

## **WATERTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**January 5, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Watertown City School District's Board of Education was held on January 5, 2021 in the District Office Conference Room at HT Wiley School. The meeting, conducted by the Board President, Maria Mesires, opened at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Maria T Mesires  
Michael R. Struchen  
Culley T. Gosier  
Jason B. Harrington  
Nancy C. Henry  
Beth A. Linderman  
Suzanne C. Renzi-Falge

Officers Present: Patricia B. LaBarr, Superintendent of Schools  
Michelle R. Gravelle, District Clerk

Administrators: Stacey J. Eger-Converse, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Tina M. Lane, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services  
  
Joshua W. Hartshorne, School Business Administrator

There was one visitor in attendance.

President Mesires opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Agenda Changes:** Under—Board and Staff Reports

**Add:** FAF Meeting Report, January 5, Beth Linderman, Chair.

Under-- Items for Board Action

**Add:** M. Approval for Medical Examination Pursuant to NYS Education Law Section 913.

**Public Comments:** None

**Communications:** The District Clerk shared two communications with the board members.

- North Country Family Health Center submitted the 2020 Year End Report along with a card, thanking the district for their continued support.
- A letter from a parent, Frances Seymour, in regards to the district's professional development days. Board members had already received a copy of this letter and the Superintendent elaborated on it during her Superintendent report.

**Board and Staff Reports:**

**Watertown City School District Community Partnerships; Issue Analysis Project—**

Laura Bateman, Jodie Delaney, MaryClaire Pineau & Olivia Roggie.--

Team Live 4 presented to the board members through a slide presentation, Integrating Community Based Resources to Support Student Growth. The Team based their study on the question, "How can we access and integrate community based resources to support student growth in the Watertown City School District?" They continued with the focus on:

- School Based Health Services
- Passion for Community Relationships
- Benefits of a Site Coordinator
- Optimizing Partnerships

The Team provided some recommendations based on their work regarding what community partnerships would be best suited for Watertown City School District. The three options/recommendations to target academic improvement, graduation rate, chronic absenteeism, and discipline were:

- University & School Connection--incorporate university students through the Liberty Program and Cornell 4H program to mentor Watertown students.
- Coordinator Position-- hiring a community school coordinator to work closely with the homeschool coordinators acting as the hub for information exchange, outreach and coordination.
- Community Based Schools--transformation to a Community School model.

**Director of Facilities--Mr. John Wilson--** Mr. Wilson spoke on behalf of work he has begun during the first few months of his employment with the district. His goal is to increase efficiency with the Custodial & Maintenance department. He is focusing on:

- Utilizing the QWARE facilities management software. Streamline maintenance work order requests to prevent lost work orders and provide accountability for the maintenance work.
- HVACR (Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning and Refrigeration) equipment Preventative Maintenance in each building.
- Life Safety-- exit and emergency lighting, fire extinguishers and AED machine required monthly checks in order to maintain compliance.
- Fleet maintenance.
- Mr. Wilson is also focused on cleaning up and cleaning out the basements of each building. Some items may be able to go to auction. He is working on cross training the staff in the maintenance department, as some have specialized skill sets.

**Finance, Audit & Facility Meeting Report, January 5, Beth Linderman, Chair—** Ms. Linderman reported on the FAF meeting held earlier this evening.

- The committee was able to look at the three proposals submitted based on the RFP for Construction Management Services.
- Looking at finalizing the Capital Project. Prioritizing the must haves.
- Discussion about the ongoing expenses for the district due to the COVID pandemic.
- First look at budget discussion with a timeline for decisions.

### **Items for Consent Agenda:**

Resolution offered by Michael Struchen.

**RESOLVED**, that Consent Agenda Items A, B, C, D, E, & F are hereby approved.

- Approval of the Minutes of Board of Education Meeting on December 1, 2020.
- Approval of the Monthly Treasurer's Report for November 2020.
- Approval of the Monthly Financial Report for November 2020.
- Approval of the Extra-Curricular Classroom Activity Reports for WHS, Case, and Wiley for November 2020.

- E. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Pre-School Education.
- F. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Special Education.

Seconded by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and carried; all voting aye.

**Items for Board Action:**

Resolution offered by Culley Gosier.

