

September 25, 2023

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

MINUTES

September 25, 2023

1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, David E. Moll, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School.

1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

1.2 ROLL CALL

Members Present: Paul L. Bendigo, Robert M. Dempsey (departed 7:55 p.m.), Nicoleen M. Kleffel, Linda R. Lash, George H. Mertz III, G. Dane Miller, David E. Moll, Bryan J. O'Donnell, Alfonso F. Rossi

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Cathy Taschner, Casey Blankenbiller, Dr. Melissa Brewer, Robin Brightbill, Stephanie Deibler, Jennifer Gabryluk, Kristin Holst, Jenny Rexrode, Jacqueline Rivas, Kristen Wallace

Solicitor: Alicia Luke, Fox Rothschild LLP

1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 28, 2023, and the special meeting of September 18, 2023, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

1.4 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Moll reported that the Board met in executive session on September 18, 2023, prior to the Committee meetings, for legal matters, on September 25, 2023, prior to the Board Meeting for the review of legal matters and personnel matters, and will meet following the September 25, 2023 Board meeting, for personnel matters.

1.5 RECOGNITION

Mr. Colin Dempsey, PSBA, presented school board service awards to Mr. Robert Dempsey - 24 years, Mr. Dane Miller - 16 years, Mr. George Mertz - 8 years, and Mr. David Moll - 8 years, recognizing their many years of dedication to the Schuylkill Valley School District. They have given their time freely to the district and were presented with their "*Honor Roll*" certificate which requires the completion of 8 years of service on a school board. Mr. Robert Dempsey received a special award for his 24 years of service.

2.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 PRESIDENT – *David E. Moll*

Mr. Moll noted that the Board is here to support the students, teachers, coaches and administration. The Board tries to provide all the resources they can, but they also need to be fiscally responsible.

2.2 SECRETARY – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash reminded the Board that they can enroll in PSBA's travel/accident insurance.

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

Mrs. Lash reported that their last meeting was held on September 21. The meeting included an Early Childhood Department presentation on starting school and a review of legislative items for the next term. We have three new superintendents in the county and Dr. Taschner will be mentoring Dr. Lisa Hess, Governor Mifflin School District, as part of the *New Superintendents' Academy*. Dr. Taschner reported on the COLA meeting held on September 12. Dr. Sherry Smith discussed the PA budget, the challenges they face and how it's impacting schools. One interesting fact was that this was the first year in many years that the number of PA certified teachers' certificates issued was less than the number of emergency certificates.

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

Mr. Mertz reported that their next meeting will be held on September 27.

2.5 TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – David E. Moll

Mr. Moll reported that their next meeting will be held on September 28.

2.6 PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION LIAISON – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash thanked Mr. Colin Dempsey, PSBA, for attending the meeting and recognizing the Board members' service. She reminded the Board that the PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference will be held on October 15-17 in the Poconos.

2.7 SCHUYLKILL VALLEY EDUCATION FOUNDATION – Robert M. Dempsey

Mr. Dempsey reported that their last meeting was held on September 20. Attendance was excellent and they now have a full executive board in place and a number of new board members including local business owners/representatives. The foundation has been working on community awareness by participating in National Night Out and Leesport Community Days. They will be attending homecoming and have a future goal of reaching out to SV alumni.

3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Joanna Schlottman, Bern Township – Employment
Lisa Jacobson, Bern Township – Work Environment
Louis Shucker, Bern Township – Student Outcomes/Achievements

4.0 BOARD

There were no items for Board approval.

4.1 Other (Old/New Business)

Alicia Luke, Counsel, Fox Rothschild LLP, stated that there is no legal requirement that board meetings be streamed or the recordings be kept on record. This was a COVID policy that a lot of districts adopted when schools were closed and then continued for some period of time thereafter. It does seem to be a trend to reevaluate at this point since we're several years out. Streaming meetings and maintaining recordings can be expensive from a technological standpoint. Ms. Luke recommended that the district have a policy to formally address whether to stream, whether to record and how long to post the recordings. She would like to see this on the October agenda for discussion by the Board to determine which way they would like to go moving forward.

