

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

**MINUTES**

**November 18, 2019**

- 1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the Board President, Kevin Raudenbush, in the LeRoy K. Seip Memorial Meeting Room of the Schuylkill Valley High School.**

**1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**1.2 ROLL CALL**

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

Members Absent: Paul L. Bendigo

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Treasurer: Changming Wang

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Cynthia S. Mierzejewski, Michael Billman, Robin Brightbill, Stephanie Deibler (arrived at 7:50 p.m.), Brian Feick, Dawn Harris, Courtney Maguire, Melissa Rhoads, Changming Wang

**1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 28, 2019.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**1.4 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Raudenbush reported that the Board met in executive session on November 11, 2019, for personnel matters, and on November 18, 2019, for personnel matters and litigation.

**1.5 RECOGNITION**

Mr. Raudenbush recognized Dr. Jay Melvin for 12 years of service on the Board of School Directors. He thanked Dr. Melvin for his dedication to the district and the students. Also recognized for their service on the Board were Robert M. Dempsey, 20 years of service; G. Dane Miller, 12 years of service; and Kevin Raudenbush, 12 years of service.

Dr. Mierzejewski stated that the Keystone State Literacy Association has thousands of members, many of whom are dedicated to the reading and writing skills of students, and to improving the literacy of all students across the Commonwealth. This year the Keystone State Literacy Association literacy award was given to a Schuylkill Valley staff member, Marsha Townsend. This award is for exemplary service and the promotion of literacy. Mrs. Rhoads added that Mrs. Townsend has worked tirelessly to help our students develop a love of reading.

She has also started family reading night which brings out about 500 people every year and she is very deserving of this award.

## 2.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

### 2.1 PRESIDENT – *Kevin Raudenbush*

No report.

### 2.2 SECRETARY – *Linda R. Lash*

No report.

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

No report.

### 2.4 BERKS CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER – *Jay Melvin*

Dr. Melvin reported that there is no meeting in November.

### 2.5 TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – *Paul L. Bendigo*

No report.

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

Mrs. Lash reported that Gov. Wolf is dissatisfied with the state's charter school laws and stated that they are among the worst in the country with charter school law being flawed and outdated. These schools do not have the same accountability as our public schools and reform is past due. Mrs. Lash also noted that school psychologists are in short supply. In addition, the federal government is proposing cutting supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits for more than three million people with one million of these being school-age children who are receiving free or reduced lunches. Mrs. Lash also mentioned that the private school voucher plan under House Bill 1800 (Rep. Turzai, R-Allegheny) was to be discussed on November 18 but she hasn't heard anything further. She noted that PSBA does not support this government giveaway to private schools.

### 2.7 BERKS COUNTY COLA UPDATE

Mr. Miller stated that the Council on Legislative Action is comprised of all of the districts in Berks County. They are trying to increase their lobbying and legislative influence especially with the politicians that represent the districts within Berks County. They have been very successful, however one of the issues that keeps coming up is cyber charter and charter schools. They take a huge chunk of the education funding out of the Pennsylvania budget. According to the many speakers they've had at COLA meetings, Berks County is probably the most powerful voice for education in the state. We need to get across to our legislators to fight the lobbying dollars coming from the cyber charter and charter industry and we need to fight this with votes. Mrs. Lash added that cyber charter schools have no regulations on what they can do with their money and so they can advertise, which as public schools we cannot advertise using taxpayer dollars.

## 3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

No one addressed the Board.

## 4.0 BOARD

## 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' Reports

### 5.1.3 Dropout Report

Dr. Mierzejewski noted that there was a slight increase in enrollment and we are now at 2,114 students district wide, and if we include the out of district placements, we have 2,130 total students. The Board has approved the feasibility study and Mr. Feick and she met with El Associates on November 14 for their initial meeting. We asked that they give the district a quick synopsis of the elementary school and to look at the feasibility for next year.

#### Updates

- 5.2 Dr. Mierzejewski stated that she attended the Superintendents' Academy in Harrisburg, PA on October 29-30, 2019. Representatives were sent from 17 of the 18 school districts in Berks County. The group met with legislators in regard to the new cyber charter bill, which is one of the first major attempts to look at the cyber charter schools. The bill has language stating every school district needs to have their own cyber alternative plus two other choices. These would be the cyber charters that the students would use, and all other cyber charter functions would go away.

