

The regular meeting of the Watertown City School District's Board of Education was held on February 23, 2021, in the District Office Conference Room at HT Wiley School for the board members and was streamed live for the public to view virtually via a link on the district website. 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

President Mesires opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Changes: None

Public Comments: None

Communications: The District Clerk reported to the Board members about the upcoming Virtual Legislative Discussion on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 3pm via a Webex link. Board members who wish to participate are asked to sign up with the District Clerk by March 1.

Board and Staff Reports:

Hall of Achievement Inductees Announcement, Rande Richardson, Chair—Mr. Richardson streamed in virtually to announce the finalists in the Hall of Achievement induction. He thanked the committee for their hard work. The Committee is a nice blend of past graduates, current students, and staff:

Rande Richardson, '88, Chair
Kenneth Forbes, current student
Jeri Grant Gosier, '02
Michele Gehring Jeican '84
Patricia B. LaBarr
Neicia Smith, current student
Dr. Jason White '92

- **Richard A. Dillin** (Class of 1946)
Mr. Dillin was an American comics artist best known for a 12-year run as the illustrator of the DC Comics superhero-team series *Justice League of America*. He drew 115 issues from 1968 until his death in 1980.
- **Dr. Eugene M. Renzi** (Class of 1948)
Dr. Renzi is a retired Watertown obstetrician and gynecologist. Having practiced for more than 40 years, he delivered thousands of North Country children and has been active in various community organizations.
- **Dr. Alan K. Percy** (Class of 1956)
Dr. Percy is known internationally for his work and research in the clinical neurosciences. Most recently affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine, he is a highly recognized authority on Rett syndrome and related neurodevelopmental disorders.
- **Mary-Margaret Humes** (Class of 1972)
Ms. Humes is an actress, having made appearances in more than 50 national network television programs, including six seasons on *Dawson's Creek*.
- **Mary Gay Scanlon** (Class of 1976)
Congresswoman Scanlon, an education and human rights advocate and attorney, currently represents Pennsylvania's 5th Congressional District. She was first sworn into U.S. House of Representatives in 2018.
- **James Berkman** (Class of 1978)
Mr. Berkman is a nationally recognized leader in the sport of lacrosse and the head coach of the Salisbury University men's lacrosse program. In his 33 seasons, he has had 560 wins, the most in NCAA history in any division, including 12 national championships and is a National Lacrosse Hall of Fame inductee.
- **Dr. William A. Cliby** (Class of 1979)
Dr. Cliby is a gynecologic oncologist and professor at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science. In addition to his clinical practice, he is active in research and education nationally, including service as a fellowship program director and author of more than 220 peer-reviewed publications.
- **Robert L. Barry** (Class of 1981)
Mr. Barry is an engineer, inventor, and co-founder/CEO of four medical device companies. He holds more than 30 patents in the fields of cardiology, radiology, pulmonology and thoracic surgery.
- **Maggie Rizer Mehran** (Class of 1996)
Ms. Rizer Mehran has had an extensive and highly successful modeling career, having appeared on the covers of many fashion publications, and walked the runway for

internationally renowned companies. She has remained active in supporting and increasing awareness of various charitable causes.

Mr. Harrington joined the meeting just prior to Mr. Gonseth's presentation.

Welcome—Terrance Gonseth, Principal, Sherman Elementary

Mr. Gonseth presented virtually with a Power Point presentation noting Sherman Elementary's:

Five Awesome Happenings

- Virtual Teachers—he praised Brittany Widrick, Stacey Burns, and Amy Ose for their wonderful work instructing completely virtual to their classes.
- New Staff to Sherman Elementary—Mr. Gonseth reviewed the list of new staff members this year to Sherman Elementary and how each brings a special addition to their building.
- Entire Faculty at Sherman Elementary—he commends his staff on the exceptional communication among the staff members which helps each day run smoothly.
- Community Support—Mr. Gonseth listed the number of things Sherman does to support the community, Food 4 Families deliveries, Angel Tree, and Technology Support just to name a few items of support.
- Sherman Elementary Students—Mr. Gonseth enjoys having the students in the building.

