

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

Seneca Valley High School Auditorium - 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

January 6, 2020

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. Eric DiTullio, Vice-President, called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** – The meeting was opened with a moment of silence in memory of James “Jim” Rettinger who passed away on December 14, 2019. Mr. Rettinger taught art in the Seneca Valley School District for 38 years.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Mason Harding, a third-grade student at Rowan Elementary School, continued the board meeting initiative, *I Led the Pledge*, by reciting the “Pledge of Allegiance.”
 - C. **Roll Call** - Roll call by Ms. Annie Mersing, Board Secretary, showed the following members in attendance: Ms. Leslie Bredl, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Timothy Hester, Mr. Frederick Peterson, Jr., Ms. Kathy Whittle and Mr. Jeff Widdowson. Mr. James Nickel and Mr. Randall Hart were absent.

Others present included Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Matthew McKinley, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary; Dr. Sean McCarty, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary; Ms. Kyra Bobak, Human Resources Director; Ms. Lynn Burtner, Business Manager; Ms. Linda Andreassi, Communications Director; Mr. Randy Miller, Buildings and Grounds Director; Ms. Heather Lewis, Athletics Director; Ms. Marie Palano, Director of Analytics and Federal Programs; Ms. Nannette Farmar, Principal of Rowan Elementary School; Attorney Matthew Hoffman, Solicitor; and a press representative.

- D. **Region 6 Board Seat Interview** – The Board interviewed Mr. Mike Jacobs, a candidate for the vacant Region 6 - Zeligonle Borough Seat.

Mr. Jacobs stated he is an alum of Seneca Valley School District and is honored to give back to the district that gave so much to him. He is also a parent of three students in the District. He has experience in finance and accounting, as well as corporate governance. He is eager to take on the challenge of educating students to thrive in an evolving workforce and outside of the traditional classroom

2. INFORMATION REPORTS

- A. **Student/Staff Recognition** – Ms. Linda Andreassi announced the following student and staff recognition:
 1. Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) in the Seneca Valley School District (SVSD) has once again been named a PA Don Eichhorn Schools: “Schools to Watch” (PA STW) as part of a recognition program developed by the

National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. This program is held annually in partnership with the Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education (PAMLE), Duquesne University, Edinboro University, Kutztown University, and the Horace Mann Service Corporation. The Pennsylvania "Schools to Watch" leadership team has announced that the award for RGMS is the third consecutive designation after first earning the elite title nine years ago. State leaders selected RGMS for its Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity and Organizational Structures and Processes. In addition, the school was noted as having strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement.

Mr. Tony Babusci, along with Ms. Trisha Butschle, Mr. Rob Raso and Mr. Larry Wendereusz spoke with the board about the process and history of the "Schools to Watch" re-designation. Mr. Babusci relayed his great pride in the RGMS staff in again receiving this prestigious award. The Board thanked Mr. Babusci and his team for their efforts and commitment to the students of Ryan Gloyer Middle School.

2. Albert Pimenov, a fifth-grade student at Haine Middle School, was recently honored as one of the brightest students in the world at a recent international Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) awards ceremony. Mr. Pimenov was honored for his exceptional performance on the SAT, ACT, or similar assessment taken as part of the CTY Talent Search. More than 2,100 students from this group who scored in the top 12 percent on their test were invited to attend the Grand Ceremony, which was held in November at Johns Hopkins University.
3. Three Seneca Valley students won awards and 18 others were featured at Slippery Rock University's (SRU) 2019 Regional High School Art Exhibition. Seniors Kelsey Gianfrancesco, Corin Trejchel and Victoria Lydon earned three of the five awards presented during the exhibit reception in November. All students are under the direction of Jason Woolslare, Jason Shorr and Megan Bonistalli, high school art teachers.
4. Twenty-three students represented Seneca Valley at the recent Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Honors Chorus concert held at Westminster College in November. The 96 students in the PMEA Honors Chorus were selected from auditions and represent Butler, Beaver, Mercer and Lawrence counties.
5. Elizabeth Salgado, junior SV flautist, recently took first place in the Senior Woodwinds Division in the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Young Artist Competition in November. Miss Salgado is a highly accomplished young woman who was the top-scoring musician at Honors Band and will be going on to the District level to begin the journey to the state level once again.

