noted in the agreement, either party can terminate the agreement for any reason, with or without cause, upon written notice of termination at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of every year of any term of the agreement.

Note: Annual Summary of Cost

Current Taxes:

Base Fee: \$22,500 and \$.75 cents for the processing of each paid and interim billing

Printing Fee: \$13,500 for the printing regular and interim bills of approximately 20,000 inclusive of receipt, exoneration form, instructional information  
The above also covers the cost of postage for mailing, as well as window envelopes.

**Delinquent Taxes:**

There is no cost to STSD for the collection of Delinquent Taxes; all expenses are incurred directly by the delinquent taxpayer as identified below:

\$30.00 Fee for processing of delinquent School Occupation

\$14.00 Fee for processing of delinquent Per Capita

(agreement attached to BoardDocs)

**9.B.** Approve the agreement between Susquehanna Township School District and J.P. Harris & Associates, LLC as attached for the collection of the District's 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 Current Real Estate Taxes at the fee structure cited within the agreement. It is noted that this 4-year agreement is identical in cost to the existing agreement and reflects no increases in collection rates. As further noted in the agreement, either party can terminate the agreement for any reason, with or without cause, upon written notice of termination at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of every year of any term of the agreement.

Note: Annual Summary of Cost

Base Fee: \$13,500 and \$.75 cents for the processing of each paid and interim billing  
Printing Fee: \$7,500 for the printing regular and interim bills of approximately 10,000

The above also covers the cost of postage for mailing as well as window envelopes.  
(agreement attached to BoardDcos)

**9.C.** Approve the Amendment to the Sunbelt Staffing Agreement to provide temporary contracted nursing services until a permanent replacement is found. This Amendment will extend the agreement until June 11, 2021. (attached to BoardDocs)

**X. POLICY**

**None.**

**XI. OTHER**

**MOTION TO APPROVE**

**11.A.** Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve Item 11.A.  
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

**11.A.** Approve the 2021-2022 Susquehanna Township School District Calendar.  
(attached to BoardDocs)

**DISCUSSION**

**11.B.** Approve the addendum to the confidential settlement agreement for student #2020-21/005. (Discussion of the agreement held in executive session)

**XII. NEW BUSINESS**

**None.**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**13.A.** Moved by Mr. Rawls, Sr., seconded by Ms. Byzek, to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion passed: 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

  
Julieann Newill  
Board Secretary