

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
929 Lakeshore Drive  
Leesport, PA 19533-8631

MINUTES

October 25, 2021

1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, G. Dane Miller, in the LGI Room/Auditorium of the Schuylkill Valley Middle School.

1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

1.2 ROLL CALL

Members Present: Paul L. Bendigo, Robert M. Dempsey, Nicoleen M. Kleffel, Linda R. Lash, George H. Mertz III, G. Dane Miller, Kevin Raudenbush, Alfonso F. Rossi

Members Absent: David E. Moll

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Treasurer: Michelle Kauffman (not present)

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Janet Heilman, Michael Billman, Robin Brightbill, Candice Kehres, Lacey Smey, Jason Williams

Also present were Lucas Blatt, Jr., Charles Witters and Jason Witters from Boy Scout Troop #103.

1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 27, 2021, and to approve the minutes of the special meeting of October 18, 2021, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

1.4 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Miller reported that the Board met in executive session on October 25, 2021, prior to the Board meeting, for litigation matters.

2.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 PRESIDENT – *G. Dane Miller*

Mr. Miller stated that there were Boy Scouts in attendance at the meeting and noted that Peters Creek, Lake Ontelaunee is an amazing place and may possibly be available in the future for teachers and students as a field trip destination. There was a brief meeting on October 23 with Mr. Mitch Gaul from the middle school as the host and hopefully this will lead to bigger things in the future.

2.2 SECRETARY – *Linda R. Lash*

Mrs. Lash reported that the final PSBA election results were as follows: David Schaap, President-Elect; Allison Mathis – Vice President; Richard Frerichs, William LaCoff and Nathan Mains – Insurance Trust Trustees.

**2.3 BERKS COUNTY I.U. BOARD – Linda R. Lash**

Mrs. Lash reported that their last meeting was held on Thursday, October 21. The BCIU is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year of service. The BCIU will be going through a cyber security and data privacy multi-factor authentication for all of their employees. They also reviewed some of the current legislation news including the White House outlining the COVID-19 vaccination plans for children ages 5-11. At the present time there are no mandates for this nor does the state have any timeline or desire to put mandates in place at this time. Their next meeting will be held on November 18.

**2.4 BERKS CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER – George H. Mertz III**

Mr. Mertz reported that their next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 27.

**2.5 TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – David E. Moll**

Mr. Bendigo reported that their next meeting will be in three months.

**2.6 PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION LIAISON – Linda R. Lash**

Mrs. Lash stated that she attended the Monthly Liaison President's meeting on October 13. The topic was holding public meetings and best practices for school directors including staying on the topic of the agenda and that it is the board's meeting and not the audience's meeting. She noted that it would be good if all board members read the Essentials for Parliamentary Procedure. As Mr. Miller stated, if you don't wear a mask the Board can change its masking format and the Board can reconvene at another time. If you don't wear a mask, the Board can file charges which would be a first-degree misdemeanor. At the monthly board member meeting they learned more about bills that were presented including HB 1254 which was a voucher bill for students to use any public or non-public school if no full-time in-person instruction was available. This bill failed, 94-105. They are also working on Hurricane Ida relief, and there were election reform bills that were introduced as well. SB 1660 which would allow a school board to put into operation temporary emergency provisions for 60 days when an emergency results in five consecutive days being unable to provide in-person instruction. This bill is still sitting in the senate. HB 1892 was approved by the House Education Committee to make the payments to charter schools accurate and try to resolve disputes over charter school payments. HB 1332 would mandate that Pennsylvania's schools make all instructional materials, techniques, and syllabi publicly available beginning with the 2022-23 school year. This is an unfunded mandate and clearly explains the definition of curriculum, in this case, which is that there is an internet link or title for every textbook, a course syllabus, and state academic standards for each course. No other state at this time requires any of this information from their school districts. The IDEA is not fully federally funded at this time however we do have Sen. Boyle and Sen. Fitzpatrick who are working with PSBA. There will be a November 9 IDEA webinar and they are trying to get this funded so that school districts across the nation will have this money.

**3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Kristin Waldrop, Ontelaunee Township – Administrative staff retention  
Scott Rickert, Bern Township – Parental choice  
Amanda Knoblauch, Ontelaunee Township – CRT in schools  
Kelly Steinke, Bern Township – Topics of past school board meetings  
Olivia Steinke, Bern Township – Masking at the middle school dance  
Angela Davis, Centre Township – Masking  
Jeremy Hoagland, Ontelaunee Township – Vaccine  
Daniel Yobb, Ontelaunee Township - Masking  
Heather Yobb, Ontelaunee Township – Masking  
Victoria Grebloski, Ontelaunee Township – Masking  
Charles Grebloski, Ontelaunee Township – Election  
John Newton, Ontelaunee Township – Board transparency

**BOARD**

Settlement Agreement and Release

- 4.1 The Board is requested to consider and approve the Settlement Agreement and Release between the parents, individually on their own behalf and on behalf of their minor child, Student #643, as proposed, and further, authorizes the Board President and Board Secretary to execute the Settlement Agreement and Release on behalf of the District.