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 (will resume in October)

Other (Old/New Business)

- 5.2 Dr. Taschner reported that Emmitt Mackes and Julia Yobb have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program as commended students meaning they've demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success. The high school is in the midst of spirit week which will end with homecoming on Friday. PYEA began the school year strong by observing September as pediatric cancer awareness month and sponsoring our fall gold-out events which raised over \$2,300. It is also spirit week at the elementary school and on Friday, the high school football players and cheerleaders will welcome the elementary students as they come to school and then visit classrooms to teach each of the classrooms a cheer. Middle school students are preparing for outdoor education which is a wonderful experience that happens because of the dedication and teamwork of the entire staff. Our student athletes are off to a great start and are looking forward to some post-season play. Curriculum committees start this week with English and Language Arts followed by the Science committee which will meet the first week in October.

Dr. Taschner provided an update on the elementary school HVAC system and thanked the Board for all of their support. A commissioning agent was approved, they have reviewed the specs and design and are slated to be onsite sometime this week. We've also continued to do additional testing in the rooms via the work order system. Information will be brought to the Board from the commissioning agent who will be providing multiple reports.

6.0 **POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – George H. Mertz III

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 6:35 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023.

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 Mrs. Melissa Miller, Part-Time Lunchroom Aide at the Elementary School, effective June 8, 2023.
 - 6.1.2 Ms. Stacy Wentzel, Full-Time Accounts Payable and Transportation Secretary, effective September 22, 2023.
 - 6.1.3 Ms. Alicia Zettlemoyer, Part-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the Middle School, effective June 8, 2023.
- 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 Approves the following substitutes for the 2023-24 school year:
 - Erica Burch - Nurse
 - Brian Cornish - Guest Teacher
 - Howard Cummings - Food Services Worker
 - Orlando Diaz - Guest Teacher
 - Kiley Esbenshade - Food Services Worker
 - Michelle Heckman - Guest Teacher
 - Susan Heckman - Nurse

Adrienne Kissinger - Nurse
Shannon Lewis - Elementary, Mentally and/or Physically Handicapped (Retiree)
Joseph Reedy - Social Studies 7-12 (Retiree)
Dawn Schlenker - Food Services Worker
Jane Sigoda - Instructor in the Home (Retiree)
Christine Wysocki - Elementary K-6 (Retiree)
Alexandria Yeager – Paraprofessional

6.2.2 Approves the following volunteers for the 2023-24 school year:

Franklin Ammarell - Football
Alison Burke - Student Internship Supervisor
Shawn Danner - ES/HS
Virginia Danner - ES/HS
Marla Dolleman - ES
Euphemia Garza-Zmroczek - ES
Daniel Lodge - ES
Jaime Macrina - Student Internship Supervisor
Samantha Markowski - ES
Courtney Powers - Student Internship Supervisor
Maria Prinzo - Student Internship Supervisor
Leann Quire - Student Internship Supervisor
Heather Rachuba - ES
Danielle Smith - Student Internship Supervisor
Onya Tanis - ES
Bianca Wert - ES
Daniel Wert - ES/HS
Margaret Williams - Student Internship Supervisor
Katelyn Zaleski - ES
Bryce Zohner – ES

6.2.3 Approves the following mentors for the 2023-24 school year at a stipend of \$1,175.00 for full year mentors and \$587.50 for half year mentors:

Jennifer Blessing for Alyssa Smith - Half Year
Stacy Hallman for Olivia Martz - Full Year
Charlotte Lupia for Deborah Hill - Half Year

6.2.4 Approves the bus drivers utilized by Eshelman Transportation for the 2023-24 school year.

6.2.5 Approves an extension of hours for Mrs. Michelle Rowley, Paraprofessional at the middle school, from 4 hours per day to 6 hours per day.

6.3 Acknowledges the following Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leaves of absence:

Adam Bandel, Custodian, effective approximately October 21, 2023, through October 31, 2023.

Paige Bandel, Payroll and Taxes Secretary, effective approximately October 21, 2023, through December 11, 2023.

Taylor Serafin, Kindergarten Teacher at the elementary school, effective approximately January 3, 2024, through April 3, 2024.

Courtney Guinther, Data Management & HR Secretary, effective approximately October 4, 2023, through January 5, 2024.

- 6.4 Approves the following childrearing leave of absence for the 2023-24 school year:

Mrs. Taylor Serafin, Kindergarten Teacher at the elementary school, effective approximately April 4, 2024 through April 30, 2024.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by George Mertz to accept, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignations in Item 6.1.1 through and including 6.1.3, as presented; and to approve the employment in Items 6.2.1 through and including 6.2.5, as presented; and to acknowledge the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leaves of absence in Item 6.3, as presented; and to approve the childrearing leave of absence for the 2023-24 school year in Item 6.4, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.5 Approves the winter and spring coaching appointments, as presented.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Dane Miller to approve the winter and spring coaching appointments, as presented.