Dr. Mierzejewski also noted that the Board received a document regarding the Health Trust for Berks County School Districts. There are thirteen school districts in the health trust as well as a few other entities and they have been working on some initiatives to bring down the cost of our health insurance premiums. Last year they rolled out an incentive for using independent labs for testing by eliminating the co-pay for participants who use these labs. They are currently exploring whether to open one or more local health centers as an option for employees to use. The centers would be funded through the health trust and there would be no cost to employees for using the centers.

## 6.0 POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### *Summary of Committee Deliberations – Linda R. Lash*

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 6:43 p.m. on Monday, November 11, 2019, in the Schuylkill Valley High School LeRoy K. Seip Memorial Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in January 2020.

### *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 following resignations:

- 6.1.1 Ms. Lisa Lawson, Part-Time Lunchroom Aide at the Elementary School, effective November 8, 2019.
- 6.1.2 Ms. Mariya Mitov, Part-Time Lunchroom Aide at the Elementary School, effective November 22, 2019.

**Board Action: Moved by Jay Melvin and seconded by George Mertz to accept with best wishes for the future, the resignations in Items 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, as presented.**

**Yeas: Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Melvin, 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. Diana Berstler, Part-Time Lunchroom Aide at the Elementary School, at an hourly rate of \$9.75, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Ms. Lisa Lawson, effective November 11, 2019.
- 6.2.2** Temporary increase in hours for Ms. Karen Bauder, Full-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the High School, from 6 hours per day to up to 15 hours per day, due to a temporary increase in student need, for the Winter athletic season.
- 6.2.3** Mentor for the 2019-20 school year at a stipend of \$1,175.00 for full year mentors and \$587.50 for half year mentors.
- 6.2.4** Stipend of \$600 to Ms. Janet Scull for additional work completed and assistance provided from the start of the 2019-20 school year, through September 20, 2019.
- 6.2.5** Panthers-On-Parade salaries for the 2019-20 school year.
- 6.2.6** Substitutes for the 2019-20 school year.
- 6.2.7** Volunteers for the 2019-20 school year.
- 6.2.8** Job description for the position of Business Manager.

**Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to approve the employment in Items 6.2.1 through and including 6.2.8, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.2.9** Dr. Janet Heilman, Director of Teaching & Learning, at an annual salary of \$104,500 (prorated for actual days worked), to fill the vacancy created by the transfer of Mrs. Melissa Kelchner, effective pending release from current assignment.

**Board Action: Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by George Mertz to approve the employment in Item 6.2.9, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.2.10** Additional Winter coaches for the 2019-20 school year.
- 6.2.11** Mrs. Dawn Schlenker, Part-Time Food Services Worker, 4 hours a day at an hourly rate of \$9.75, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Ms. Kathleen Kunkle, effective November 18, 2019.
- 6.2.12** Mr. Dan Shuman, 4th Grade Teacher at the Elementary School to Temporary Full-Time Instruction Technology Integration Coach at the Elementary School, for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs. Mary Kate Raytek, effective date to be determined.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Jay Melvin to approve the employment in Items 6.2.10 through and including 6.2.12, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.3** Approves the request for a leave of absence from Ms. Mary Kirk, Part-Time Lunchroom Aide at the Elementary School, effective December 17, 2019, through approximately January 24, 2020.
- 6.4** Approves the request from Mr. Makoto Kizuka, science teacher at the middle school, for three consecutive unpaid days, April 1-3, 2020.
- 6.5** Approves the second reading and final adoption of Policy 201: Admission of Students, as revised.
- 6.6** Approves the second reading and final adoption of Policy 208: Withdrawal from School, as revised.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Dane Miller to approve the actions in Items 6.3 through and including 6.6, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.7** 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.):
  - 6.7.1** Additional head coaches for the 2019-20 school year.
  - 6.7.2** Mrs. Elizabeth Bender, from Part-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the Middle School to Full-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the Middle School, no change in hourly rate of pay, due to an increase in student needs, effective November 18, 2019.

**Board Action: Moved by Jay Melvin and seconded by George Mertz to approve the employment in Items 6.7.1 and 6.7.2, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.7.3** Mrs. Deborah Hughes, from Part-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the Middle School to Full-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the Middle School, no change in hourly rate of pay, due to an increase in student needs, effective November 18, 2019.

**Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to approve the employment in Item 6.7.3, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**



- 6.8 Accepts, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignation of Ms. Elizabeth Martini, Part-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the Middle School, effective December 4, 2019.
- 6.9 Approves the conference request from Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski, to attend the PASA Leadership Forum, from March 29-31, 2020, in State College, PA, at an approximate cost of \$814.78.
- 6.10 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.):
  - 6.10.1 Additional community aquatics employee for the 2019-20 school year.

**Board Action: Moved by Jay Melvin and seconded by George Mertz to approve the actions in Items 6.8 through and including 6.10.1, as presented.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

#### 6.11 Other (Old/New Business)

Mr. Raudenbush stated that there was a community meeting on November 13, 2019, in regard to a school police officer with approximately 45 individuals in attendance. The discussion was very interesting and for the most part it seemed that the community would support a school police officer on staff. The feedback received was also in the majority for supporting an SPO. The Board has had public discussions regarding the next steps in regard to moving forward. Dr. Mierzejewski stated that the administration needs to know how the Board wants to move forward. Mr. Miller stated that we currently divide these duties among many individuals and we need one person to bring all of those things together so they can focus on just the duties of keeping all of our students and staff safe in the district. He would like to continue forward to see what the position will actually look like in regard to salary, equipment, training, etc. Dr. Mierzejewski asked for confirmation that the Board is looking for costs and also a job description and the Board agreed. Mr. Rossi also asked for a timeline.

#### 7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

##### *Summary of Committee Deliberations – G. Dane Miller*

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 7:27 p.m. on Monday, November 11, 2019, in the Schuylkill Valley High School LeRoy K. Seip Memorial Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in January 2020.

##### *Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration*

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

- 7.1 Approves the agreements with Crowne Plaza Reading Hotel to reserve April 29, 2022, and April 28, 2023, for the high school prom, and further, authorizes the junior class advisor to execute the agreement.
- 7.2 Approves ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding with Mr. Lester Miller, in the amount of \$500.00, who provided services for the purpose of Outdoor Education from October 8-10, 2019.
- 7.3 Approves ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding with Mr. Michael Werley, in the amount of \$250.00, who provided services for the purpose of Outdoor Education from

October 7-9, 2019.

- 7.4** Approves the MTI Production Contract required for the 2020 P-O-P production, at a cost of \$3,850.00, and further, authorizes the Director/Producer to execute the contract.

**Board Action:** Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by Jay Melvin to approve the actions in Items 7.1 through and including 7.4, as presented.

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 7.5** Approves the purchase of the equipment and installation for a replacement LGI projector at the middle school, at a cost not to exceed \$11,000, to be paid from the Technology Reserve Fund, and further, authorizes the Director of Instructional and Information Technology to make the purchase.

**Board Action:** Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by George Mertz to approve the action in Item 7.5, as presented.

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE**

### ***Summary of Committee Deliberations – Jay R. Melvin***

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 8:32 p.m. on Monday, November 11, 2019, in the Schuylkill Valley High School LeRoy K. Seip Memorial Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in January 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 October 21, 2019, to November 19, 2019, as presented.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$625,187.08</b>
<b>CAFETERIA FUND</b>	<b>\$6,084.37</b>
<b>TECHNOLOGY RESERVE FUND</b>	<b>\$2,127.50</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$633,398.95</b>

- 8.2** Approves the Treasurer's Report and the Financial Reports for October 2019, as presented.

- 8.3** Approves accepting the report of the annual local audit as performed by Herbein & Company for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

**Board Action:** Moved by Jay Melvin and seconded by George Mertz to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1 from October 21, 2019, to November 19, 2019, as presented; and to approve the Treasurer's Report and the Financial Reports for October 2019, as presented; and to approve accepting the report of the annual local audit as performed by Herbein & Company for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.4 Approves ratification of the agreement with Daniel Boone Area School District to fully administer the 2019-2020 Free & Reduced Lunch program for Schuylkill Valley Students #571, #3524, and #4089, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.
- 8.5 Approves the Act 1 resolution which states that 2020-2021 real estate taxes will not increase more than the Act 1 index of 3.2%.
- 8.6 Approves ratification of the agreement with the Berks County Intermediate Unit to administer the district's Title I, Title II and Title IV grants for services for non-public students from August 1, 2019, through June 15, 2020.