Three Areas of Growth

- Connecting/contacting students/families who are not engaged either by choice or can't because of technology limitations.
- Teachers could use more training and time to become more comfortable and knowledgeable with the various levels of readers in their classrooms.
- SchoolPace Data (web-based student achievement dashboard that allows educators to monitor growth and performance in real-time by American Reading Company) He feels there is room for growth in becoming more familiar with the SchoolPace Data and what it represents for the students.

One Request for Support

Continued ongoing support with families and students both hybrid and virtual.

Items for Consent Agenda:

Resolution offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

RESOLVED, that Consent Agenda Items A and B are hereby approved.

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Pre-School Education.
- B. Approval of the Minutes of the Committee on Special Education.

Seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

Items for Board Action:

Resolution offered by Beth Linderman.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Watertown City School District (the "Board") has considered the effect upon the environment of proposed capital work, including but not limited to the following:

Improvements and renovations to the infrastructure, mechanical systems, buildings and grounds at the District's H.T. Wiley Intermediate School, Case Middle School and Watertown High School.

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the scope of the project and has further received and considered the advice of its architects with respect to the potential for environmental impacts resulting from the proposed action; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the Proposed Action with respect to the Type II criteria set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 617.5(c), now therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Education as follows:

1. The Proposed Action does not exceed thresholds established under 6 NYCRR Part 617, State Environmental Quality Review Act, (SEQRA).
2. The Board hereby determines the Proposed Action as a Type II action in accordance with the SEQRA regulations.
3. No further review of the Proposed Action is required under SEQRA.
4. This resolution shall be effective immediately.

Seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

WHEREAS, school districts are required to report their tax cap calculation to the Office of the State Comptroller the State Education Department and the Office of Taxation and Finance by March 1.

WHEREAS, the tax levy limit calculation for the '21-'22 school year is 1.82%.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that '21-'22 calculation tax levy limit calculation, as per the attached spreadsheet, is hereby approved.

Seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

RESOLVED, that the approval of the Memorandum of Agreement by and between the Superintendent of Schools of the Watertown City School District Board of Education and the Jefferson County Board of Elections for the Budget Vote/School Board Elections on May 18, 2021 as per the attached is hereby approved.

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

Resolution offered by Nancy Henry.

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

RETIREMENT

A	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Commeret, Tanna	Cook Manager	3/8/2021	25 ½

RESIGNATION

B	Name	Title	Effective Date	Years
1	Sibley, Kimberly	Noon Monitor	2/12/2021	3 months

APPOINTMENT – LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE

D	Name	Title (Tenure Area)	% FTE	Effective Date	Ending Date
1	Velasquez, Anthony	Early Childhood Ed 1-6	100	2/24/2021	6/30/2021

APPOINTMENT – PROBATIONARY (INSTRUCTIONAL)

C	Name	Title (Tenure Area)	Effective Date	Ending Date	Certification Status	Salary
1	Lofberg, Jessica	Elementary	2/24/2021	2/23/2025	Childhood Ed (1-6), Initial	\$51,117 (F-1)

APPOINTMENT – NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SUBSTITUTE

E	Name	Effective Date	Ending Date
1	Sibley, Kimberly	2/22/2021	6/30/2021

APPOINTMENTS – INTRAMURAL SUPERVISORS

I	Name	Sport	Effective Date	Hourly Rate
1	Dickinson, Carissa	High School Girls Volleyball	2/24/2021	\$22.45/hr
2	Navarra, Brian	Middle/High School Boys Lacrosse	2/24/2021	\$22.45/hr
3	Simser, Shane	Middle/High School Boys Lacrosse	2/24/2021	\$22.45/hr

Seconded by Culley Gosier and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Suzanne Renzi-Falge.

