

**West Valley Central School Board of Education
Official Minutes**

**Regular Meeting December 15, 2020 via in person and ZOOM due to COVID
restrictions**

Members Present: Niesyty, Ploetz, Davis, Harmony, Klahn, Amanda, Frank

Others Present: Amodeo - ZOOM, O'Brien -ZOOM, Ward, Gugino, Boberg, Mark Jagord – Springville Journal, Alicia Dix, Jordan Robbins

I. CALL TO ORDER

Regular Meeting called to order at 7pm with Ploetz presiding.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE to the UNITED STATES FLAG

III. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to **ADOPT** the amended agenda as listed below:

Additions: Personnel item C, D

Deletions: none

Changes: none

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted.

IV. Correspondence/BOE information

Heather Klahn asked Carolyn Boberg to copy a letter from Mrs. Fisher regarding COVID 19 to hand out to each BOE member and Administration and a letter from DOH. The letter had to do with testing and our procedure. She asked if a letter could go out about our procedures to the parents.

Tim Ploetz proceeded with reading a letter from Kris Aldrow regarding the Food Pantry and needing more space. She states in her letter that there has been an increase in the number of clients in need of nutritional support and they utilize the pantry. The food pantry put together 49 food boxes for Thanksgiving. The West Valley food pantry requested the school to look at the opportunity to possibly utilize a classroom with an exterior door. The food pantry would have some flexibility to help with an expansion program. They are open to any suggestions from the West Valley School board and look forward to hearing from you. They have sent letters to other organizations within the town and are open to any suggestions. Mark Ward states that it is something we will have to look into. With COVID we are utilizing all of our rooms at this time. Depending on the storage that is needed we could possibly use the bus garage. Currently utilizing a space in the town building and they are running out of room. We receive a large donation from the school's national honor society, and it is greatly appreciated.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Board of Education invites you, the residents of our school community, to feel comfortable in sharing matters of interest or concern that you might have with us. The Board President will be happy to recognize those of you who wish to speak. Please indicate this on the sign in sheet and you will be called on in order, identify yourself with your name and address.

Those items brought to the attention of the Board during this time may be taken under consideration for future response or action. We ask that individual comments be limited to a few minutes in order to accomplish the evening's agenda.

We respectfully ask that issues related to specific school district personnel or students be brought to the attention of the Superintendent or Principal privately.

none

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

Within this section of the agenda, the Board of Education or Administration may take the opportunity to comment on matters of interest or concern.

Amanda Lawrence asks about COVID testing procedures and when will a letter go out. Tim Ploetz asked if this has to do with the letter and she states yes and she has been asked from parents also. Amanda asks if something will be on the website or a letter with information. Mark states that this is the first he has heard of this. Will need a little time to respond on this. Dan and I have been working on a letter that will be going out to parents soon. The problem is that the State goes back and forth on the requirements. What to do to if someone refuses the test, the amount of time to quarantine and distance learning. Our area is not designated yet to be tested. The governor wants to keep schools open because it is a safer place then other places. Lindsey Drozd has been a real asset through all of this.

Heather states that she agrees with Amanda and the Fisher family and others need a response. Heather just received the email right before coming here. Mark states that the problem with this being talked about now is that I wasn't aware of it and will need to have time to respond.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

Review of capital project with Young and Wright, Ashley shared her screen with the board for an update to the previous presentation. Jerry states that we are going to actually walk through the parts that are new to the project, and obviously answer any questions on these parts and if there are any questions on items that have already been presented. The main difference is that we have put a couple sketches of preliminary entrances in to give you some feel for the potential scope of the secure entrance. Then

