

**BURRELL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AGENDA MEETING MINUTES  
June 11, 2024**

**Call to Order**

The Burrell School District Board of Directors Agenda Meeting was held in the High School Board Room and was called to order at 7:04 PM by President Pam Key.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mrs. Key asked all present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**

Board Members Present: Mrs. Gretchen V. Beveridge, Mr. Timothy J. Vinkovich, Ms. Tricia Shank, Mrs. Nikki Watson, Mrs. LeeAnn S. Guido, Mr. Rick Kaczor, Mr. Tom Deiseroth, Mrs. Jean Schager and Mrs. Pam Key

Board Members Absent: None

Quorum present

Others Present: Dr. Shannon L. Wagner, Superintendent, Mrs. Jennifer S. Callahan, Business Administrator/Board Secretary and Dr. Autumn Turk, Director of Curriculum and Development

Student Representatives Present: None

**Executive Sessions**

June 11, 2024 - Immediately following meeting - Personnel Agenda

June 18, 2024 - 7:00 PM - Personnel Agenda

**Approval of Minutes**

Special Board Meeting – May 7, 2024; Agenda Meeting – May 14, 2024; Regular Meeting – May 21, 2024

**Approval of Monthly Financial Reports**

- a. Treasurer's Report
- b. General Fund Report
- c. Capital Reports
- d. Food Service Reports
- e. Student Activity Reports

**Comments from Public - Agenda Items Only**

None

## **Reports of Administration and Standing Committees**

### **SUPERINTENDENT - DR. WAGNER**

#### **Student/Staff Recognition and Reports**

**Approval of Consulting Services Agreement with Facilities Management Systems to provide temporary consulting and management services beginning June 12, 2024**

<u>MOTION:</u>	Motion by: Mrs. Guido	Seconded by: Mr. Kaczor
<u>VOTE:</u>	Roll Call: All in Favor	Motion Carried

#### **Wellness Report**

#### **School Safety Report**

#### **Approval of LPN Agreement**

#### **Gifts, Grants, Donations Report**

Dr. Wagner stated the list of items have been provided to the District for support and she is sharing the information.

**Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with Burrell Education Association for Personalized Learning Coach for 2024-25 school year**

Dr. Wagner stated she will talk in Executive Session regarding the contract matter.

### **OTHER ADMINISTRATION - DR. TURK / DR. EGNOR**

**Approval of Discipline Guidelines for Burrell High School, Huston Middle School, Stewart Elementary School and Bon Air Elementary School for 2024-2025 school year**

Dr. Turk stated these guidelines are being provided for approval.

Mrs. Watson asked about guidelines for visitors in buildings and raptor.

Dr. Wagner stated that is more of Board policy and procedures and not part of discipline or handbook.

**Approval of Agreement with St. Anthony School Programs for Student Placement Services for 2024-2025 school year**

Dr. Turk explained that this is a post-secondary program and runs out of Duquesne and currently there are 2 students and 4 more will attend.

Mr. Kaczor asked what does the program do.

Dr. Turk responded that it teaches the students life skills and vocational. The agreement shows the specifics that they do.

Mr. Kaczor asked do we not have other places.

Dr. Wagner stated this program is excellent.

Dr. Turk stated this is the recommended program.

### **Appointment of Michael A. Chapman, DDS as school dentist for 2024-2025 school year**

Dr. Turk explained that Dr. Chapman would like to continue as the school dentist and the description of services have been provided.

Mrs. Guido asked if there are a lot of services.

Dr. Turk responded that we require dental for certain grades so if families do not have dental care, they can use him. He basically donates services.

### **Appointment of Kultar Shergill, MD as school physician for 2024-2025 school year**

Dr. Turk explained that Dr. Egnor posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for this since it is a yearly agreement. Dr. Shergill was the only response received.

### **Adopt District K-12 Curriculum**

Dr. Turk stated that the document provided in Board docs shows a link that will be on the District website once it is adopted. Curriculum is now in Google sheets so as teachers make changes, it is available to families as changes occur so it is always up to date.

Dr. Turk stated education is constantly changing and evolving so this will allow much more transparency for families. She added that almost all of the courses are in, but some of them are still being worked on so you will see those in real time as they make updates.

Mrs. Key asked if the new ELA program is in there.

Dr. Turk replied that is an area that will continue to be worked on as we begin to use the new program.

### **Approval of Professional Development Training Agreement with Rachelle Dené Poth, ThriveinEDU LLC for professional development services August 2024**

Dr. Turk stated that this training will be for educators so they understand A.I and what it is and what is available and how it may be used to help them. It is important to understand why they need to talk about it.

Mrs. Watson asked was she a referral.

Dr. Turk responded yes, she works with ABC Create and is a teacher. We had several teachers who wanted to attend her trainings this year but it did not work out with the schedule. It was difficult to find someone available during the time needed.

Mrs. Watson asked are there any testimonials.

Ms. Shank stated that she knows her. She was a lawyer before becoming a teacher. She is on the cutting edge locally and has written several books.

Dr. Turk stated she presents nationwide. She does have a confidentiality agreement with the contract. The rates were negotiated.