**Board Action: Moved by Robert Dempsey and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the Settlement Agreement and Release between the parents, individually on their own behalf and on behalf of their minor child, Student #643, as proposed, and further, authorizes the Board President and Board Secretary to execute the Settlement Agreement and Release on behalf of the District.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

5.0 **SUPERINTENDENT**

Monthly Reports

- 5.1 The following monthly reports have been provided to the Board:

- 5.1.1 Enrollment Year-To-Date
- 5.1.2 Principals' Report
- 5.1.3 Dropout Report

Superintendent's Update

- 5.2 Dr. Heilman noted that the 2021 SVSD Annual Report has been published. She introduced Ms. Danielle Sabulsky, SV Digital Content and Marketing Specialist, who discussed some of the highlights of the report. Ms. Sabulsky stated that she was happy to announce that the 2021 Annual Report is available on the district's website home page under site shortcuts. This report allows the community to see some of the district's many accomplishments. There is a section called "Fast Facts" which shows our BCTC enrollment increased from 11% to 15% since the last report in 2019 and our graduation rate increased 1%. The last page shows updated facts and photos. Our list of community service organizations has increased as well as the clubs offered by the high school and middle school. She thanked everyone who provided information for the report, and also Julie Bunnick at the BCIU for designing the report.

Dr. Heilman stated that she will be returning to the November Board meeting as the Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Cathy Taschner will be starting as the Superintendent effective Monday, November 1, 2021. Dr. Heilman looks forward to working with Dr. Taschner, the leadership group, parents and students to continue our efforts at Schuylkill Valley.

6.0 **POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

***Summary of Committee Deliberations – George H. Mertz III***

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 6:36 p.m. on Monday, October 18, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, November 8, 2021.

***Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration***

**Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:**

- 6.1 Accepts, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignation of Mrs. Kate Costenbader, Supervisor of Special Education, effective November 25, 2021.

**Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Robert Dempsey to accept the resignation in Item 6.1, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.2 Approves the employment of the following (all elections are contingent upon receipt and district approval of all necessary pre-employment forms, certification, state-mandated physical examinations, clearances, etc.):

6.2.1 Mrs. Sallie Gigliotti, Long-Term Substitute Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, Bachelor's, Step 1, \$50,803 (prorated for actual days worked), to fill the vacancy created by the leave of absence of Ms. Dana Carter, effective September 13, 2021, through approximately November 30, 2021.

6.2.2 Mrs. Caitlin Dieffenbach, Part-Time Food Services Worker, 4 hours per day at an hourly rate of \$11.00, to fill the vacancy created by the transfer of Mrs. Magdalena Twardenga Koss, effective October 6, 2021.

6.2.3 Additional Fall coaches for the 2021-22 school year.

6.2.4 Additional bus driver utilized by Eshelman Transportation for the 2021-22 school year.

6.2.5 Substitutes for the 2021-22 school year.

6.2.6 Volunteers for the 2021-22 school year.

6.2.7 Ms. Melissa Miller, Part-Time Lunchroom Aide at the Elementary School, 3 hours per day at an hourly rate of \$11.00, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs. Barbara Good, effective date to be determined.

6.2.8 Additional community aquatics staff for the 2021-22 school year.

6.2.9 Mrs. Paula Marple, Part-Time Food Services Worker, 4 hours per day at an hourly rate of \$11.00, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs. Caitlin Dieffenbach, effective date to be determined.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the employment in Items 6.2.1 through and including 6.2.9, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.3 Approves the leave of absence for Mrs. Lisa Lawson, Part-Time Food Services Worker, effective August 30, 2021, through approximately November 19, 2021.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the leave of absence in Item 6.3, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.4 Approves the conference request from Ms. Judy Strausser to attend the 2021 A/CAPA Fall Conference from October 27-28, 2021 in Hershey, PA, at a cost of \$419.00.
- 6.5 Approves the conference request from Mr. Casey Blankenbiller to attend the PASBO Facilities, Transportation and Safety Conference from November 4-5, 2021, in Lancaster, PA, at a cost of \$220.00

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the conference requests in Items 6.4 and 6.5, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.6 Accepts, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignation of Mrs. Caitlin Dieffenbach, Part-Time Food Services Worker, effective October 19, 2021.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to accept the resignation in Item 6.6, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## 7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

### *Summary of Committee Deliberations – Kevin Raudenbush*

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 6:51 p.m. on Monday, October 18, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, November 8, 2021.

### *Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration*

**Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:**

- 7.1 Approves ratification of the agreement with KidsPeace who provided extended school year services for Student #4244 from July 6, 2021 through August 16, 2021, at the rates provided.