**RESOLVED**, That the totals listed below are to be deleted from the 2020-2021 City of Watertown School Tax Delinquent List as the taxes plus 2 percent penalty were received at the Board of Education offices after the December 1, 2020 deadline but were postmarked on or before December 1, 2020.

School Taxes: **\$40,508.23**

Library Taxes: **\$202.12**

Total 2% Penalty: **\$606.45**

Total: **\$41,316.80**

New totals for the Watertown City Comptroller to collect are:

School Taxes: **\$623,659.98**

Library Taxes: **\$3,041.13**

Penalties: **\$12,534.17**

Total: **\$639,235.28**

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Beth Linderman

**RESOLVED**, That the totals listed below are to be deleted from the 2020-2021 City of Watertown School Tax Delinquent List as the taxes plus 2 percent penalty were received at the Board of Education offices after the December 1, 2020 deadline but were postmarked on or before December 1, 2020.

School Taxes: **\$27,681.69**

Library Taxes: **\$129.32**

Total 2% Penalty: **\$538.89**

Total: **\$28,349.90**

New totals for the Jefferson County Treasurer to collect are:

School Taxes: **\$311,539.57**

Library Taxes: **\$1,437.86**

Penalties: **\$6,259.55**

Total: **\$319,236.98**

Seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

**RESOLVED**, That the IRS mileage reimbursement rate as of January 1, 2021 will be 56 cents per mile for business miles driven and is hereby approved.

Seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

**RESOLVED**, That the 2021 Calendar for the Annual Meeting, Budget Hearing, Budget Vote and School Board Election Vote is hereby approved.

**Budget Vote/School Board Elections**  
**Tuesday, May 18, 2021—12 noon to 9pm**

**North Elementary**  
**Watertown High School**

Seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Beth Linderman.

**RESOLVED**, that the Consultation Agreement with James E. Huber is hereby approved.

Seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

**RESOLVED**, that a donation from Safe Schools Endeavor through Northern New York Community Foundation for \$1,850 was received. The grant is designated support of the Totally Vocally Program at Case Middle School. This donation is gratefully accepted and approved and will be acknowledged in writing.

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Michael Struchen.

**RESOLVED**, that a donation from TOPS Market for 20 mini fruit pies per month for the remainder of the school year (approximately \$223.00) for the HT Wiley Pie for a Principal Project was received. This donation is gratefully accepted and approved and will be acknowledged in writing.

Seconded by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

Resolution offered by Culley Gosier.

**RESOLVED**, that a donation from The Elpis Fund through Northern New York Community Foundation for \$250.00 was received. The donation is designated support of the Watertown City School Districts' Food4Families Program. This donation is gratefully accepted and approved and has been acknowledged in writing.

Seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

**RESOLVED**, that the disposal, recycle, or donation of damaged, outdated, and unused books and video tapes from the libraries at Knickerbocker Elementary, Primary Library Office (North Elementary), Ohio Elementary, Sherman Elementary and Starbuck Elementary is hereby approved.

Seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Patricia B. LaBarr, the Board of Education hereby approved the following:

**RESIGNATIONS**

A	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Smith, Deborah	Teacher Assistant	1/29/2021	3
2	Slate, Tara	Senior Typist	1/4/2021	4 ½
3	Powers, Dean	Teacher	1/20/2021	4 months
4	Boulden, Amy	Teacher	2/12/2021	5 months

**LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

B	Name	Title	Effective Date	Ending Date	Reason	Building

1	Dingman, Rebecca	Food Service Worker	12/24/2020	3/31/2021	Personal	Wiley
2	Marston, Rachel	Teacher	5/14/2021	6/25/2021	Medical	WHS

**APPOINTMENTS – PERMANENT**

<b>C</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Salary</b>
1	Turck, Cynthia	Custodian In Charge	12/7/2020	\$15.61/hr.
2	LaParr, Andrew	Custodian	12/10/2020	\$14.61/hr.

**APPOINTMENTS – INSTRUCTIONAL SUBSTITUTES**

<b>D</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Ending Date</b>
1	Brown, Selina	1/6/2021	6/30/2021
2	Ganon, Aubrey	1/6/2021	6/30/2021
3	Hatchell, Steven	1/6/2021	6/30/2021
4	Peters, Brooke	12/7/2020	6/30/2021
5	Petrillose, Tina	1/6/2021	6/30/2021
6	Stanley, Rosemarie	1/6/2021	6/30/2021
7	Velasquez, Anthony	1/6/2021	6/30/2021

Seconded by Beth Linderman and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Nancy Henry.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of Patricia B. LaBarr, Superintendent of Schools, the following tenure appointment is hereby approved:

Kristin Storino, Remedial Reading, Effective date January 6, 2021.

Seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

**RESOLVED**, That the approval of Extra-Curricular Activities Clubs and Advisors at Watertown High School are hereby approved.

Class of 2024; Club Advisors: Robin Boomhower, Kelly Connell, Samantha VanBrocklin

Seconded by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and carried; all voting aye.

### **Executive Session**

At 6:49pm President Mesires asked for a motion to move into the Executive Session to discuss ongoing legal matters and a Personnel issue. Motion was made by Jason Harrington and seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

### **Open Session**

At 7:18pm a motion was made by Beth Linderman to return to Open Session; seconded by Culley Gosier and carried all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

**WHEREAS**, it is the duty of the Board of Education (the "Board") to employ only such individuals as are physically and mentally qualified to perform the duties associated with their positions; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 913 of the NYS Education Law provides in relevant part that "[T]he board of education or trustees of any school district ... shall be empowered to require any person employed by the board of education ... to submit to a medical examination by a physician or other health care provider of his or her choice ... in order to determine the physical or mental capacity of such person to perform his or her duties"; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 913 of the NYS Education Law, in order to safeguard the health of children attending public schools, the Board has the authority to require District employees to submit to a medical examination by a school medical examiner designated by the Board in order to determine whether such employee possesses the physical or mental capacity to perform the duties associated with his or her position; and

**WHEREAS**, the Superintendent of Schools made a recommendation to the Board of Education in executive session at the regularly scheduled Board meeting this evening, Tuesday January 5, 2021, that a certain District employee, who shall be identified here as Employee, be required to undergo an examination and evaluation pursuant to NYS Education Law Section 913; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has determined that Dr. Benjamin Rudd, whose office is located at 1575 Washington St., should act as school medical examiner for the purposes of NYS Education Law Section 913.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Dr. Rudd, with an office located at 1375 Washington St., is hereby designated as school medical examiner for purposes of NYS Education Law Section 913.
2. The Superintendent of Schools is hereby authorized and directed to order Employee to report to Dr. Rudd for examination at his office located at 1375 Washington St. on such date as Dr. Rudd shall designate, provide that the day and time for the examination is scheduled to take place during the employee's regular work day.
3. The Superintendent of Schools is further authorized to order Employee to provide Dr. Rudd with properly completed and signed medical authorizations that comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) in sufficient quantity to enable Dr. Rudd to obtain all records of prior medical care, treatment, and evaluation of Employee by physicians and other medical care providers within the last ten (10) years. The form of the authorization is incorporated into this resolution as Exhibit A.
4. The Superintendent of Schools is further authorized to order Employee to report to such other physicians or agencies as Dr. Rudd may direct.
5. The results of Dr. Rudd's examination and all further examinations required or requested by Dr. Rudd are to be forwarded to the Board.
6. The Superintendent of Schools is directed to forward a letter to Employee together with a certified copy of this resolution, advising Employee of the scheduled date of the examination, directing Employee to report to Dr. Rudd's office for the examination and evaluation, and directing Employee to report to such other physicians or agencies as Dr. Rudd may direct.
7. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

**END OF RESOLUTIONS**

**Superintendent of Schools Report**--Superintendent LaBarr thanked both Mr. John Wilson and the team Live 4 for their presentations this evening.

- The Wellness committee finished the Trek to the North Pole challenge with a winner of Starbuck Elementary. The district recorded over 24,000 miles for the month of December.
- The next challenge is through PBS, storyboard and snowmen.
- Superintendent LaBarr reviewed a parent letter that she recently shared with the board. The parent wrote to the Superintendent and the board to ask them to reconsider the upcoming professional development early dismissal days. Utilizing Wednesdays as an alternative day to hold the professional development was the suggestion of this



particular parent. Mrs. Eger-Converse and the Superintendent outlined several reasons why Wednesdays wouldn't be the opportune choice. After some discussion the board members came to the decision to change January 29 from an early dismissal to a full day of instruction.