Ms. Brightbill, Mrs. Rexrode and Miss Deibler reviewed the process for implementing the new coaching salaries. Miss Deibler stated that the coaching assignments were pulled from the SVEA Collective Bargaining Agreement effective with the 2023-24 contract in order for the review and adjustment of positions and salaries. In the past there was a tiered system in the contract based on the number of people on each team, length of season, and job responsibilities. The committee discussed this history and their goal was to not have shared salaries as we have in the past. We had formerly placed the coaches with the highest level of experience in the calculated positions, determined a total sum of money for that sport, and then the head coach and Miss Deibler would allocate the salaries. The committee looked at everyone having a position and that the coaches had the number of assistants they need to serve our athletes appropriately. Mrs. Rexrode then created a survey for the coaches asking how many coaches they would need to serve the students.

Mrs. Rexrode noted that the Extracurricular Committee was asked to create a proposal for a new coaches' salary structure with the primary goal of competitive salaries and no shared salaries. There were coaches, administrators and board representation on the committee. Every coach received the survey to provide their input on their needs and how many coaches they would ideally need for a season. The committee was able to present a proposal to the Board in June 2023. They suggested using a tiered structure based on the amount of time and effort put into the position, the number of students participating, and the length of the season. Head coaching experience would receive an additional \$120 per year credit; assistant coaching experience would receive an additional \$90 per year credit, with a maximum of 20 years' experience credit. The tiers that they established were Tier I, Football - \$10,000; Tier II, Winter Sports - \$9,000; Tier III, Track & Field - \$8,000; Tier IV, Fall & Spring Sports - \$7,000; Tier V, Shorter Season Sports - \$6,000; Tier VI, Junior High Sports - \$5,000, \$4,500, \$4,000, \$3,500, \$3,000 (same tier structure). To implement the structure, the head coaching and assistant coaching experience in the field needed to be calculated. This was a manual process of reviewing each employee file to determine the experience.

Ms. Brightbill noted that the manual process was made more complex by the need to review handwritten resumes and applications and formulate an individual's true coaching experience. There was a miscalculation made by using the experience at varsity versus junior high instead of the proposed calculation of head coach versus assistant coach. They have taken the step to create a procedural document that is transparent and easy to understand. The employment application has been updated to collect years of experience by sport and by head coaching versus assistant coaching. On September 23, there was an initial notification sent to all fall coaches about the original calculation and the opportunity to review and correct our records with Ms. Brightbill.

Winter and spring coaches will receive a similar communication this week.

Mr. Moll noted that when this was removed from the current SVEA contract, current coaches would maintain the salary that they had, as this was part of the concern brought forward. Miss Deibler stated that they are making sure that everyone is compensated for all the work that they do. Credit for experience that was taken into account would be interscholastic PIAA or intercollegiate. Mr. Miller noted that this was a monumental undertaking and will get better as we continue the process. Mrs. Kleffel stated that she appreciated all of the work that was put into the process.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.6 Approves the appointment of Ms. Robin Brightbill as the School Safety and Security Coordinator as per Act 44 of 2018, effective September 25, 2023. 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 Dane Miller and seconded by George Mertz to approve the appointment of Ms. Robin Brightbill as the School Safety and Security Coordinator as per Act 44 of 2018, effective September 25, 2023, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.7 Approves the appointment of Mrs. Kristen Wallace, Director of Finance, as the district's Right-to-Know Officer, effective September 25, 2023.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the appointment of Mrs. Kristen Wallace, Director of Finance, as the district's Right-to-Know Officer, effective September 25, 2023.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.8 Approves the MOU and Confidentiality Agreement with SVEA.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Paul Bendigo to table the resolution.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.9 Approves the renewal of the annual license fee for the district's electronic employee file management system in the amount of \$1,400.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by George Mertz to approve the renewal of the annual license fee for the district's electronic employee file management system in the amount of \$1,400.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

6.10 Approves the resignations of the following mentors:

- Jessica Jordan
- Sue Raynes

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the mentor resignations in Item 6.10, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

6.11 Approves the revision to the Act 93 Certified and Act 93 Non-Certified Agreements.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the revision to the Act 93 Certified and Act 93 Non-Certified Agreements.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

Summary of Committee Deliberations – G. Dane Miller

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 6:50 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

7.1 Approves the quote from CDW-G for the renewal of the email archiving subscription, in the amount of \$19,110.00, as presented. The name is being withheld for reasons of cyber security.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the quote from CDW-G for the renewal of the email archiving subscription, in the amount of \$19,110.00, as presented. The name is being withheld for reasons of cyber security.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Paul L. Bendigo

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023.