**Approval of Agreement with Cristina Panaccione & Associates, LLC (CP&A) to provide school based therapeutic services for students with commercial health insurance beginning June 19, 2024**

Dr. Turk explained that as you know we approved the agreement last month with Family Behavioral Resources for services and this agreement with CP&A now allows us to expand coverage to families who have commercial insurance.

Mrs. Key asked is this out-of-school counseling.

Dr. Turk responded that it is school based so it allows a space in school and there is no cost to the District. She also thanked Mrs. Guido for introduction.

Mrs. Guido stated she is excited to share these services with Burrell.

**PERSONNEL: Approval of Personnel Log dated June 18, 2024**

**Northern Westmoreland Career & Technology Center Report - Mr. Kaczor/Mr. Vinkovich**

**Westmoreland Intermediate Unit Report - Mrs. Watson**

**PSBA Liaison Report - Mr. Deiseroth**

**BUSINESS - MRS. CALLAHAN**

**Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Incurring of Nonelectoral Debt by the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds in the Aggregate Principal Amount Not to Exceed \_\_\_\_\_ and 00/100 Dollars (\$ \_\_\_\_\_.00); Covenanting to Pay, and Pledging all Available Taxing Power for the Payment of, the Bonds; Establishing a Sinking Fund and Appointing a Sinking Fund Depository; Fixing the Form, Maximum Interest Rates, Maturity Dates, Redemption and Other Provisions for the Payment Thereof; Covenanting to Accept 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**

Mrs. Callahan explained that this resolution is the formal language to issue bonds as discussed last month. She stated that our Bond Council and Investment Banker will be here next week to go through the details of the proposed bond issue.

**Authorize Jennifer S. Callahan to make all year-end budgetary transfers for fiscal year 2023-2024**

**Approval of renewal of the following District insurance policies for period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025:**

- **Property, Liability, Crime, Equipment, Auto**
- **Educators Legal Liability**
- **Excess Liability**
- **Law Enforcement**
- **Cyber Liability**
- **Workers Compensation**

Mrs. Callahan reviewed the District insurance policies and costs for 2024-2025. There was an increase in the Liability Policy that was typical of all insurance packages due to the increased cost of replacement and repairs. Most of the other policies were pretty stable in cost from the prior year. The insurance coverage amounts and lines remained the same.



## **Adopt Final General Fund Budget 2024-2025**

Mrs. Callahan presented the Final Budget for Board Consideration next week as follows:

- Total Revenue and Expenditures \$36,676,823
- Real Estate Tax increase of 6.5 mills
- Planned use of Fund Balance \$904,000
- Changes since Draft Budget -\$370,000 and since May Proposed Budget \$-172,500
  - Reviewed changes details since May which included the elimination of Administrative Positions and adjustments in other personnel items as well as decreases in various expenditure items
- Reviewed major expenditure categories, change since last budget, and make up of each
- Reviewed Bond issue expected payments and cost increase over 2-year period.
- Reviewed Historical Data since 21-22 Budget on Tuition and Special Education due to the substantial increase in placements and costs, as well as special education services and costs, and number of aides needed to support our students
- Reviewed Revenue budget in detail
  - Local Revenue – taxes
    - Real Estate assessed values and no new growth in area as well as reduction in overall assessed values due to commercial property appeals
  - State Revenue – subsidy estimates since the State Budget is not yet complete
  - Federal Revenue, which decreased substantially since the ESERS funding is finished as previously reviewed in detail
- Fund Balance uses and estimated ending balance of about \$1.8million or 5% of expenditures

## **Approval of Resolution Authorizing 2024 Levy of Taxes**

Mrs. Callahan explained the recommended tax levy resolution which includes Real Estate Tax at 6.5 mill increase to 117.5. All other taxes remain the same as prior years: Per Capita Tax \$5.00 Act 511 and \$5 School code 679; Real Estate Transfer Tax 0.5%; Earned Income Tax 0.5%; and Local Service Tax \$5 per individual engaged in occupation in District limits.

## **Approval of Resolution Authorizing 2024 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion**

Mrs. Callahan explained the calculation of the Homestead Farmstead Exclusion amount for 2024-2025. The overall amount the District is receiving from the State from gambling funds in increased substantially to \$1,062,103.44. That amount must be distributed to the 4,107 total approved Homestead and Farmstead property owners as a reduction in real estate taxes. The amount is \$2,203 reduction in assessed value which is \$258 tax dollars. The prior year amount per property was \$214 so it is an increase of \$44 per owner.

## **Permission to discard obsolete equipment**

## **Approval of Capital Reserve Fund Budget for 2024-2025**

Mrs. Guido asked about pool amount on list.

Dr. Wagner stated that we do not have to make a change to the boiler but we are recommending we leave funds budgeted to help if something breaks and we need to make additional repairs or replace major parts.

Mrs. Guido asked for confirmation that as of right now, the pool is functional for classes but our coop with Kiski for swim team will still happen since it was based on the number of students and not only pool issue.

Dr. Wagner stated yes and added that the coop with Kiski allows more students to be part of the team since it is grades 7-12.

Dr. Wagner stated we will continue to assess District facilities and capital needs as we move forward. She stated that as a Board we need to prioritize what needs attention at any given time.