**Board Action: Moved by Jay Melvin and seconded by George Mertz to approve ratification of the agreement with Daniel Boone Area School District to fully administer the 2019-2020 Free & Reduced Lunch program for Schuylkill Valley Students #571, #3534, and #4089, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement; and to approve the Act 1 resolution which states that 2020-2021 real estate taxes will not increase more than the Act 1 index of 3.2%; and to approve ratification of the agreement with the Berks County Intermediate Unit to administer the district's Title I, Title II and Title IV grants for services for non-public students from August 1, 2019, through June 15, 2020.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.7 Grants authorization for Administrative personnel to participate in the county-wide bid of paper for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the Berks County Joint Purchasing Agreement.

**Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Jay Melvin to grant authorization for Administrative personnel to participate in the county-wide bid of paper for the 2020-2021 school year, in accordance with the Berks County Joint Purchasing Agreement.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.8 Accepts a donation from the Conner A. Kleffel Memorial Foundation, in the amount of \$500, to be used in the Life Skills classroom at the high school.
- 8.9 Accepts a donation from the Conner A. Kleffel Memorial Foundation, in the amount of \$300, to be used for the Outdoor Education program at the middle school.
- 8.10 Accepts a donation from Mr. Sherwood Galen, SV alumni, in the amount of \$100, to be used for assistance in paying for school lunches.
- 8.11 Approves the exoneration of tax collectors from collecting unpaid interim bills dated May 1, 2019, and that the Board approve submitting the taxes to Berks County Tax Claim Bureau for collection. There are (6) bills totaling \$4,110.03 (last year there were three (3) bills totaling \$3,387.81).



**Board Action:** Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by George Mertz to accept the donations in Items 8.8 through and including 8.10, as presented; and to approve the exoneration of tax collectors from collecting unpaid interim bills dated May 1, 2019, and that the Board approve submitting the taxes to Berks County Tax Claim Bureau for collection. There are (6) bills totaling \$4,110.03 (last year there were three (3) bills totaling \$3,387.81).

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.12** Approves the purchase of two (2) double-stacked ovens, one (1) for the elementary school and one (1) for the high school, from Singer Equipment in the amount of \$51,280.80, to be paid from the Food Service Budget, and further, authorizes the Director of Food Services to execute the proposal. (Costars contract 036-005)

**Board Action:** Moved by Jay Melvin and seconded by Dane Miller to approve the purchase of two (2) double-stacked ovens in Item 8.12, as presented.

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- 8.13** Approves the following resolution:

WHEREAS, on October 28, 2019, John E. Muir, Esquire, and Kozloff Stoudt, Solicitors, for the Schuylkill Valley School District, filed a Notice of Intervention on behalf of the Schuylkill Valley School District to intervene in the Real Estate Assessment Appeal (as listed below).

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the actions taken by the Solicitors to intervene in the Real Estate Assessment Appeal are hereby ratified;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Solicitors are hereby authorized to retain the appraisal services of Douglas A. Haring, including preparation of an appraisal report and testimony at and assistance in preparation for trial, if necessary, in regard to the following Real Estate Tax Assessment appeal on behalf of Schuylkill Valley School District:

R&F Reading, LLC vs. Berks County Board of Assessment Appeals  
Property: 629 Snyder Road, Ontelaunee Township  
Parcel I.D. No. 68540014438598  
Preparation of appraisal report - \$5,500.00

**Board Action:** Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the resolution in Item 8.13, as presented.

**Yeas:** Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Melvin, 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 8:49 p.m. on Monday, November 11, 2019, in the Schuylkill Valley High School LeRoy K. Seip Memorial Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in January 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 9:33 p.m. on Monday, November 11, 2019, in the Schuylkill Valley High School LeRoy K. Seip Memorial Meeting Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in January 2020.

***Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration***

There were no Committee recommendations.

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

Mrs. Lash commented that the high school drama club's production of "Clue: On Stage" was very good.

**12.0 ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by George Mertz, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned.

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

  
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Linda R. Lash, Secretary  
Board of School Directors