B. Dates to Remember – Ms. Andreassi announced the following dates to remember:

January 1 – 31	School Board Director Recognition Month
January 13	School Board Meeting, Senior High School, 7 p.m.
January 16	End of First Semester, Grades 5-12

January 17	Staff In-Service Day, No School for Students, School Safety Update for Secondary and Central Office Administrators
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Act 80 Day, No School for Students

- C. **Cranberry Township Residential Developments** – Dr. Tracy Vitale provided an update on the Eagle Ridge residential development on Ehrman Road which was approved in December, 2019.
- D. **Bond Refinancing** – Ms. Alisha Reesh Henry, Managing Director, PNC Capital Markets, and Mr. Christopher Brewer, Partner, Dismore & Shohl, provided a summary of the district’s bond refinancing position. Ms. Henry stated the district is in a position to have greater savings since the last time she presented in November, 2019, and remains in a good financial state.
- E. **Program of Studies for the 2020-2021 School Year** – Dr. Matthew McKinley provided a summary of the program of studies for the 2020-2021 school year. New courses are being added in the World Language, Math, Business and Career Departments. Dr. McKinley stated the district hopes to create a deeper learning and understanding for all students so they may be successful in life, no matter their chosen path. This will be accomplished by instituting a modified block school for the 2021-22 school year; by creating a new system of pathways for our students; and through an increased emphasis with every department on global skill sets.
- F. **Agency Reports**
1. Vo-Tech – Mr. Fred Peterson stated the Vo-Tech committee has welcomed a lot of new members. The current executive director is retiring and therefore a search for his replacement has begun.
 2. I.U. IV – Mr. DiTullio stated the intermediate unit will be changing the evaluation process for its executive director. It also will be changing the election of the chair/vice-chair to a calendar year term.
- Mr. DiTullio further reported on the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS.) The new rates were lower than expected in 2021, only increasing to 34.51%.
- G. **Legislative** – Mr. Peterson reported on the following federal legislative developments:
1. President Trump recently signed legislation which increases the age to buy tobacco products including cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and vaping products to 21.
 2. The federal budget was passed.
- At the State level, Mr. Peterson reported that Governor Wolfe announced a multi-agency and anti-stigma campaign, “Reach Out PA: Your Mental Health Matters,” aimed at expanding resources and the state’s comprehensive support of mental health and related health care priorities in PA.

H. Financial Reports

1. Operations
2. Senior High Activities
3. Intermediate High Activities
4. Middle School Activities
5. Athletics
6. Food Service
7. Tax Collections
8. Capital Projects Funds

3. ACTION AGENDA

- A. Public Comment – There was no public comment.
- B. Personnel Action – Approved the following personnel items that were discussed in an Executive Session held prior to this meeting:
1. Resignations - Director – Chelsea Vazquez; Professional Substitutes – Colleen Priester; Classified - Angela Nickum, Barbara Long, Jeffrey Montgomery; Supplementals – Steve Mayes, Carrie Potter-Murray
 2. Appointments – Director – Antoinette Mersing; Professional Substitutes – Steffany Adair, Samantha Travis; Classified – Kaitlyn Baumann, Nichol Mignanelli, Michelle Spatafore, Emily Rihely, Erica Sicilia, Lori Brown, Alexis Baney, Kimberly Martin, Emily Blakesley; Supplementals – Christopher Kocent, Krystal Epps, Maria Cass, Megan Meeder, Lauren Hackett, Marlesse Hames, Lisa Tyson, Jane Leo, Michael Conlon, Veronica Mortier
 3. Leaves – Professional - Lisa Tyson, Timothy Dubovi, Amy Book, Danielle Reynolds, Joseph Ohodnicki; Classified - Rosa Doherty, Patricia Ristey, ISG Angelo Lettiere, Melissa Nulph, Deborah Schettler, Debra Neely, Max Gandy
 4. Stipends – Lauri Pendred, Timothy Eiler, Antoinette Mersing
- C. Student Adjudications – Approved student adjudications #2019-20-04, #2019-20-05 and #2019-20-06 as discussed in Executive Session.
- D. Budget Resolution – Approved the budget resolution indicating that the district will not raise the rate of any tax for the support of its public schools for the 2020-21 fiscal year by more than 2.6%, which is the Act 1 index for the district as established by the Department of Education.
- E. Board Member Resignation – Approved the resignation of Region 6 - Zelienople Borough Board Member, Mr. Randall Hart, effective December 5, 2019.
- F. Board Member Appointment – Approve the appointment of Mr. Mike Jacobs as Board Member of Region 6 – Zelienople Borough effective January 6, 2020 through November 30, 2021.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Approve the following meeting minutes:

- A. **Work Session** – November 4, 2019
- B. **Regular Meeting** – November 18, 2019
- C. **Reorganization Meeting** – December 3, 2019
- D. **Work Session** – December 3, 2019

5. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – Approve the treasurer’s report.

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS** – Approve the general fund bills.

Grand Total: \$1,734,681.39

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS** – Approve the construction fund bills.

Grand Total: \$344,451.66

8. **ADMINISTRATION ACTION**

A. **Board Policies** – Approve the following board policies:

- 1. #112 – Guidance Counseling, revised, first reading – Mr. Jeffrey Roberts
- 2. #222 – Tobacco Use, revised, first reading – Dr. McKinley
- 3. #440 – Responsibility for Student Welfare, revised, first reading
– Mr. Jeff James
- 4. #905 – Citizen Advisory Committee, revised, second reading
– Ms. Andreassi
- 5. #910 – Community Relations, revised, second reading – Ms. Andreassi
- 6. #912 – Relations with Educational Institutions, revised, second reading
– Ms. Andreassi

B. **School Bus Drivers** – Approve the list of new bus drivers since September 16, 2019 for ABC Transit and Valley Lines.

C. **Student/Teacher Calendar** – Approve the student teacher calendar for the 2020-21 school year.

9. **INSTRUCTION ACTION**

A. **Conferences** – Approve conference requests.

B. **Club Status** – Approve club status for the K-Pop Dance Club at no cost to the District and under the supervision of Senior High School Teacher, Mrs. Melanie Snavelly.

C. **Grant Disbursement** – Grant permission to apply for and disburse, if approved, the PASmart Targeted Computer Science Grant in the amount of \$35,000 to expand STEM and computer science learning at the elementary schools. Requested by Mr. Jeff Roberts, Supervisor of Student Services and Gifted Education.

- D. **Student Trip** – Acknowledge the Orchestra Students to participate in the PMEA District Orchestra at Indiana University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of Ms. Sarah Miller and Ms. Marlina Hasara.
- E. **Edgenuity Agreement Renewal** – Approve the renewal of the agreement between Edgenuity and Seneca Valley School District to operate our cyber program to be paid in five equal installments over five years in the amount of \$2,616,975.

10. **BUSINESS/FINANCE ACTION**

- A. **Budget Transfers** – Approve budget transfers.
- B. **Athletic Fund Summary Revisions** – Approve revisions to the Athletic Fund Summary.
- C. **New K-6 Building Environmental Graphics Proposal Revisions** – Approve revisions to the environmental graphics proposal for the New K-6 Building.
- D. **Bond Refinancing Resolution** – Authorize the incurring of nonelectoral debt by the issuance of general obligation bonds, Series of 2020 in an aggregate principal amount not-to-exceed seventeen million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$17,800,000); covenanting to pay, and pledging all available taxing power of the local government unit for the payment of, the bonds; establishing a sinking fund and appointing a sinking fund depository; fixing the form, maximum interest rates, maturity, redemption and other provisions for the payment thereof; authorizing the acceptance of a proposal for the purchase of the bonds; authorizing a filing of required documents with the department of community and economic development; ratifying and directing certain actions of officers; and making certain other covenants and provisions in respect of the bonds.


11. **PERSONNEL ACTION** – Mr. Jeff Widdowson – (Executive Session)

12. **COMMUNICATION** – No communication was received.

13. **ADJOURNMENT** – With nothing further to come before the board, Mr. Peterson motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – An executive session was held prior to his meeting to discuss personnel items.

Mr. Eric DiTullio, School Board Vice-President


Ms. Annie Mersing, School Board Secretary