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of Superintendent of Schools, Patricia B. LaBarr, Joshua Hartshorne be approved, effective December 15, 2020, for a permanent appointment in the competitive class title of School Business Manager under the Rules of the Watertown City Civil Service pursuant to the requirements of Civil Service Law section 61.

Seconded by Jason Harrington and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Beth Linderman.

RESOLVED That the proposed new courses: *Mechatronics, Family Adventure Wellness, Explorations in Data Science* and *History Through Film-Global* for the 2021-22 school year at Watertown High School are hereby approved.

Seconded by Michael Stuchen and carried; all voting aye.

Resolution offered by Jason Harrington.

RESOLVED, that the approval of Extra-Curricular Advisor, Rebecca Wright, Student Council Advisor, at Watertown High School is hereby approved.

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

Executive Session

At 6:35pm President Mesires asked for a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss the Medical Examination Pursuant to NYS Education Law Section 913. Motion was made by Culley Gosier and seconded by Nancy Henry and carried; all voting aye.

Open Session

At 6:42pm a motion was made by Beth Linderman to return to Open Session; seconded by Jason Harrington 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, February 23, 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 1375 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 Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

END OF RESOLUTIONS

Items for Discussion/Information:

2021-2022 School Calendar

The Board members had a discussion about the proposed 2021-22 school calendar that was presented to them. Union leaders have had a chance to review the calendar as well, prior to this meeting. The only comment received from the union leaders pertained to the Watertown Education Association and possibly switching December 23 and April 18. They were reminded that April 18 serves as Easter Monday, which is typically a date requested by the Teachers Union to be

off due to the large amount of staff that travel for the holiday. It's been decided to leave it as it is for now. This calendar is consistent with the Jeff-Lewis BOCES calendar. Superintendent LaBarr noted that on this calendar June 20 will represent the Juneteenth holiday observation. Assistant Superintendent Stacey Eger-Converse spoke about the introduction of Trimester grading dates for K-4, which is new this year. This will help relieve diving into formal assessments and report cards in the first nine weeks of school. This is all in efforts to devote more focus to student's social emotional wellbeing as they transition into the next grade level. The Board members all agree at this point to move forward with this proposed School Calendar.

Superintendent of Schools Report: Patricia B. LaBarr

- ❖ Superintendent LaBarr thanked Mr. Rande Richardson and Mr. Terry Gonseth for their presentations this evening. She feels that especially now, it's a great time to celebrate previous graduates with all of the good they've done in the world. More updates following the next Hall of Achievement meeting on Thursday.
- ❖ The past two days have gone well with some of the district's remote students returning to school to the hybrid model. There have been reports that the guidance for social distancing might change from 6 ft. to 3 ft. She continues to watch for more guidance on that from the CDC.
- ❖ The district's new phone system is up and running. There were a few glitches that have been resolved. The Superintendent thanked Mr. Jeff Wood, Mr. Dave Campbell, and the entire technology team for their efforts in helping the transition go smoothly.
- ❖ Mr. Craig Orvis provided the Superintendent with a Food Service Department report that Mrs. LaBarr shared with the members. The report is a breakdown of the number of meals that have been served to remote and hybrid students.
- ❖ She updated the board members on a recent study that was brought to her attention by Rachel Burt with the Watertown Daily Times. The survey was conducted by the New York Coalition for Open Government and focused on school board meetings conducted between January through June 2020 on a number of NYS school districts. It highlighted not only the number of Executive Sessions each district held during that period of time, but the verbiage in which they used to pivot from Open Session to Executive Session.
- ❖ The next meeting will start with a Public Hearing for the District Wide Safety Plan, which has been posted to the district website for public review. Comments to the plan can be made to communications@watertowncsd.org. The Pandemic piece is the only difference to the Plan since it was originally presented in the Fall.
- ❖ Additionally, she gave a brief update on Sports. As of now there are 4 scheduled girls' and boys' basketball games, 3 Volleyball games, and 2 wrestling matches. The boys modified and varsity swimming is going well. The Frontier League is looking at adjusting the end date of winter season and the start of Fall 2 season.
- ❖ She gave an update on vaccines for staff members. She's working with Jefferson County Public Health in order to schedule a clinic on a Saturday, making it more accessible to faculty and staff. NYS is coming out with the directive for school districts to start reporting the number of teachers that have already received the vaccine. Once some more specific guidance comes out she plans to work with Mr. Steve Jennings from JCPH to start that reporting.

