

March 18, 2024

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

MINUTES

March 18, 2024

1.0 **The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by the Board Vice President, Alfonso F. Rossi, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School.**

1.1 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

1.2 **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Franklin M. Ammarell, Nicoleen M. Kleffel, Linda R. Lash, Bryan J. O'Donnell, Alfonso F. Rossi, Kelly J. Steinke, Daniel B. Weyandt

Board Member Paul L. Bendigo was not physically present but participated and voted via speakerphone.

Members Absent: David E. Moll

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Cathy Taschner, Kristin Holst, Dr. Joshua Kuehner, Dr. Shannon O'Donnell, Jenny Rexrode, Michael Sobczak, Kristen Wallace

Solicitor: Alicia Luke, Esq., Fox Rothschild LLP

1.3 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 26, 2024, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

1.4 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Rossi reported that the Board met in executive session on March 11, 2024, during the Committee meetings, for personnel matters, and immediately following the Committee meetings for personnel matters, legal matters, and confidential student information. The Board also met in executive session on March 18, 2024, prior to the Board meeting, for personnel matters.

2.0 **REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES**

2.1 **PRESIDENT – *David E. Moll***

No report.

2.2 **SECRETARY – *Linda R. Lash***

No report.

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

Mrs. Lash reported that the BCIU had their executive board meeting on March 18 and discussed their audit by Herbein & Co., which was a clean audit. Their regular meeting will be held on

March 21.

- 2.4 **BERKS CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER – David E. Moll**
No report.
- 2.5 **TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – Nicoleen M. Kleffel**
Mrs. Kleffel reported that their next meeting will be held on March 28.
- 2.6 **PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION LIAISON – Linda R. Lash**
Mrs. Lash reported that Monday, April 8 is PSBA Advocacy Day at the Harrisburg Capitol.
- 2.7 **SCHUYLKILL VALLEY EDUCATION FOUNDATION – Linda R. Lash**
No report.
- 3.0 **PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**
Allyson McKechnie, SV Track & Field Coach – Treatment of Coaching Staff
- 4.0 **BOARD**
There were no items for Board approval.
- 4.1 **SOLICITOR’S REPORT**
No report.
- 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’ Dashboard Reports

Superintendent’s Update

- 5.2 Dr. Taschner provided highlights from recent student activities. Middle school band and chorus students selected at the Berks Junior County Band and Chorus competitive auditions will perform at Muhlenberg High School on Saturday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. Students selected for band include Hannah Raifsnider, clarinet; Kendall Gery, clarinet; Adolynn Matthews, clarinet; Brayden Getrost, alto saxophone; Amora Bobb, trumpet; Ian Luckey, trombone; Trent Fortenberry, trombone; and Annabelle Zaorski, mallet percussion. Students selected for chorus include Matilda Walborn, Lucianna Holben, Hannah Raifsnider, Braden Getrost, and Ian Luckey. Gifted students in 8th grade participated in the STEM Design Challenge which was to help Pennsylvania farmers by creating an agricultural robot or other type of “high-tech farming” equipment that could be used for agriculture. First place went to our MS team “*The Garden Girls*” which included Samantha Hassler, Elle Winkler, and Adolynn Matthews. Gifted students in 4th grade also participated and third place went to our ES team “*Automation Agents*” i.e., Sam Ketterer and Matthew Yobb.

Our SVHS girls basketball coach, Mr. Jason Bagenstose, celebrated his 100th win with the team and was presented with a hand-painted SV basketball to honor this impressive milestone. The PIAA Swimming and Diving State Championships were held March 13-16, with Owen Eisenhofer placing 3rd in the 100 butterfly and 3rd in the 100 backstroke. Mabel Walborn placed 6th in the 500 freestyle and 7th in the 200 freestyle. It was also the first time SV had a qualified diver at states in many years. At the PIAA Wrestling Championships, Kayley Weidner and Addison Becht competed in the first State Championship for girls wrestling with Kayley placing 5th. Dr. Taschner congratulated all of our athletes and coaches on their many accomplishments.

- 6.0 **POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Paul L. Bendigo

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

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 2023-24 school year unless otherwise noted:

- Mrs. Catherine Paff, Mathematics Teacher at the middle school.
- Mrs. Teresa Pisanick, 5th Grade Teacher at the middle school.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Kelly Steinke to accept, with best wishes for the future, the resignations due to retirement in Item 6.1, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.2** Accepts, with best wishes for the future, the following resignation:

- Mr. Howard Cummings, Part-Time Food Services Worker at the High School, effective February 28, 2024.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to accept, with best wishes for the future, the resignation in Item 6.2, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.3** 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.):

- 6.3.1** Mr. Ryan Rollman, Custodian, at an hourly rate of pay of \$16.51, effective March 11, 2024, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Shane Rooney.