## **Communications**

### **Requests for Use of Buildings**

### **Payment of Bills**

### **Additions to Agenda (Agenda Meeting only)**

None

### **Comments from Public**

*Heather Thompson, resident*

- *Expressed big concern with tax increase in community*
- *Believes people move in because nice homes for nice price and low taxes in a nice community but are increasing taxes too high if raise them 6.5 mills*
- *Stated other districts are not increasing taxes as much*
- *Expressed concerns that we keep increasing each year and people may move out of District*

*Bo Jackson, resident*

- *Stated his comments are no reflection on teachers or Administration at Burrell because his kids went through here and received a decent education*
- *Expressed his opinion that MTSS and PLC program should not continue to add costs*
- *Expressed opinion that it is misleading to say we pay for cyber students*
- *Suggested we compare with other schools – Franklin Regional just built a \$50 million school without raising taxes*

*Jenna Golem, resident*

- *Appreciates budget presentation which provided a lot of information*
- *Expressed concerns about significant tax increases*
- *Agreed that MTSS and the things we have been developing should be in place with no additional cost*
- *Believes District will keep losing revenue when losing residents and business*
- *Suggested Budget be revisited and line items adjusted*

*James Anderson, resident*

- *Suggested Board members drive down the road and look at for sale signs before they make decision*
- *Believes taxes are killing senior citizens because they can't put food on the table*

*Kane Hooks, student*

- *Stated he is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader and all his siblings went to Stewart*
- *Stated there are a lot of empty buildings like Wendy's*
- *Requested to keep Stewart School open*

Mrs. Key stated we do appreciate all the comments from the public. She stated that all Board members did not vote "yes" to pass the proposed budget in May.

Mrs. Guido stated she agrees with everything said, but in addition to a nice home and a nice community it is important to have a good education. She also clarified that the MTSS costs are for things we have implemented and are continuing such as social workers, behavior specialist, and counselors. It is not that we are adding costs to MTSS or having specific MTSS costs in the budget.



Mrs. Guido also added that we are between a rock and a hard place. We invite people to come to the hearing about Stewart because it is actually going to cost more money to maintain and keep Stewart open as a school. These are all things that we have been going back and forth and back and forth. She stated that we are partnering with the City to try to get more businesses.

*John Rowe, resident*

- *Stated that Arconic is up for sale and that multiple companies are looking to purchase it and take the building and section it off*

Mrs. Guido stated that would be fabulous.

Mr. Kaczor added that we have to maintain our buildings just like homeowners fix a roof on their house or replace a furnace. We have boilers that need to be replaced.

Mrs. Guido added that the improvements are really a 2-year plan. We have to raise taxes to cover an amount of up to \$20 million to replace boilers, HVAC, and provide air conditioning at buildings.

Mr. Kaczor stated the parking lot at Bon Air and a small addition to Bon Air will be needed for the cafeteria because having a dual gym/cafeteria is not ideal for students.

Mrs. Guido stated that the Budget has been reduced recently by \$370,000. We eliminated 2 positions.

*Debbie Bartrug, resident*

- *Questioned why issues at Stewart have not been taken care of and why something from 1965 is still operating*

Mr. Kaczor stated we were not part of the Board at that time.

*Debbie Bartrug, resident*

- *Stated it seems like a joke about the pool and main line in the pool*
- *She asked if it is just being let go*

Dr. Wagner responded that it would be over a few million dollars to replace the pool. It has been well maintained, but it is original and will be a significant cost to renovate. That is possibly why it has not yet been done.

Dr. Wagner stated the Architect review indicates that our buildings are very well maintained, but we are at the point where we have to replace things and they cost money. She clarified that it will cost \$17 million to renovate Stewart and that is just to bring it up to code and use it successfully. It is a 1931/1939 building and for the same amount we could shut it down and install air conditioning in our other buildings so our students are comfortable. People have air conditioning at home and everywhere they go these days so it is a necessity for a good learning environment.

Dr. Wagner explained that Franklin Regional School District is a completely different community that cannot be compared because they have substantial growth and businesses. She stated that it is important to upgrade our facilities. Unfortunately, since there is no growth and our businesses appeal taxes, this puts the burden back on homeowners.

Dr. Wagner stated the Board has a difficult decision to do what we need for the educational process and to be responsible to taxpayers. It is not accurate that our buildings are not being maintained well.

*Debbie Bartrug, resident*

- *Asked where the Armed Guard is located and if it makes sense to be with little kids*



Dr. Wagner responded that the SRO is at the High School, Middle School and all buildings and an armed guard is stationed at Bon Air. The District pays 70% of the SRO costs and the city pays the balance. The armed guard is placed there because the behavior of adults and children is different than before Covid. Dr. Wagner stated that Bon Air needed some additional security at recess because the world is a different place. She believes it is necessary to keep our littlest students safe.

