

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

MINUTES

May 18, 2020

1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, G. Dane Miller, held online via Zoom Meeting Room.

1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

1.2 ROLL CALL

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

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Treasurer: Changming Wang

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present (online): Dr. Cynthia S. Mierzejewski, Michael Billman, Casey Blankenbiller, Robin Brightbill, Jeremy Crills, Stephanie Deibler, Brian Feick, Dawn Harris, Dr. Janet Heilman, Joshua Kuehner, Courtney Maguire, Michael Mitchell, Changming Wang, Dr. Sarah Yoder, Jason Williams

1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve the minutes of the special meeting of April 20, 2020, and to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 27, 2020, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

2.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 PRESIDENT – G. Dane Miller

Mr. Miller reported that he and Mrs. Lash have been on several PSBA forums in the last few weeks. He has been forwarding notes to the Board regarding these forums and will continue to do so. He noted that many of the districts in the Philadelphia region are planning for an alternating day schedule in the fall with the biggest problem being the school busses and addressing social distancing issues.

2.2 SECRETARY – Linda R. Lash

No report.

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

Mrs. Lash reported that their next meeting is on May 21.

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

Mr. Mertz reported that the BCTC Joint Operating Committee approved reducing the district's share of the BCTC budget from 1.79% to .5%, which is a savings of about \$7,238. The new

welding shop is almost complete and it should be open in time for the new school year. There was a suicide prevention message contest open to the public and one of the winners was Schuylkill Valley student Mason Clery, whose message will be used by the state for teen suicide prevention. Mr. Mertz also reviewed the many awards received by senior Schuylkill Valley students.

2.5 TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – David E. Moll

Mr. Moll reported that they did not meet but are completing necessary communications online.

2.6 PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION LIAISON – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash stated that she attended a virtual state-wide legislative advisory council meeting on May 14 which featured John Callahan from PSBA. There were some concerns for schools going forward which include districts being funded properly; a COVID flare-up in the fall; and opening buildings. There were also questions regarding the state approving a 5-month or 7-month budget and would the districts receive all of their basic education funding. There are many concerns including older teachers returning in the fall, anyone with medical issues, and bus drivers. They also discussed reducing the number of mandates and postponing or eliminating graduation requirements for students not in the class of 2020.

3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

No one addressed the Board.

4.0 BOARD

Policy Waiver

4.1 The Board is requested to consider and approve waiving Policy 006.1, Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications.

Board Action: Moved by Robert Dempsey and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve waiving Policy 006.1, Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Settlement Agreement and Release

4.2 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 #1586, 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 Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the Settlement Agreement and Release between the parents, individually on their own behalf and on behalf of their minor child, Student #1586, 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, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

PSBA 2020 Delegate Assembly Participant

4.3 The annual PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference will be held in a virtual format in October 2020, and the PSBA Delegate Assembly will be held on November 7, 2020.

The Board is requested to consider appointing Mrs. Linda Lash as the PSBA delegate assembly participant representing the school district on November 7, 2020.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve appointing Mrs. Linda Lash as the PSBA delegate assembly participant representing the school district on November 7, 2020.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, 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 Dropout Report

Dr. Mierzejewski stated that we currently have a total of 2,113 students.

State Mandates Checklist

5.2 Dr. Mierzejewski provided a checklist that was compiled by the BCIU and includes sections on training/drills, personnel, reporting, and policies. There is a lot of required training and mandated training does become cumbersome when you add those pieces to all of the other things that we have.

Impact of COVID19 Updates

5.3 Dr. Mierzejewski stated that most important during this time is our continuity of education. We submitted the district's Continuity of Education Plan stating that we are continuing with online education through the end of this school year. There have been many individuals that are working very hard on this to make it happen. If we start next year online, we have learned a great deal and will be able to implement any lessons learned. There have been many conversations around next year, but it is too soon to have any decisions made. The state will provide parameters and guidelines. Currently we have CDC procedures that we need to follow. In order to reopen we must have CDC procedures in place including the hygiene of the buildings, the health of the students and staff, the precautions that are put in place, and training and communications.