we also added the capital outlay project. Ashley states that the priority is that the Board of Education is to review the scope and make a final determination of what the next capital project is going to be for the district. This once again, is the same educational building scope that we went through the lighting replacement were important too, so usually lighting and ceiling replacements go hand in hand. Replacing the sidewalks, playground and lockers but not all of them, lighting fixtures in the gymnasium, flooring issues both carpet and tile. Some window replacements along the gym corridor, window blinds, some mechanical equipment items, the exhaust fans that we talked about previously, ventilation in the weight room and fire alarm upgrades. The nurse's suite, some office renovations and general classroom renovations. Secure entrance renovations were shown in two different locations and the pros and cons with both and the cost difference. Either changing the current entrance to be more secure or moving it to another door entrance with a canopy over the entrance so people know where to enter the building. They did some quick schematic layouts right now of trying to just fit some office space, kitchen space, toilet rooms, sort of reconfigure the main office and create a secure entrance. Using your existing main entry, we wouldn't do anything to the outside of the building, it will stay the same, retain the same historic character that it has. We would look at putting in a third set of vestibule doors here. So, any existing staff that have badges would basically still be able to enter the building the same way. You would have to use your badge to access through each set of doors using the reader. Any visitor or student coming into the building, parents to drop something off, would be buzzed in through the door, sign in and then proceed to wherever they need to go in a secure way. The other secure entrance would have a canopy over it and a reconfiguration of reception area and offices. The second option is more expensive and would be more accessible to the gym, library, cafeteria and elementary classrooms. We would create a large vestibule with canopy area. Make some grade changes outside to make the outside look correct. Once decided which entrance will be done, we will talk to those employees that will be affected with the change. We have the budget to go either way. The schedule was gone over for the timing of the SEQRA, capital project vote and legal notices. The project will potentially start in March of 2022 and wrap up at the end of July. Just a quick update on the capital outlay project, you have \$100,000 and are completing our drawings for the project. Pictures and field measurements were done last time we were out there. We will be sending all those drawings and workbooks to the State Education Department in January. The State review times are between eight and ten weeks. We are hoping to build the project in late March, early April. Then the construction work would take place from April until June, and then we will get everything wrapped up by June 30 so that we can get the project closed out. The project would include putting at least 8-to-10-foot fence around the dust collector, fix cracked windowsills, replacing brick and pointing around the main entrance and some cracks along the foundation. It is not going to increase taxes because the community share because we receive aid and we have reserve funds. The capital outlay project and technology project will also have no effect on taxes. We will have a lot coming up here in the district and the price is right. Certainly, the need is there. Maintaining what we have is important.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Interim Superintendent, Mark Ward reported on a letter that he sent to every elected official in the county, state and at the national level concerning the school and community's deficiency with internet service and cell service in the area. It's not fair for our kids to suffer because of the lack of infrastructure. With changes in how teachers are teaching the students by remote learning this needs to become a priority. Without the internet or cell phone capability today, you are like a second-class citizen. And it also kills us economically because if businesses cannot connect, why would that want to come to a place where there is no internet or cell service. It is unfortunately affecting the education process. I know everyone around the table knows this but I thought writing a letter to at least try to help bring this issue to the forefront to let it be know how this is affecting the community and school negatively.

I have been thinking about a four-page newsletter in January, that will just feature the capital project. I have been thinking that basically what you have included in the project seems to be items from the building conditions survey that need to be done. This will provide an early introduction to this concept. Hopefully we have people listening on ZOOM, so they will get a little idea of what the plan is. Hopefully they can get excited about it.

Communication seems to be a tactic that gets thrown around from time to time. And I think you know it, myself included, good communication is so important to keep people in the loop and it is important to all of us. We need to have teachers communicating with families and students and in the reverse. But we do certainly have an obligation to continue to do our due diligence to communicate with families and that is something that Dan is going to be stressing and I am stressing as well. This needs to happen with this kind of delivery of education. With a small district as this is, there is no excuse to have good communication. It is also important if a student is having trouble to catch it early before it turns into an uphill battle. The hope is to encourage everybody to kind of work together on it. It is not a matter of pointing fingers. It is doing what we need to do to do our jobs.

We have a limited service laboratory application filled out for COVID testing. If the district gets to the point where we need to test a percentage of our population, we are ready. There is a mobile unit and they would provide the swabs. A problem with the mobile unit is that if everyone in our area went yellow or orange or red, they might not be as available. Our school nurse would be the lead person if this situation arises. We paid the application fee and are prepared if we have to take care of this ourselves. As for students we have most grade levels back today except two grade levels will be back on the 18th.

B. Principal, Daniel Amodeo reports on where we are with our target school designation. Shawna, myself and a couple other staff members have been working with the regional partnership on developing a plan to submit to the State. There are several different components to our plan. The one area is the State Education Department which is a special education quality assurance department. They are working more directly with Shawna and the special education program, our processes and procedures. Basic tier one or instructional level for everyone, at tier two level which is instruction for targeted students that may need assistance and then the tier three level, which would be even more targeted assistance for general education for special education students. So we have done most of that analysis and that has really been the foundation of our needs assessment and from there what we have done is completed initiative inventory, the things that we are doing to address some of what was determined in that needs assessment. And then from there, the regional partnerships submit to the State. And right now, they've gotten through the first level of approval. And they are looking to go through the second level of approval and then once we get that back we will start looking at those activities that we put in our initial inventory, some of which we have already started. One of those that we have talked a lot about is our instructional coaching with our elementary teachers and our middle school math teachers. Obviously the COVID situation being in school and transitioning to remote has thrown a little bit of inconsistency in that, but, nonetheless. Our instructional coaches were in a couple weeks ago and met virtually online with some of our staff late last week as well. We are still finding the way, regardless of the instructional format that we have to provide that instructional coaching to implement a common resource for all of our students. Then in seventh and eighth grade we are looking at math, and transitioning that in June, some of the high school methods in algebra. So that all kind of all goes together and we want to move forward with that for next school year as well. Having that support from CABOCES in our school building on a regular basis to provide coaching and to expand what it is that we are actually doing with our staff and giving them even more so that can trickle down to our students and they can start showing improvement in our children and our performance.