*John Rowe, resident*

- *Stated he believes that 90% of our District is a problem*
- *Expressed concerns that Board is eliminating the position to get the work done*

*Shawn Oden, resident*

- *Stated he owns business and property*
- *Questioned why some of the repairs get done when economy was nice*
- *Believes old people are begging for food and to get places*
- *Stated his student hurt his leg and teacher would not send him homework to work on*
- *Expressed opinion that the food has gone downhill so cutting food and education*
- *Expressed opinion that the estimated cost to fix the pool is ridiculous when there is trenchless plumbing that could run a pipe and that he can get a plumber to fix it for \$40,000 guaranteed*
- *Expressed opinion that everyone is lying*
- *Asked why Board didn't raise everyone's taxes when economy was better before Biden*
- *Suggested District work with the City to lower costs*
- *Suggested that the Board should raise taxes 1 mill each year rather than all at once*
- *Suggested that members should have taken steps when they got on the Board*

Mrs. Key stated when anything is brought to this Board, we deal with it right away. It is not anything that we as Board members lie about or ignore – we talk about it and we don't ignore it. It is easy for people to sit back and point fingers, but I invite you to run for school board and then you can sit here and do that. I invite anyone to do that. We spend a great deal of time and it is difficult.

Mr. Kaczor added that we have been taking steps and it has taken years.

Mrs. Key added that we are working with the City of Lower Burrell. Mrs. Key stated this discussion is no longer helpful or going to solve anything.

### **Adjournment at 9:48PM**

MOTION:

Motion by: Mr. Kaczor

Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich

VOTE:

Roll Call: All in Favor

Motion Carried



Jennifer S. Callahan  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

JSC/mls

**BURRELL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
June 18, 2024**

**Call to Order**

The Burrell School District Board of Directors Board Meeting was held in the High School Board Room and was called to order at 7:50 PM by President Pam Key.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mrs. Key asked all present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**

Board Members Present: Mrs. Gretchen V. Beveridge, Mr. Timothy J. Vinkovich, Ms. Tricia Shank, Mrs. Nikki Watson, Mrs. LeeAnn S. Guido, Mr. Rick Kaczor, Mr. Tom Deiseroth, Mrs. Jean Schager and Mrs. Pam Key

Board Members Absent: None

Quorum present

Others Present: Dr. Shannon L. Wagner, Superintendent, Mrs. Jennifer S. Callahan, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, Dr. Gregory Egnor, Director of Student Services and Solicitor Lee Price

Student Representatives Present: None

**Executive Sessions**

June 11, 2024 - Immediately following meeting - Personnel Agenda

June 18, 2024 - 7:00 PM - Personnel Agenda and School Safety

**Approval of Minutes**

Special Board Meeting – May 7, 2024; Agenda Meeting – May 14, 2024; Regular Meeting – May 21, 2024

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Kaczor                      Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich

VOTE:      Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

**Approval of Monthly Financial Reports**

- a. Treasurer's Report (Attachment 6-1)
- b. General Fund Report (Attachment 6-2)
- c. Capital Reports (Attachment 6-3)
- d. Food Service Reports (Attachment 6-4)
- e. Student Activity Reports (Attachment 6-5)

MOTION:      Motion by: Mr. Kaczor                      Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich

VOTE:      Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

## **Comments from Public - Agenda Items Only**

None

## **Reports of Administration and Standing Committees**

### **SUPERINTENDENT - DR. WAGNER**

#### **Student/Staff Recognition and Reports**

Dr. Wagner recognized:

- Teacher inductees – finished 3rd year of Induction program
  - Ali Adams, Lori Cooper, Jacki Eller, Caitlin Hirak, Madison Koscianski, Melinda Larko, Hannah Mulkern, Karley Owens, Kelly Rini, Mollie Sweeney, Denise Tanilli, Brian Welsh, and Ashley Zoloscik
- Dr. Boylan and Dr. Turk - Induction program
- Sydney Bordonaro – 2015 graduate
  - Appeared on Today Show with Hoda/Jenna – she is a stylist for WNBA
  - Amazing to see our graduates grow up and do great things

#### **Consulting Services Agreement with Facilities Management Systems to provide temporary consulting and management services beginning June 12, 2024 Information**

Dr. Wagner stated this agreement was approved last week.

#### **Wellness Report (Attachment 6-6)**

Dr. Wagner stated the report prepared and submitted by Food Service Director Megan Mlinarcik is provided.

#### **School Safety Report**

Dr. Roland shared safety information in Executive Session.

#### **Approval of Licensed Practical Nurse Agreements for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school terms**

<u>MOTION:</u>	Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich	Seconded by: Mr. Kaczor
<u>VOTE:</u>	Roll Call: All in Favor	Motion Carried

#### **Gifts, Grants, Donations Report (Attachment 6-7)**

Dr. Wagner summarized the report last week.

#### **Approval of placement of a student intern for soccer for summer 2024**

<u>MOTION:</u>	Motion by: Mr. Kaczor	Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich
<u>VOTE:</u>	Roll Call: All in Favor	Motion Carried



## **OTHER ADMINISTRATION - DR. TURK / DR. EGNOR**

### **Approval of Discipline Guidelines for Burrell High School, Huston Middle School, Stewart Elementary School and Bon Air Elementary School for 2024-2025 school year**

Dr. Egnor stated Dr. Turk reviewed these guidelines last week.

MOTION:      Motion by: Ms. Shank                      Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich  
VOTE:        Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

Dr. Egnor thanked the Administrators, teachers and parent advisory who went through a more thorough process than usual.