On the state level there will be a back-to-school task force which plans to produce a report by June 19 which will include detailed guidelines, suggestions and resources for returning to school. There has also been a lot of state legislation including Act 13 which gave us much legislation around school district employees to be paid no more or no less than they would normally expect to be paid. A legislative piece that just came out is in regard to FBI fingerprinting, which has the deadline extended to December 31 for anyone whose clearance has currently expired. It will be required as soon as individuals are able to obtain a new clearance pending the lifting of COVID restrictions.

There have been many county-wide discussions including the superintendents meeting at least twice a week. Their discussions include students and what is best for them; the health and welfare of the staff; and how they can make things efficient in a unified manner. When making decisions they use the state guidelines in the three-phase metric. Berks County is currently in the red phase, and they use the guidelines under that metric. We will not be able to open schools until the green phase which has guidelines to follow but does not have social restrictions.

Mr. Mitchell stated that schools are doing many different things around graduation and prom. At this point we still want to do our traditional graduation ceremony, however that many not happen in July or August. With the assistance of Dr. Sarah Yoder, we were able to get into a consortium with Schuylkill County schools for a virtual ceremony at a very reduced rate. This will allow for a virtual graduation ceremony on June 5. Mrs. Cammauf and Mr. Bagenstose, senior class advisors, arranged for each student to record a video message and have it posted online. The graduation ceremony speakers will also do their speeches online. We will arrange for the students to receive their diplomas and graduation packets on June 6. The regular ceremony is scheduled to be held on July 30 provided that we reach the green phase. If not, then we will continue to postpone the ceremony until a later date. Prom has been scheduled for July 11 but it does not look like that will happen, so that may be pushed back further. Students have been notified of these dates as well and we will also continue the tradition of Panther Impact Awards. We are trying to keep this as nice as we can for our seniors.

Dr. Mierzejewski stated that we have continued to do our grab-and-go food service on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The highest day that we have had is 430 students and we have been averaging 350-400 students per day. Most meals are picked up by families and the Conner Kleffel Memorial Foundation is also doing delivery, if needed, on their own. This is not associated with the school.

Moving forward, we have to think about what's going to be happening next year. We are putting together a variety of plans and we're having a lot of conversations around them including the best path. Many students will be at different places along their learning curve and we want to be able to meet all of their needs. The administrators are also discussing some type of summer options and resources that we can be providing for students. There are online pieces as we will not be able to do anything in person in the summer and everything will need to be virtual. The same will apply to our ESY program. It will begin with the teachers at the end of the school year during the in-service days. We are going to be asking the teachers what it will look like for our students (whether in person or virtually) and how are we going to be able to hit all of the students where they are along the spectrum.

Dr. Mierzejewski noted that one of the big impacts this is having on the district is our budget. The impression may be that the district is saving money however almost 80% of the budget is salaries and benefits. We are still responsible for all of that through Act 13. In addition, revenue losses are building across the state at about \$1 billion for the next school year. The state will not be able to counter what we're losing. We are hoping for flat funding for basic education funding and special education funding. Mr. Miller added that Schuylkill Valley is to be congratulated for being way ahead of the curve as far as getting our online instruction in place and out to students.

6.0 POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Summary of Committee Deliberations – George H. Mertz III

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 6:32 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2020, via Zoom Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 15, 2020.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 6.1** Accepts, with best wishes for the future, the following resignations due to retirement effective with the last day of the 2019-20 school term unless otherwise noted:

- 6.1.1** Mr. Scott Hagy, Special Education Paraprofessional at the High School.

- 6.1.2** Dr. Deborah Schmeck, Gifted Teacher at the Elementary School & Middle School.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Paul Bendigo to accept, with best wishes for the future, the resignations due to retirement in Items 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, 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** Mr. Micah Storms, Kindergarten Teacher at the Elementary School, Bachelor's, Step 3, \$51,772, to fill the vacancy created by the transfer of Ms. Kathleen Deren, effective with the start of the 2020-21 school year

- 6.2.2** Mr. Scott Horning, Part-Time Temporary IT Summer Intern, at an hourly rate of pay of \$12.00, effective approximately June 8, 2020, through no later than August 28, 2020.