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 August 15, 2023, to September 26, 2023, as presented.

GENERAL FUND	\$1,440,588.46
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FUND	\$362,020.76
CAPITAL RESERVE FUND	\$4,132.03
MS/HS ACTIVITY FUND	\$15.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,806,756.25

- 8.2 Approves the retention of Fox Rothschild LLP as District Solicitor.
- 8.3 Approves the retention of Levin Legal Group P.C. as Special Counsel for the 2023-24 school year.

Board Action: Moved by Dane Miller and seconded by Bryan O’Donnell to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1, from August 15, 2023, to September 26, 2023, as presented; and to approve the retention of Fox Rothschild LLP as District Solicitor; and to approve the retention of Levin Legal Group P.C. as Special Counsel for the 2023-24 school year.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O’Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

9.0 **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Alfonso F. Rossi

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met at 7:05 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023 in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 9.1 Approves change order number H-1 from Shannon A. Smith, Inc. for HVAC duct modifications in the Middle School Pool Renovation project, in the amount of \$74,974.15.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve change order number H-1 from Shannon A. Smith, Inc. for HVAC duct modifications in the Middle School Pool Renovation project, in the amount of \$74,974.15.

Mr. Bruce Christman, EI Associates, explained that when the existing ductwork was demolished in the pool area, there were some non-consistent configurations from the as-built drawings that were discovered. One of the items was the return air ductwork and an issue with debris within the ductwork, as the insulation was inside the ductwork. This was immediately tested for asbestos, mold and fungi, and all tests came back negative. The district has the test results on file and they will be posted on the district website. Due to the extent of the non-conformity with the system, it caused some engineering work, and it took a few weeks to design the new ductwork layout and then provide it to the HVAC contractor who then provided a proposed price for the work. Their goal is still a November 1 completion date.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O’Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

10.0 STUDENT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Nicoleen M. Kleffel

The Student Services and Activities Committee met at 7:38 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 10.1 Approves the agreement with Maxim Healthcare Staffing Services.
- 10.2 Approves the contract with Jam on Sound Productions, Inc., for DJ services at middle school dances. This is a standard contract with the list of scheduled dates for the 2023-24 school year included. Fees will be paid through the student activities account. Also note that we are receiving a \$25 school discount per event.
- 10.3 Approves the contract with Mr. Adam Lehrhaupt for three (3) 45-minute presentations on February 21, 2024.
- 10.4 Approves the SVHS Ski Club trip, as presented. The trip will be paid for by the students.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Dane Miller to approve the agreement with Maxim Healthcare Staffing Services; and to approve the contract for DJ services for dances with Jam on Sound Productions, Inc. The standard contract is attached as well as the list of scheduled dates for the 2023-24 school year. Fees will be paid through the student activities account. Also note that we are receiving a \$25 school discount per event; and to approve the contract with Mr. Adam Lehrhaupt for three (3) 45-minute presentations on February 21, 2024; and to approve the SVHS Ski Club trip, as presented. The trip will be paid for by the students.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.5 Approves the agreement with Caron Foundation for SAP (School Assistance Program) Services for the 2023-24 school year.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by George Mertz to approve the agreement with Caron Foundation for SAP (School Assistance Program) Services for the 2023-24 school year.

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell

Abstain: Rossi

Motion carried.

11.0 OTHER BUSINESS/GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mrs. Kleffel reminded everyone that this week is homecoming and we will be celebrating our Pride of Schuylkill Valley inductees. They will be here on September 29 to speak with our students and will attend the luncheon and induction ceremony on September 30. This year's recipients include Dr. Mark Rickenbach, Russell Adams, Kyle Beissel, Jennifer (Lash) Miller, Frank Melvin and Dr. Jeffrey Schoenebeck.

September 25, 2023

12.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

13.0 ADJOURNMENT

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

Yeas: Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.


Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Board of School Directors