### **Approval of Agreement with St. Anthony School Programs for Student Placement Services for 2024-2025 school year**

MOTION:      Motion by: Mrs. Beveridge                      Seconded by: Mr. Deiseroth  
VOTE:        Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

### **Appointment of Michael A. Chapman, DDS as school dentist for 2024-2025 school year**

MOTION:      Motion by: Mr. Kaczor                      Seconded by: Mr. Deiseroth  
VOTE:        Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

### **Appointment of Kultar Shergill, MD as school physician for 2024-2025 school year**

MOTION:      Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich                      Seconded by: Mrs. Schager  
VOTE:        Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

### **Adopt District K-12 Curriculum**

Dr. Egnor stated Dr. Turk explained this last week.

MOTION:      Motion by: Mr. Kaczor                      Seconded by: Mrs. Beveridge  
VOTE:        Roll Call: All in Favor                      Motion Carried

### **Approval of Professional Development Training Agreement with Rachelle Dené Poth, ThriveinEDU LLC for professional development services August 2024**

Dr. Egnor stated Dr. Turk discussed this last week.

MOTION:      Motion by: Mrs. Guido                      Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Watson stated she researched the information and resources. She stated there is a free 2-hour training. She thinks there are a lot less expensive options for this training on AI.

Mrs. Guido stated she didn't do any research, but it is \$3,000 and if we can do it for free she would rather save the money. She asked if it is voluntary or mandatory.

Dr. Wagner stated it can be mandatory.

Mrs. Guido stated AI is a big thing and kids are probably better at it. If this is going to help teachers with their practice and identify when students are using it inappropriately then the training is important.

Ms. Shank stated she understands that the training is expensive. If she was offered this as a teacher she would rather be shown things because it is difficult and overwhelming. She asked if it is approved she would like a follow up summary.

Dr. Wagner stated we could do that and have information through needs assessments. We also had a teacher here that we thought would like to present, but they are not comfortable. The staff is asking for this in needs assessment, so we really believe it is important.

Dr. Egnor stated that AI gets mixed up with Chat GPT but it is much more than that and moving at such a fast pace.

Mrs. Schager stated she votes no because it is \$3,000 that could be used elsewhere.

Dr. Wagner stated she does not believe a 2-hour online training would be adequate.

Mrs. Watson discussed that the free training that is available she actually did it and can help them use it and giving them a basic understanding. She does not think it needs to be any fancier than a practical level.

Mrs. Beveridge asked can we see if other schools want to piggy back on this to reduce costs or make money.

Dr. Wagner stated she will need to talk with Dr. Turk because she is not sure if it is based on the number of people.

Mrs. Guido suggested that Administration really look at this.

Ms. Shank suggested to make sure we really get a big bang for our buck.

Mrs. Watson stated the technology is there, but can only learn and apply so much. She also thinks there are so many free online resources. This individual has written books so those who really want more information could read that.

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor except Mr. Kaczor, Mrs. Schager and Mrs. Watson voted NO

Motion Carried

**Approval of Agreement with Cristina Panaccione & Associates, LLC (CP&A) to provide school based therapeutic services for students with commercial health insurance beginning June 19, 2024**

Dr. Egnor explained this last month. The agreement with Family Behavior Resources (FBR) is for counseling in school and now this agreement is for families who have health insurance. We have now removed barriers for a student who wants counseling.

MOTION: Motion by: Mrs. Guido Seconded by: Mrs. Beveridge

DISCUSSION: Mr. Kaczor asked what type of services are provided.

Dr. Egnor stated families would request counseling in school, but FBR turned them down due to insurance. This is talk therapy done by a licensed counselor and is mostly cognitive behavior therapy. It is a mental health professional providing services. The school does not refer, it just provides resources to the families.

Mrs. Schager asked to confirm that there is no cost to District.

Dr. Egnor confirmed that there is no cost to the District.

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

### **Approval of Student Education Agreement with River Academy for Special Education Services for 2024-2025 school year**

Dr. Egnor explained that this school requires an agreement for each student who is placed in their school. The IEP team has determined that this student should be educated in this placement.

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich Seconded by: Mrs. Guido

### DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Schager asked are there any other schools that could provide these services.

Ms. Shank stated this is the 2nd student attending this school.

Dr. Egnor stated outside placements do not always accept students. If an IEP team deems that needs are exceeding what can be provided in our school, then he explores options for students. This program is therapeutic so it may be the best option for some students that need it.

Mr. Kaczor asked what is the cost.

Mrs. Guido stated it is \$53,000 as listed in the contract. She added that these costs are going up as more students have needs but the government is not funding special education subsidy at that same cost increase.

Mr. Kaczor asked why do we vote on this when there is really no choice.

Solicitor Lee Price stated if you say no you will probably end up in a due process hearing. He added that because it is a contract with a cost, the Board must approve.

Ms. Shank asked if tuition is District cost and if this is necessary for this particular student. She also asked why are there additional costs for things like ESY, Nursing, etc.

Dr. Egnor stated it is a private school who can bill separately as needed. Some schools like Clairview and Sunrise where we have students placed do not always bill separately.

General discussion ensued about the contract and the services included and the costs.

Dr. Egnor added that everything that can be done is done. It is not taken lightly when it comes to these kinds of placements. It is taken very seriously by the IEP team and Administration.

Mrs. Beveridge asked about any funding we could get.



Dr. Egnor explained that if students fall into the most costly tier, we can apply for contingency funds but because the level is so high, we have only had a few students that have qualified for that level of costs. He explained how the funding is distributed.

Mrs. Key stated the federal government needs to increase funds for special education. It is getting worse and worse.