- 6.2.3** Volunteer for the 2020-21 school year.

- 6.2.4** Mrs. Susan Christman as the recording secretary to the Board of School Directors, to be paid \$125 per meeting for the 2020-21 school year.

- 6.2.5** Mrs. Changming Wang as the treasurer to the Board of School Directors for the 2020-21 school year.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to approve the employment in Items 6.2.1 through and including 6.2.5, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.3** Approves the adoption of the online Policies and Procedures Handbook for Parents and Students for the 2020-2021 school year, subject to any further revisions to policies and/or inclusion of new policies in the handbook.

Board Action: Moved by Robert Dempsey and seconded by George Mertz to approve the adoption of the online Policies and Procedures Handbook for Parents and Students for the 2020-2021 school year, subject to any further revisions to policies and/or inclusion of new policies in the handbook.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.4** Reviewed present Policy 918: Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Robert Dempsey to approve the review of present Policy 918: Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.5** Approves the following days to be worked between the guidance counselors at each building, from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, paid per diem:

Elementary School Guidance Counselors - 12 total days
Middle School Guidance Counselors - 8 total days
High School Guidance Counselors – 24 total days

Approves a total of 26 days to be worked between the three psychologists, from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, paid per diem.

Total Estimated Cost: \$40,565.90

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the days worked for the guidance counselors and school psychologists in Item 6.5, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.6** Approves the appointment of Mr. Jeremy Crills as School Safety and Security Coordinator as per Act 44 of 2018, effective July 1, 2020. The School Safety and Security Coordinator is tasked with reviewing the school entity's policies and procedures, coordinating training, and resources for students and staff, coordinating school safety and security assessments, making reports to the Board of School Directors on current safety and security practices of the school, and serving as the liaison to the School Safety and Security Committee, PDE, law enforcement and other organizations on matters of school safety and security. Details on these duties can be found in Section 1309-B of Act 44.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Robert Dempsey to approve the appointment of Mr. Jeremy Crills as School Safety and Security Coordinator as per Act 44 of 2018, effective July 1, 2020.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.7** Approves the appointment of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys as the school district solicitor for the 2020-2021 school year, according to the schedule of fees and services outlined in their proposal.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by David Moll to approve the appointment of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys as the school district solicitor for the 2020-2021 school year, according to the schedule of fees and services outlined in their proposal.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.8** Accepts, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignation of Ms. Heather Forrer, Part-Time Reading Paraprofessional at the Elementary School, effective June 8, 2020.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by David Moll to accept, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignation of Ms. Heather Forrer, Part-Time Reading Paraprofessional at the Elementary School, effective June 8, 2020.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.9** 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.):

6.9.1 Ms. Kali Antalosky, English Teacher at the High School, Bachelor's, Step 1, \$49,553, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Mrs. Patricia Kramer, effective with the start of the 2020-21 school year.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by David Moll to approve the employment in Item 6.9.1, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.10** Approves the job description for the position of Director of Pupil Services & Learning.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the job description for the position of Director of Pupil Services & Learning.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.11** Approves the job description for the position of Supervisor of Special Education.

Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by George Mertz to approve the job description for the position of Supervisor of Special Education.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Kevin Raudenbush

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 6:45 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2020, via Zoom Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 15, 2020.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 7.1** Approves the non-refundable \$20 Chromebook protection plan for the 2020-2021 school year, to be assessed to middle school and high school students who will take their student issued Chromebook home. The non-refundable \$20 Chromebook protection plan will be optional to students who keep their Chromebook at the elementary school, middle school, and high school to have protection in the event of an incident during the school day.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve the non-refundable \$20 Chromebook protection plan for the 2020-2021 school year, to be assessed to middle school and high school students who will take their student issued Chromebook home, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7.2** Approves the agreement with Educational Based Services (EBS) to provide the following services from August 24, 2020 through June 11, 2021, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education & Pupil Services to execute the agreement.