Mr. Rossi tabled item 6.3.1.

- 6.3.2** Approves the transfer of Mrs. Louisa Trumbore from Food Services Supervisor to Food Services Director, at an annual salary of \$64,225 (prorated for actual days worked), effective date to be determined, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Mrs. Diane Kaag-Senior.

- 6.3.3** Substitute for the 2023-24 school year:

Yanelis Alverdi Vazquez - Custodian

- 6.3.4** Volunteers for the 2023-24 school year:

April Asencios - ES
Tiffany Denk - ES

Mary Montesdeoca - ES/HS
Christine Moore - ES
Paige Moore - ES
Michelle Yobb - All Bldgs.

6.3.5 Coach for the 2023-24 school year:

Frank Ammarell – Baseball Assistant Coach - Volunteer

6.3.6 Coach for the 2023-24 school year:

J. Taylor Campbell – Baseball High School Assistant Coach - \$3,680

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Franklin Ammarell to approve the employment in Items 6.3.2 through and including 6.3.6, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

6.3.7 Coach for the 2023-24 school year:

Timothy Kier – Lacrosse Boys High School Assistant Coach - \$3,500

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Bryan O'Donnell to approve the employment in Item 6.3.7, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Weyandt

Nays: Bendigo, Steinke

Motion carried.

6.3.8 Miss Audrey Mertz, Part-Time Food Services Worker, 4-hours per day at an hourly rate of pay of \$15.41, effective date to be determined, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Ms. Athena Tyrrell.

6.4 Approves the following requests for unpaid days:

Ms. Leanne Moyer, Special Education Paraprofessional at the middle school, four and half (4.5) consecutive unpaid days, from April 10, 2024, through April 16, 2024.

Ms. Marianne Potts, Special Education Paraprofessional at the high school, three (3) consecutive unpaid days, from March 15, 2024, through March 19, 2024.

6.5 Approves the following request for a personal leave of absence:

Mrs. Sally Horton, Special Education Paraprofessional at the middle school, effective February 12, 2024, through March 15, 2024.

Board Action: Moved by Bryan O'Donnell and seconded by Kelly Steinke to approve the employment in Item 6.3.8, as presented; and to approve the requests for unpaid days in Item 6.4, as presented; and to approve the request for a personal leave of absence in Item 6.5, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.6 Acknowledges the following Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave of absence:

Mrs. Patricia Lacey, Business Education Teacher at the high school, effective January 31, 2024, intermittently through June 7, 2024.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Linda Lash to acknowledge the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave of absence in Item 6.6, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.7 Approves the compensated leave of absence for the purpose of professional development for Mrs. Dana Heins, Social Studies Teacher at the middle school, for the 2024-25 school year.

Board Action: Moved by Kelly Steinke and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the compensated leave of absence for the purpose of professional development for Mrs. Dana Heins, Social Studies Teacher at the middle school, for the 2024-25 school year.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Linda R. Lash

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 7:16 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 7.1 Approves the disposal of 10 *Food Science And You* textbooks (2nd Edition), copyright 1994. ISBN: 0-02-677016-4.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Kelly Steinke to approve the disposal of 10 *Food Science And You* textbooks (2nd Edition), copyright 1994. ISBN: 0-02-677016-4.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Nicoleen M. Kleffel

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 7:21 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

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 February 10, 2024, to March 19, 2024, as presented.

GENERAL FUND	\$907,215.76
CAFETERIA FUND	\$53,499.68
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FUND	\$611,034.03
MS/HS ACTIVITY FUND	\$3,912.66
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,575,662.13

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Franklin Ammarell to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1 from February 10, 2024, to March 19, 2024, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.2 Approves the Berks Career and Technology Center budget for the 2024-2025 school year in the amount of \$19,287,583; Schuylkill Valley's member share is \$766,565 and \$62,282 for special needs.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Kelly Steinke to approve the Berks Career and Technology Center budget for the 2024-2025 school year in the amount of \$19,287,583; Schuylkill Valley's member share is \$766,565 and \$62,282 for special needs.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

9.0 BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Bryan J. O'Donnell

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met at 7:24 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 9.1 Approves the proposal from Full Landscaping & Tree Service, LLC, for landscaping of the District grounds, effective through June 30, 2024.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Bryan O'Donnell to approve the proposal from Full Landscaping & Tree Service, LLC, for landscaping of the District grounds, effective through June 30, 2024.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 9.2 Approves the baseball infield proposal from Hummer Turfgrass Systems, Inc., for baselines, in the amount of \$7,790.00, and infield maintenance, in the amount of \$4,805.00.