Dr. Egnor stated this has been investigated for the last year and a half.

Mrs. Watson asked if this school is new.

Dr. Egnor stated yes within the last 2 years.

Mrs. Beveridge asked how many students attend this program.

Dr. Egnor stated the last check was 6 students. He believes it will fill up as time goes on and the maximum capacity of their license is 24 students.

Dr. Egnor stated the cost is similar to other placements but due to recent behaviors, students have needed to receive therapeutic settings to address behaviors. We plan for and anticipate for students to return after the behavior is addressed.

Solicitor Lee Price recommended to the Board that there is disruption that can occur when we are not able to provide the education.

Mrs. Beveridge asked is this considered a long-term placement.

Dr. Egnor stated his expectation would be 2-5 years.

Mrs. Watson asked is there any talk for insurance to help cover these costs in the future.

Dr. Egnor stated that an IEP gives the school the ability to bill access but individual commercial insurance does not get billed.

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

**Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with ARIN Intermediate Unit for School Psychologist Services for 2024-2025 school year (Attachment 6-8)**

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Kaczor Seconded by: Mrs. Beveridge  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

**PERSONNEL: Approval of Personnel Log dated June 18, 2024 (Attached)**

MOTION: Motion by: Mrs. Guido Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

**Northern Westmoreland Career & Technology Center Report - Mr. Kaczor/Mr. Vinkovich**

Mr. Kaczor stated there is no report since the meeting is this coming Thursday.

## **Westmoreland Intermediate Unit Report - Mrs. Watson**

Mrs. Watson stated the report is on the drive.

## **PSBA Liaison Report - Mr. Deiseroth**

Mr. Deiseroth reported:

- Provided State legislative report from PSBA
- Governor signed HB 1097 - observance of 911 in schools

## **BUSINESS - MRS. CALLAHAN**

**Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Incurring of Nonelectoral Debt by the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds in the Aggregate Principal Amount Not to Exceed Twelve Million and 00/100 Dollars (\$12,000,000.00); Covenanting to Pay, and Pledging all Available Taxing Power for the Payment of, the Bonds; Establishing a Sinking Fund and Appointing a Sinking Fund Depository; Fixing the Form, Maximum Interest Rates, Maturity Dates, Redemption and Other Provisions for the Payment Thereof; Covenanting to Accept 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**

Mrs. Callahan stated for the last few months the Board has been evaluating information and discussion in regards to potential capital improvements needed throughout the District. The discussion included having Administration apply for a grant for up to \$5 million to offset some of the costs which she and Dr. Wagner submitted before the May deadline. Additionally, last month, the Board officially appointed bond council and underwriters in order to move forward with a bond issue in order to borrow funds needed to make improvements. Alisha Henry Reesh, with PNC Capital Markets, provided a thorough explanation of the finances and estimated costs and calculations and the process that happens to issue bonds. Alisha is here tonight to review a brief overview of current estimates and for any financial questions. Tonight, we have this very lengthy resolution item for the Board to vote on. Bond Council, Lisa Chiesa, from Clark Hill is our bond counsel and she is here as well to explain the very lengthy resolution that the Board is being asked to vote on tonight so I will turn it over to the Bond professionals.

Ms. Reesh explained the new money financing discussion. She reviewed the proposed new debt service. It is anticipated that debt will extend to 2035 keeping it to 10 Years. The annual budgetary impact of this bond issue at this time was presented. As previously discussed, we are using \$400,000 in net payments as the barometer for the bond issue.

Ms. Chiesa explained the debt ordinance satisfies 3 requirements. It is the resolution, complies with the local debt act and becomes the contract with holders of bonds. It includes details and restrictions. It is a parameters resolution because we are not actually selling bonds tonight. This way, Alisha and PNC can "time the market" to try to get the best deal for the District. You hand over authorization for President, Vice President and/or Secretary to sign off on the Bonds. The net debt service payment limit is set at \$500,000 just in case something happens with the market and term of 2035. But we think the market may come down. This serves as the official promise to hold to these amounts.

**MOTION:**      Motion by: Mrs. Guido      Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich

## **DISCUSSION:**

Mrs. Guido asked is this just for one issue and are these the maximum/worst case scenario.

Ms. Chiesa responded yes, it is for one bond issue no more than \$10 million to be bank qualified. She added yes, it is basically worst case and that Mrs. Callahan and Ms. Reesh communicate regularly to try to time it correctly.



Mrs. Schager asked if the January 1, 2024 payment is correct.

Ms. Reesh stated it should read January 2025.

Mrs. Beveridge asked about the "all in true interest cost" on the summary. It is different in June as compared to May. Could it change again?

Ms. Reesh explained that rates change each day. It is based on current rates and the hope is for it to come in at a lower interest rate but it also depends on how soon you need the money.

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

#### **Authorize Jennifer S. Callahan to make all year-end budgetary transfers for fiscal year 2023-2024**

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Deiseroth Seconded by: Mrs. Guido

DISCUSSION:  
Ms. Shank asked if there is a document.

Mrs. Callahan stated no because it is the authorization for her to make transfers as she closes out fiscal year over the next few months.