- Occupational Therapist \$62 per hour, up to 35 hours per week
- Speech Language Pathologist \$64 per hour, up to 38 hours per week

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the agreement in Item 7.2, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7.3** Approves the legal services consultation agreement with Sweet, Stevens, Katz and Williams LLP, for the 2020-21 school year, at a cost of \$10,000, to be used for special education matters, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education to execute the agreement.

Board Action: Moved by Robert Dempsey and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the legal services consultation agreement in Item 7.3, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7.4** Approves ratification of the tuition agreement with New Story to provide Student #3867 educational services for the 2019-20 school year, at the rates provided, from November 8, 2019, through January 3, 2020, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services to execute the agreement.

- 7.5** Approves ratification of the tuition agreement with New Story to provide Student #4089 educational services for the 2019-20 school year, at the rates provided, from February 5, 2020, through June 4, 2020, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services to execute the agreement.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to approve ratification of the tuition agreements in Items 7.4 and 7.5, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7.6** Approves accepting a grant from the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency, ID 32423, in the amount of \$35,000.00, to be used for vape sensing systems at the High School and signage at the Middle School.

Board Action: Moved by Kevin Raudenbush and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve accepting a grant from the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency, ID 32423, in the amount of \$35,000.00, to be used for vape sensing systems at the High School and signage at the Middle School.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7.7 Approves the addendum to the contract with Austill's Rehabilitation Services, Inc., to provide physical therapy services through June 30, 2023, at the rates listed, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education & Pupil Services to execute the agreement.
- 7.8 Approves the contract and agreement with River Rock Academy to provide alternative educational services for the 2020-2021 school year, at the rates provided, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education & Pupil Services to execute the agreements.
- 7.9 Approves the agreement with the Richard J. Caron Foundation to provide student assistant program services for the 2020-2021 school year, at the rates provided, from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education & Pupil Services to execute the agreement.

Board Action: Moved by Kevin Raudenbush and seconded by George Mertz to approve the actions in Items 7.7 through and including 7.9, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7.10 Approves the agreement with Educational Based Services (EBS) to provide the following services from August 24, 2020, through June 11, 2021, and further, authorizes the Director of Special Education & Pupil Services to execute the agreement.

- Board Certified Behavior Analyst \$83 per hour, up to 32 hours per week

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the agreement in Item 7.10, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE

Summary of Committee Deliberations – David E. Moll

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2020, via Zoom Meeting Room, and at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2020, via Zoom Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 15, 2020.

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 April 23, 2020, to May 19, 2020, as presented.

GENERAL FUND	\$234,137.57
TECHNOLOGY RESERVE FUND	\$600.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$234,737.57

Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by George Mertz to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1 from April 23, 2020, to May 19, 2020, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.2** Approves the Treasurer's Report and the Financial Reports for April 2020, as presented.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Robert Dempsey to approve the Treasurer's Report and the Financial Reports for April 2020, as presented.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.3** Discussion on budget alternatives for 2020-2021.

Mr. Feick stated that he provided four different options for the 2020-2021 budget. Option one would be a zero increase in taxes and one additional position of an LTS Kindergarten; option two would be a zero increase in taxes and all new proposed positions included which is 4.5 positions (one LTS Kindergarten, two guidance counselors, one emotional support teacher and one mid-year cyber director); option three would be a ½ mil increase with one additional position of an LTS Kindergarten; and option four would be a ½ mil increase and all new proposed positions. Option one would leave us with a 6.52% fund balance; option two would leave us with a 5.63% fund balance; option three would leave us with a 7.68% fund balance; and option four would leave us with a 6.78% fund balance.

Dr. Mierzejewski commented that the new positions include an emotional support teacher at the middle school, an LTS at the elementary school (either kindergarten or second grade depending on the numbers), two guidance counselors (one middle school and one high school), summer help for the custodial staff, and the new position of cyber director beginning mid-year. At this time, the district does not have an emotional support program and there is a big gap. The emotional support teacher would be serving our emotional support students who have the identification of emotional support needs. Having an emotional support teacher to be able to handle behavior plans and behavior issues with students goes beyond the emotional support classroom and that helps to benefit all of the program. The reason we are looking at the middle school to start is that the elementary school has some programs in place and some interventions in place to help them out a little bit more than we do at the elementary school. At the high school, the students have a higher engagement due to being in more high interest courses and doing more high interest work. Caseloads are determined by the state and we have several teachers at the middle school who are at their caseloads or beyond. Mr. Mitchell stated that if we approve an emotional support teacher at the middle school and have an emotional support classroom there, the students will most likely need the same thing when they get to high school. He asked the Board to consider adding an emotional support teacher and emotional support classroom at the high school as well.