Board Action: Moved by Franklin Ammarell and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the baseball infield proposal from Hummer Turfgrass Systems, Inc., for baselines, in the amount of \$7,790.00, and infield maintenance, in the amount of \$4,805.00.

Dr. Taschner noted that these were concerns brought to the Board last year regarding the baseball field. These proposals take care of some of the safety issues including the 1st and 3rd baselines which are currently grass. Mr. Rossi added that this area is not able to be maintained as a level running surface and will be updated to prevent injury, along with some other basic maintenance. Dr. Taschner added that work will still need to be done on the grass infield and outfield at some point with screenings and overseeding.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE APPROVED AT THE MARCH 11, 2024 BOARD MEETING:

- 9.3 Approves the agreement with Tents & Events Rentals for HS graduation needs, in the amount of \$3,981.94.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the agreement with Tents & Events Rentals for HS graduation needs, in the amount of \$3,981.94.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 9.4 Approves Change Order #H-2 for a CO2 Monitoring System, in the amount of \$7,017.56.

Board Action: Moved by Bryan O'Donnell and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve Change Order #H-2 for a CO2 Monitoring System, in the amount of \$7,017.56.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

10.0 STUDENT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Alfonso F. Rossi

The Student Services and Activities Committee met at 7:37 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 10.1 Approves FFA members to attend the 2024 State Legislative Leadership Conference.

Board Action: Moved by Kelly Steinke and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve FFA members to attend the 2024 State Legislative Leadership Conference.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.2 Approves the contract with TeamSnap to be used as a team communication platform.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Kelly Steinke to approve the contract with TeamSnap to be used as a team communication platform.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.3 Approves the waiver for Student #2878.

Board Action: Moved by Bryan O'Donnell and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the waiver for Student #2878.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.4 Approves the agreement with CONCERN Counseling Services.

Board Action: Moved by Bryan O'Donnell and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the agreement with CONCERN Counseling Services.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.5 Approves the Letter of Agreement with the BCIU for ECYEH (Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness) Support.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Kelly Steinke to approve the Letter of Agreement with the BCIU for ECYEH (Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness) Support.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.6 Approves the 2024-25 Schuylkill Valley High School Code of Conduct.

- 10.7 Approves the 2024-25 Schuylkill Valley Middle School Code of Conduct.

- 10.8 Approves the 2024-25 Schuylkill Valley Elementary School Code of Conduct.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to table Items 10.6, 10.7 and 10.8, as presented.

Dr. Taschner stated that principals need more time to have a discussion with teachers. We started this discussion in November with principals using surveys to get feedback from their staff. After the changes were made, we asked that they be sent out again, which they were. There were some conversations on March 18 and the principals can provide an update on this information.

Mrs. Rexrode, HS Principal, stated that after their handbook was sent out to the faculty and staff, they had some questions about the academic integrity portion of the handbook. It was indicated that cell phones were missing in the code of conduct matrix, the bell schedule needed to be updated, and there was a question as to whether AI needs to be addressed in the handbooks. Mrs. Rexrode and Mrs. Crater will be meeting with the faculty later this week to talk through these items.

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Dr. Kuehner, MS Principal, stated that they reviewed some specific concerns with staff members including the academic integrity piece to make sure their terminology aligned with the terminology of the HS, specifically cheating and plagiarism. There were some questions about a few of the levels of offenses and making sure they made sense. They will be reviewing this to ensure they're in the proper position to receive the appropriate form of discipline. The primary concern at the middle school revolved around cell phones and where they are housed. Currently their building level policy states that cell phones should be turned off and in the students' lockers. That specific verbiage has been removed and the focus has been towards any inappropriate use of the phone, without consent from a staff member, would be a violation. There is significant concern around the housing of the cell phones, and they will continue to look at this with staff to make sure that the data they have supports any type of changes in terms of how they would handle this process.

Dr. O'Donnell, ES Principal, noted that the ES received two pieces of feedback. The first was an adjustment to the bus dismissal time from 3:15 p.m. to 3:20 p.m., and the other was a typographical error which has been corrected. Dr. Taschner thanked the assistant principals and all of the administrators who have been working on this project as Code of Conducts are very complex. The staff can continue to review these over spring break and then when we return there will be meetings so that the assistant principals have time to make any needed changes.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

10.9 Other (Old/New Business)

Mr. Rossi reminded everyone that nominations for the SV Wall of Fame are being accepted and he encouraged the community to submit nominations. Nomination forms are available on the SVSD website and the information will also be placed on social media.

11.0 OTHER BUSINESS/GOOD OF THE ORDER

12.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Rossi announced that there would be an executive session immediately following the meeting for personnel and legal matters.

13.0 ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Bryan O'Donnell, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Board of School Directors