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

#### **Approval of renewal of the following District insurance policies for period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025:**

- **Property, Liability, Crime, Equipment, Auto**
- **Educators Legal Liability**
- **Excess Liability**
- **Law Enforcement**
- **Cyber Liability**
- **Workers Compensation**

Mrs. Callahan stated last week she explained the recommended policies and costs.

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich Seconded by: Mr. Deiseroth

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

#### **Adopt Final General Fund Budget 2024-2025 (Attachment 6-9)**

Mrs. Callahan reported that the budget presented for adoption is a balanced budget of \$36,676,823 which includes using \$904,000 from the fund balance and includes a real estate tax increase of 6.5 mills. The proposed budget presented in May included an increase of 4.5 mills to cover operating costs and the Board voted to add an additional 2 mills for future bond payments for capital improvements needed.

Mrs. Callahan explained that over the past several months, the Board has looked at all of the detail of the budget for 2024-2025. We spent a lot of time at each meeting since March talking about the budget process and the fact that there are many people in the District involved in creating the data. We looked at all of the details of the expenditures. Like all other districts, personnel costs are the largest expenditures. The District's overall payroll costs actually decreased from prior year. However, benefit costs increased. We talked about what else has changed from year to year, what categories have had the largest increases and why. We looked at each category and discussed the amounts budgeted and what items it entails.



Mrs. Callahan stated the largest categories of increases are Special Education Services and Student Tuition, Employee Benefits, and the NWCTC cost. We looked at the Special Education and Special Placement details and the increased needs of our students and how over the past few years have doubled the costs and needs for classroom aides and assistants. Additionally, the number of students needing special placement has tripled in the last 4 years. These placements can be extremely costly but are necessary based on the students IEP.

Mrs. Callahan explained how the Board reviewed revenues – local, state and federal funding. We talked about how our District has about an \$850,000 decrease in federal revenue this year due to the end of the ESSERS funding. As a District we split the largest portion of funds and spent it over the 3 years as allowed. We discussed state revenue amounts expected. The largest state revenue item is Basic Ed Subsidy. We have 50% of the governors proposed budget amounts in the budget at this time as the state budget is not yet finalized. We looked at local revenue items and amounts. We talked about how our District residents Earned Income is up over prior years resulting in increased revenue. We spent a lot of time talking about real estate tax and the increase included in the budget. We talked a lot about the fact that our overall real estate assessed value is not increasing and with the large decrease we realized a few years ago from about 6 large commercial property tax appeals. We lost nearly \$650,000 in revenue from those appeals. Because of these factors, our assessed value rate is the same as it was in 2015-2016 but our expenses have increased substantially since then.

Mrs. Callahan stated the Board also considered the tax increase impact on the average homeowner. Because the state property tax allocation amount increased, approved homesteads/farmsteads will receive a larger discount on their property tax bills this year by about \$44. The average homeowner will pay about \$106 more in real estate tax which is an increase of 3.9%.

Mrs. Callahan also reviewed the changes since the draft budget of March. It had a deficit of \$370,000. We were able to eliminate that deficit over the 2 months by making changes. The largest changes that impacted the bottom line were the combined administrative positions cut and/or combined.

Mrs. Callahan presented new information tonight for public and Board review that shows county comparisons of budget and financial data. The following data and information was presented:

- 2019-2020 through 2023-2024 data including assessed value increase, millage rate, tax increase and revenue from assessed value. This shows that most of the districts had substantial increases in assessed value over the years resulting in increased revenue from assessed value, or “natural growth”. Burrell has had a nearly \$4 million decrease in assessed value. Therefore, without even raising taxes, many of the other districts have gained revenue amounts of \$500,000 to \$1,800,000 more than our District within that 4 year period. This equates to a range of 3 mills to 12 mills of taxes.
- Burrell School District expenditures during that same period increased 11.4% and again most districts increased at this rate or more.
- Expenditure per ADM for 2021-2022 as shown on Pennsylvania Department of Education website indicates that Burrell expenditures per ADM are approximately in the middle of the county and some spend much more per student.
- Market Value Aid Ratio and Market Value Personal Income Aid Ratio for 2023-2024 indicates Burrell is the 5<sup>th</sup> “wealthiest” in the county. These numerical calculations are based on sales values of taxable real estate and personal income for our District residents as compared to the rest of the state. These figures are used in determining amounts of some of the state subsidies we receive so in summary, we would receive less than the majority of districts in our county when this calculation is factored.
- Expected 2024-2025 tax increases and increased revenue from natural growth also show several districts gaining much more revenue than Burrell. Our expected tax revenue from natural growth is just \$662, while other districts have an increase of \$100,000 to \$345,000.
- State Basic Education Revenue based on governors proposed budget shows Burrell receiving an increase of 7.26% while the majority of the county is receiving a range of 9% - 15%.
- Comparisons of county Salary data for administrators shows Burrell’s administrators receive about 3.7% less than the county average. Teacher pay at Burrell for the first 10 years is lower than the county average as well.

Mrs. Callahan summarized that it is important to consider all of this data when discussing our tax rate, which is higher than most in the county, but it is driven by all of these things that have an impact on overall revenue. Unfortunately, our lack of natural growth in assessed value is one of the biggest impacts driving the tax increase in order for us to keep up with the increases in costs that all districts and all households are dealing with.