Dr. Mierzejewski noted that in regard to the LTS position at the elementary school, the enrollment numbers were reviewed and they did look at the difference between having seven or eight classes. There is currently an LTS at the elementary school for the eighth classroom in

first grade which is still budgeted and they plan to keep this position. The LTS position may not be kindergarten, it may be second grade depending on how the numbers play out. The guidance positions at the middle school and high school have their hands full on a daily basis with a range of student issues. The two new counselor positions at the middle school and high school would take over mandated items including career readiness, LEA responsibilities around IEP's, assessment coordination for PSSA's and Keystone's, college admission pieces at the high school, and supporting the new truancy laws and plans process. There will also be student needs around the impact of the pandemic and the school closings, and these positions could provide assistance in that area as well. Dr. Mierzejewski stated that summer custodial help was discussed and possibly having some students assist part-time in this area.

Mr. Mitchell noted that in regard to the Cyber Director, the goal would be to save money and bring some of our cyber students back to Schuylkill Valley. There would be costs up front for adding an administrator, curriculum writing, and getting the program rolling but once we have students back, it could be a consistent savings for the district. Other Berks County districts have done this with huge savings and we believe we can do that here as well. Students will also be aligned with the district curriculum-wise as we have been developing our online curriculum throughout the pandemic. We would have more options for our students and save money in the long run. Mr. Dempsey asked if we were looking at a \$110,000 salary for the Cyber Director and Mr. Feick stated that was correct.

Mr. Miller added that the Board has until June to make any changes to the 2020-2021 General Fund Proposed Final Budget. He noted that he would prefer to put forth a bare bones budget at this time and add to it later. It's up to the Board as to what positions they would like to add to the budget. Mr. Bendigo commented that he does not feel comfortable with an unassigned fund balance of 5.66%. In his previous years on the Board, their biggest decisions were how much they were going to include in the budget according to how much the state was going to increase the district's funding. We are in very unusual times this year as to what could be impacting our revenue and he hates to see us in a situation where if we don't watch our expenditures in the 2020-21 budget, it will snowball the year after that. He believes we should be looking at what number we want in the unassigned fund balance and let the administrators decide which new positions they want to fill. He would like to see a 7% unassigned fund balance going into 2020-21. If the district wanted to give back to the local community, we could go with a district pay freeze in 2020-21 which would bring our unassigned fund balance close to 6.5%. Instead of the Board deciding which positions we think should be filled, this should be let up to the administrators and the Board should be picking a percentage of the unassigned fund balance that we want to move forward with. Mr. Miller noted to keep in mind that these are bargained contracts that the district has and it is very difficult to put a freeze in unilaterally. Mr. Bendigo added that if people would consider this it would be a good give-back to the community at this point in time.

Mrs. Lash stated that she believes the district needs an emotional support teacher as there has been much published about the effects the pandemic will have on children starting at the elementary level. She also does not want the district to lower its fund balance drastically and then have to rebuild it. Mr. Moll stated that he believes we should have a preliminary 2020-21 budget with no tax increase, add the one position for emotional support teacher, and then work out the rest. Mr. Mitchell added that the two guidance counselor positions would be much more important than an emotional support teacher. The guidance counselors could serve all of the students in need of services. Mr. Mertz stated that he believes all of the positions are important but we just cannot afford it. He is in favor of option one with a 6.52% fund balance.