- Mrs. LaBarr reviewed the metrics for the cluster zones that were recently changed by Governor Cuomo. Hospital capacity is now factored into the determination of the cluster zones.
- A recent survey went out to remote only families via Parent Square to determine the interest in coming back to school into a hybrid schedule. The survey produced small numbers at each grade level showing interest in doing so.
- The pool at Watertown High School will be completed soon. The swimming boys Varsity and Modified season is slated to begin if all goes well and able to move forward. Mr. George Emrich created a video to explain and lay out to students the expectations and changes for this season. Swim meets will be virtual, merging times through a "paper meet".
- Spring intramural participation is being discussed. The board members agreed that it worked well in the fall.
- The Office of the Attorney General has approved all of the required documents and they've been placed on the district website.
- Rande Richardson is hoping to attend the next board meeting to announce the candidates for the Hall of Achievement.

#### **Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Report--** Mrs. Stacey Eger-Converse

- Mrs. Eger-Converse provided the board members with a copy of the K-12 Instructional Update. In the Instructional Update she provided the Learning Loss Data giving an overview on where the district's students stand with regard to "COVID-19 learning loss". The data shows that students look pretty similar to last year. Research suggests that learning loss in math will be greater.
- She spoke about a Diversity Book Study starting on February 3 for interested faculty. The book, *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, will be the focus of the study. Ten spots are open for an eleven-meeting session.
- Ms. Eger-Converse is taking an asynchronous course, Rights, Respect, and Responsibility sponsored by Genesee Valley BOCES focusing on sexual and health education. It's providing some great resources on how teachers can respectively teach this sensitive topic.
- She thanked a few of the remote only teachers, Heather Cean, Stephanie Eldridge, Monica Sboro, and Peg Lazarchuck for being recorded in a 25-minute video. The video highlights tips and tricks of what these remote teachers have learned during the course of the school year. This video is intended to help teachers in the event that they may have to pivot to remote teaching.
- Lastly, she mentioned that she's been working with the high school to create four semester-long courses of study for the 2021-22 school year. These courses will be approved by resolution at the next board of education meeting.

#### **Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Student Services Report--** Ms. Tina Lane

- Ms. Lane gave an update on the COVID status in the district. Currently there are 17 staff members quarantined. The number of cases did grow over the holiday break. The

district continues to report daily on any cases in the district along with updating the NYS COVID report card online.

- Following a meeting yesterday with the tutoring coordinator, it was decided that there will now be two tutors at the high school. One will be focusing on ELA and the other will be focusing on math. They will be on site during the auditorium study hall during the day.
- There have been some recent openings in the district; Ms. Lane is continuing with some interviews for those positions.

**School Business Manager Report**-- Mr. Joshua Hartshorne

- Mr. Hartshorne reported that the Construction Manager RFP should have resolution for the next board meeting.
- He reported that the Capital Project list has been narrowed down. The list needs to be reviewed and revised by the Construction Manager once that has been named.
- Some of the taxes received dated as far back as October 7th. Due to both the holiday season mail and COVID restrictions.
- He continues to keep track of COVID expenses which are now more than \$529 thousand.
- He has begun his focus on the 2021-22 budget. He's hopeful of state aid remaining flat. CPI index is at 1.2% increase over the last 12 months, remaining flat is still essentially a reduction in purchasing power.
- There are no signs that there will be another pandemic adjustment yet/ CARES act.
- The Tax cap still has some tweaking but based on current numbers, adjustment to PILOT's and a few other things, it's reflecting close to last year with the district's max levy limit being 2.28%; although it's too early to be sure of that exact amount.

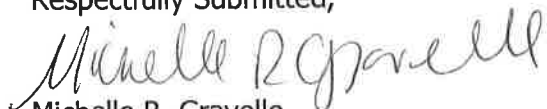
**Upcoming Dates**--- President Mesires reviewed the upcoming dates and meetings.

Ms. Linderman made special mention of the high school wind ensemble for their holiday presentation to the Rotary Club. She was very impressed with the quality of the show based on the fact that students are in two different cohorts and the work Mike Schanely and Andrea Wischerath did to make all of it come together so very well.

Superintendent LaBarr followed up by mentioning that the National Honor Society presentation, at the last minute, was decided to be held virtually. The presentation was well done on such short notice, due to the hard work from the administration at the high school along with Mike Schanely.

**Adjournment** -- At 8:12pm, with no further business President Mesires asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Suzanne Renzi-Falge and seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Michelle R. Gravelle