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Kaczor Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich

DISCUSSION:

Mrs. Schager asked for confirmation that it includes 4.5 mills for budget costs and 2 mills for a bond issue payment.

Mrs. Callahan responded yes, that is correct.

Mrs. Schager asked since the bond payment shows about \$100,000 in payment due in 2024-2025, couldn't we reduce the tax increase.

Mrs. Callahan responded yes, the Board can vote to reduce the tax amount presented. However, she explained that the 2 mills is what is needed to cover the overall bond payments that will carry through the debt service amount beginning the following year. It is less this first year since it is expected to be a half year by the time the bonds are actually issued.

Mr. Kaczor stated it will hurt more later and we may be limited by the Act 1 Index.

Mrs. Schager stated she understands and believes it is needed to be done but can't justify it.

Ms. Shank stated she also asked that question last week. She personally has 2 homes and 100+ acres and buildings. She is paying a large increase as well and does not want to increase taxes but feels that these things need done. There are things we have no control over, such as Special Education placements, etc. If doing this now, she is unhappy about it but understands it needs to take place and then we need to try to get some control over other things.

Mrs. Schager stated she understands and is concerned more for elderly people who don't work.

Mrs. Watson asked is there a way to meet in the middle as an option. She stated 4 members voted against the Proposed Budget in May because of the extra 2 mills. She asked if there is a way to meet in the middle considering all the ways it may shake out in the end.

Mrs. Schager stated if we meet in the middle and get spending under control things could look brighter next year.

Mr. Kaczor argued that it is important to consider that this year there is an increase in the homestead/farmstead reduction so the impact will be less than the full amount. He added that we do not know what the Act 1 index will be and we will still need to increase again next year to cover the full bond payment amount. He believes the Board needs to move forward with the full 6.5 mill tax increase.

Solicitor Lee Price suggested that the Board can reopen the budget if the state funding comes in higher than anticipated.

Mrs. Callahan stated the budget wouldn't really need to be reopened for state funding it would actually just go into fund balance.

Mrs. Key stated we will likely have to raise taxes again the following year.



Mr. Kaczor suggested the county needs to stop reducing the Assessed Values at appeals.

Mrs. Guido stated it is a large increase and people get angry and she gets that, but if we reduce a mill now, we are already setting ourselves up to have a bigger increase next year. She thinks people will still be angry even if we deduct 1 mill from tax increase. She doesn't believe that the cost benefit is not worth it.

Mrs. Watson stated she understands both sides. We are being conservative and safe but it is a large increase, and more than what people are used to; so she thinks meeting in the middle might make sense. It is a slight risk but she is advocating for meeting in middle with 1 mill less.

VOTE – ROLL CALL: Mr. Vinkovich, Ms. Shank, Mrs. Guido, Mr. Kaczor, Mr. Deiseroth: All voted "YES"  
Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Schager, Mrs. Beveridge, Mrs. Key: All voted "NO"

Motion Carried

#### **Approval of Resolution Authorizing 2024 Levy of Taxes (Attachment 6-10)**

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Kaczor Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor except Mrs. Key, Mrs. Schager, Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Beveridge voted NO

Motion Carried

#### **Approval of Resolution Authorizing 2024 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion (Attachment 6-11)**

Mrs. Callahan explained that this is the resolution that distributes the state tax allocation funding to approved property owners. It equates to \$2,203 assessed value and tax reduction amount of \$258.

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich Seconded by: Mrs. Guido  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

#### **Permission to discard obsolete equipment**

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich Seconded by: Mr. Deiseroth

DISCUSSION:  
Mr. Kaczor asked have we ever thought about an auction site. He suggested we look into a site with the state for any remaining items and/or for future discards.

VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

#### **Approval of Capital Reserve Fund Budget for 2024-2025**

Mrs. Callahan stated we talked about this last week, but a change has been made since then. Mr. Ferra has jumped into his new role as Director of Athletics and Building Operations and he was able to work with the Scoreboard Vendor and repair company to get our equipment working so we are not expecting to purchase a new board this coming year. But those funds have been reallocated toward safety equipment that Mrs. Roland discussed in her School Safety Report.

MOTION: Motion by: Mrs. Guido Seconded by: Mr. Kaczor  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried



## Communications

### Requests for Use of Buildings (Attachment 6-12)

MOTION: Motion by: Ms. Shank Seconded by: Mr. Deiseroth  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried

### Payment of Bills (Attachment 6-13)

MOTION: Motion by: Mr. Vinkovich Seconded by: Mr. Kaczor  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor except Mrs. Guido abstained from item# 88887777 and 88887800  
  
Motion Carried

### Additions to Agenda (Agenda Meeting only)

#### Comments from Public

None

Mrs. Key stated that she is thankful for the District permitting the Farmers Market to use Bon Air. There are so many additional vendors and it is really increasing success.

Mr. Kaczor asked if it is due to location

Mrs. Key responded yes and because Carly Logan has done a great job getting vendors.

Mrs. Watson congratulated the Tri City soccer teams that played in Edinboro this past weekend. The U12 girls and U14 boys were both undefeated and won championships.

### Adjournment at 9:33 PM

MOTION: Motion by: Mrs. Schager Seconded by: Mr. Vinkovich  
VOTE: Roll Call: All in Favor Motion Carried



Jennifer S. Callahan  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

JSC/mls