Mr. Raudenbush stated that he would like to see a zero tax increase, add the two guidance counselors, and see what the district's fund balance would be with that suggestion. Mr. Feick noted that if we want to cut somewhere, could we have everyone take 5% off their supply budgets across the board as this would take another \$60,000 off. If we did that it would bring us down to a deficit of \$873,097 which is a 6.51% fund balance. This would cover two

new positions at Master's, Step 1, and would allow the administrators to decide which positions to fill. Mr. Moll added that the 5% cut in the supply budgets should be reasonable as when we bought our supplies for the 2019-20 school year, they were bought with the expectation that it would be a full school year.

Mr. Rossi asked if we could incentivize one of our staff members to work on the cyber school initiative, and if they are successful, they could fill the position. Mr. Mitchell noted that Mr. Crills has done a lot of work in the last eight weeks on the cyber initiative. However, with the extra work required for Mr. Crills, in addition to his current principal job, this would be very difficult and some type of stipend should be considered. He believes more students will take the cyber option, especially after the pandemic. He would like to move forward with this initiative and work with Mr. Crills and the administrative team to make this happen. They are all committed to making this happen however, when the time comes and the decision is made to do it, we'll need one person solely devoted to this at least in the beginning. Mr. Raudenbush noted that it is no small feat to start a cyber school. Mr. Miller added to keep in mind that the Board is basically looking at a dollar amount and either a tax increase or no tax increase. Mr. Feick noted that when the governor first proposed the budget there was a provision in it for every school to start their own cyber academy, however there is also a provision for offering grants to do so. Maybe this will come up that we can apply for a grant to get the cyber academy up and running. Mr. Bendigo asked what dollar amount brought the unassigned fund balance to 6.51% and Mr. Feick confirmed it was a deficit of \$873,097 with expenditures of \$40,869,031, which would include the two new positions at Master's, Step 1, and \$8,000 for summer help. Mr. Bendigo asked that an unassigned fund balance percentage the Board is comfortable with be included in the budget motion with the caveat that we stay at least above a 6.5% unassigned fund balance.

- 8.4** Approves the adoption of the 2020-2021 General Fund Proposed Final Budget in the amount of \$40,869,031 which includes no real estate tax increase, and a fund balance of no less than 6.5%.

Mr. Dempsey commented that his concern previously about this budget was that it was initially presented at a 5.63% fund balance which he thought was dangerously low. He concurs with Mr. Bendigo's concern that we should be somewhere in the vicinity of 7% but he will go along with the 6.5%. He is looking beyond this year's budget into the budget that will follow this with the deficit that will follow and he would be more in agreement with trying to keep the fund balance at a higher level. That is his concern and that is why he broached the subject of a tax increase in order to see the reaction of the Board.

Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by David Moll to approve the adoption of the 2020-2021 General Fund Proposed Final Budget in the amount of \$40,869,031 which includes no real estate tax increase, and a fund balance of no less than 6.5%.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.5** Approves the adoption of the 2020-2021 Food Service budget of \$967,446 with a student lunch price increase of \$0.10, and an adult lunch price increase of \$0.10.

Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by David Moll to approve the adoption of the 2020-2021 Food Service Budget of \$967,446 with a student lunch price increase of \$0.10, and an adult lunch price increase of \$0.10.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.6 Approves the appointment of Stifel as the district's underwriter for possible 2020 financing.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Robert Dempsey to approve the appointment of Stifel as the district's underwriter for possible 2020 financing.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

9.0 **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Alfonso F. Rossi

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met at 7:38 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2020, via Zoom Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 15, 2020.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

There were no Committee recommendations.

10.0 **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Nicoleen M. Kleffel

The Extracurricular Activities Committee met at 8:34 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2020, via Zoom Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 15, 2020.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

There were no Committee recommendations.

10.1 **Other (Old/New Business)**

Mrs. Kleffel asked if a Connect 5 could be sent out reminding everyone that Pride of Schuylkill Valley nominations are due by May 30.

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

Mr. Miller noted that he is checking into onsite Board meetings being held in June with social distancing in place. We must be approved by the state at that point and if individuals are not comfortable with this, there will still be the Zoom option available.

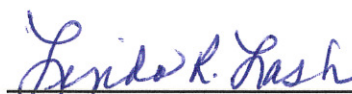
12.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by David Moll and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.



Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Board of School Directors