**Board Action: Moved by Kevin Raudenbush and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve ratification of the agreement in Item 7.1, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 7.2 Approves the contract with Jam on Sound Productions, Inc., for possible middle school dances that may be scheduled in the 2021-22 school year. NOTE: If approved, the student activities account will be used for payment(s), which is run through student council at the middle school.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the contract in Item 7.2, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 7.3 Approves the Letter of Intent to participate in the Berks County DocuSign Consortium for one year to procure DocuSign envelopes and licensing.

**Board Action: Moved by Kevin Raudenbush and seconded by George Mertz to approve the Letter of Intent in Item 7.3, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE**

***Summary of Committee Deliberations – David E. Moll***

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 6:53 p.m. on Monday, October 18, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, November 8, 2021.

***Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration***

**Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:**

- 8.1 Approves/ratifies the payment of bills in the following amounts from September 17, 2021, to October 26, 2021, as presented.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$902,129.59</b>
<b>CAFETERIA FUND</b>	<b>\$39,335.28</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$941,464.87</b>

**Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1 from September 17, 2021, to October 26, 2021, as presented.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.2 Approves the October 2021 budget transfers in the amount of \$35,776.88.

**Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the October 2021 budget transfers in the amount of \$35,776.88.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.3 Approves the CAFCO Participation Agreement for the district’s food service bid, being offered through the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 and facilitated by IU13 Collaborative Services, effective for fiscal year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

**Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the CAFCO Participation Agreement for the district’s food service bid, being offered through the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 and facilitated by IU13 Collaborative Services, effective for fiscal year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.4 Approves accepting a donation of \$465 from United Health Group (in conjunction with Mr. David Moll, school board member), to be used for the middle school Redware program.

**Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to approve accepting a donation of \$465 from United Health Group (in conjunction with Mr. David Moll, school board member), to be used for the middle school Redware program.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

9.0 **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

***Summary of Committee Deliberations – Alfonso F. Rossi***

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met at 6:59 p.m. on Monday, October 18, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, November 8, 2021.

***Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration***

**Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:**

- 9.1 Approves the sale of the aerator for \$625.00, and the plow for \$3,200.00. Both items are scheduled for pickup after the October 25, 2021 Board meeting.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve the sale of the aerator for \$625.00, and the plow for \$3,200.00. Both items are scheduled for pickup after the October 25, 2021 Board meeting.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 9.2 Approves a motion to add an agenda item to consider the EI Associates contract to generate the design documents for the elementary school roof repair.

**Board Action: Moved by Alfonso Rossi and seconded by George Mertz to approve a motion to add an agenda item to consider the EI Associates contract to generate the design documents for the elementary school roof repair.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 9.3 Approves accepting the professional services proposal from EI Associates, at a cost not to exceed \$28,000.00, to generate the design documents for the elementary school roof repair, in accordance with their October 21, 2021 proposal.

**Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve accepting the professional services proposal from EI Associates, at a cost not to exceed \$28,000.00, to generate the design documents for the elementary school roof repair, in accordance with their October 21, 2021 proposal.**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Rossi**  
**Nays: Raudenbush**

**Motion carried.**

**10.0 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

***Summary of Committee Deliberations – Nicoleen M. Kleffel***

The Extracurricular Activities Committee met at 7:14 p.m. on Monday, October 18, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, November 8, 2021.

***Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration***

There were no Committee recommendations.

**11.0 OTHER BUSINESS/GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Mr. Dempsey noted that there have been a number of speakers over the last few board meetings who have taken the opportunity to support write-in candidates in the upcoming school board election. He took a few minutes to support two of the candidates who have earned a place on the ballot, Linda Lash and Nici Kleffel. Mrs. Lash has served the Schuylkill Valley School District, it's community and students for almost 24 years. Mr. Dempsey has had the pleasure of serving with her for many of those years. There is no one on this board who has committed themselves to board service more than Mrs. Lash. She has served as board secretary, as a member of the BCIU board of directors, our PSBA liaison, and a COLA representative. She also serves on several board committees. Mrs. Lash works tirelessly to keep the board informed of legislative actions affecting our schools including those across the county and state. She has attended countless seminars, conferences, webinars and Zoom meetings. In her 24 years of board service Mr. Dempsey conservatively estimates that she has attended over 550 school board meetings and cast thousands of votes on important issues affecting the taxpayers and students of Schuylkill Valley. He stated with confidence that Mrs. Lash has always put students first. Her years of experience, dedication and thoughtful decision make her the best choice for the voters in this community to continue as a school director. He strongly supports both Mrs. Lash and Mrs. Kleffel in their efforts to continue their dedicated service to the Schuylkill Valley community.

**12.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Dempsey requested an executive session regarding a personnel matter. Mr. Miller confirmed the Board would meet in executive session following the adjournment of the meeting.

**13.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by George Mertz, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned**

**Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Raudenbush, Rossi**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

  
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Linda R. Lash, Secretary  
Board of School Directors