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Report: Stacey Eger-Converse

- ❖ Ms. Eger-Converse began by reporting that the state guidance indicates that students will be required to take State Assessments (Grades 3-8 ELA and Math, Grades 4 and 8 Science

Assessment and Regents examinations for ELA and Math) this year for the purpose of a measurement of student performance. The District is awaiting more guidance from NYS Education Department given the flexibility parameter that the federal government has provided.

- ❖ She distributed a statement to the members regarding retention for 2021-22 school year. She had the assistance of the K-6 principals. Evidence suggests that there is no actual return academically on students being retained. A statement will go out to the community on Friday regarding academic retention.
- ❖ Summer take home reading will be offered again this summer for K-8 students. Along with continuing the virtual Strive for Five activities for students. This summer she is focusing on scheduling in-person K-8 summer school programming in expanded capacity. Summer programming will also be offered for 7-12.
- ❖ Progress of professional development calendar along with the summer school schedule will be presented to the Board members at a future meeting.
- ❖ The *Blindspot* book study is turning out to be a very positive event with nice open conversations and shared experiences.
- ❖ She finished by mentioning the upcoming spirit week, the week of March 10. District wide PBIS event where students can display the "We are Watertown" logo. Additional information about this is posted to ParentSquare for families.

Assistant Superintendent of Personnel & Student Services Report: Tina Lane

- ❖ Ms. Lane began by mentioning that the North Country Family Health Center clinic at North Elementary is doing COVID testing for the district's students.
- ❖ There has been a downward spiral in COVID numbers district wide. To date this brings the district to a total of 70 students and 35 staff, overall, that have tested positive.
- ❖ A meeting with the districts medical directors right before February break focused on physicals for sports. Each sport requires a separate plan. The medical directors have reviewed the plans and have given some feedback on those. She thanks them, along with the district's nurses, for their help with the sports plans.
- ❖ She reported that employment openings for Fall were posted today.

School Business Manager Report: Joshua Hartshorne

- ❖ Mr. Hartshorne reported that it's been a busy few weeks since the last Board meeting. The 2020 Special Ed Summer STAC's (System to Track and Account for Children) are now complete.
- ❖ The CARES has been approved. The district has received about \$472k up front, which is about 20%.
- ❖ SharedWork Program began this week in the Cafeteria Unit.
- ❖ He met with Fiscal Advisors to find out where the district can get to while maintaining a \$0 additional tax levy.
- ❖ Additionally, he's still waiting on the finalized numbers from the Construction Manager.
- ❖ The tax levy calculation will be filed this week. He thanked the Board for approving the tax levy at this meeting.
- ❖ He also reports that GASB 75 audit has begun for Other Postemployment Benefits.
- ❖ He has a rough draft of the budget that will be presented at the March 2 Board meeting.

Upcoming Dates

President Mesires reviewed a few upcoming dates and meetings.

Suzanne Renzi-Falge made an announcement regarding the upcoming virtual art show, which is a collaboration between the Watertown City School District and the Flower Memorial Library. More information is posted to the district website, ParentSquare, and the Flower Memorial Library website.

Adjournment

At 7:20pm, with no further business, President Mesires asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Jason Harrington and seconded by Michael Struchen and carried; all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michelle R. Gravelle

District Clerk