Parent conferences were held on Monday and Tuesday right before Thanksgiving. It ended up all were held virtual and I can tell you I attended between 16 and 20 virtual parent conferences and I was very thankful for our families to put themselves out there in that format. On their student device and a great opportunity in the secondary we met as a team of secondary teachers, rather than having a parent have a one on one conference with one teacher then going to the next teacher. It just made it much more seamless and much easier on the parent. So that is something that we want to do. Looking forward to next year, whether it is virtual or in person we will do a team approach. We want to maintain that connection and that communication with families. Parent Portal is a good resource for parents to keep up to date on student progress. Each year we modify teachers staying after school to help and assist students. We currently have a calendar in the upstairs hallway and the teachers write down the day that they are available to stay afterwards. Teachers on the average are available to stay

afterwards two or three times a week. I have recently asked the teachers to create a calendar that can be viewed on our website. What often happens is that communication with a parent or email stating their student is missing an assignment. This will be a good tool for the parents. We have Shawna working with staff right now on the social, emotional piece of a student's progress which could be addressed through some type of support plan.

C. Business Official, Ann O'Brien reported that on the agenda is a motion for contract agreement with personal touch. Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic there was an opportunity for the District to apply for a program through NYSED Child Nutrition that would allow us to receive a higher reimbursement rate from the federal government for breakfast and lunch. There was not much time given to take advantage of the opportunity, but we were able to submit an application before the deadline. Based on an estimated number of meals for this year, the District would receive additional revenues. Part of the requirement calls for the District to enter into an emergency contract with Personal Touch which also has to be submitted to NYSED Child Nutrition. This contract allows them to receive a piece of the pie. There will be a resolution on the agenda to approve an emergency contract with Personal Touch. You may notice that the agreement is for a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Nobody seems to have an answer as to why NYS is using the SFSP agreement for this opportunity, during the regular school year. This is what is required by Child Nutrition to participate in the program.

D. Director of Special Education, Shawna Gugino reported that CSE meetings are being ran like parent conferences – virtual and are going well. Meetings have almost 100% family participation. So, going forward it is definitely going to be an option that we are going to always present to parents. It helps parents feel like they are giving meaningful input in their student's education and that they are still part of the team, even with COVID and keeping distant. Wanted to elaborate a little bit since we are starting to get into budget season. A couple years ago, we started 12:1:1 classroom and there were questions and concerns regarding, the ability to fill those classrooms. A 12:1:1 classroom consists of up to 12 students, 1 special education teacher and 1 classroom aid. We have 2 rooms – 1 for grades 1-3 and 1 for grades 4-6 because you can do a 3-year span. Our classrooms have 8 and 9 students, respectively. You may ask why we would have a 12:1:1 without 12 students. It has to do with our state aide and our threshold. A threshold is the cost of educating a student that the district pays first before the state aid comes in. This number is set by NYS and we are told what it is. We do not have control over their formula. This also changes every year and Ann and I go on the website and check every summer to see what that number will be for the school year. In addition, as I mentioned last month, we provide the speech, OT, PT services and we are able to bill Medicaid. These figures do not include the additional monies from that we can bill for. Therefore, it is still a savings for the district to hire staff and have classrooms that are not at capacity due to the way our state aid is calculated.

The decision to start a classroom is based on these factors, so you may see rooms created that are not necessarily full at the time. However, there are additional benefits as well as financial – keeping the students in district peer relationships, familiarity, curriculum implementation, and family connects to the school. The benefits our rooms enhance is the opportunity for our students to remain in their home district and the gain to the taxpayers of fiscal responsibility.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve the unofficial minutes of November 17th and December 8th, 2020, July and August Treasurer's report, budget status, revenue status, extra classroom activities, July and August Warrants, July and August Bank Reconciliations and November budget transfers.
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

X. PERSONNEL

A. Moved by Frank, seconded by Lawrence to approve Makayla Machelski as an uncertified substitute teacher, effective December 16, 2020. Pending fingerprint clearance. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Davis to approve Catherine Sabota as a substitute nurse, effective December 11, 2020. Fingerprint clearance on file.
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Frank, seconded by Lawrence to approve Melissa Fish as a substitute monitor and substitute cleaner for the remainder of the 2020/2021 school year. Pending fingerprint clearance. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

D. Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to accept the resignation of Donna Gerlach, with regret, from her monitor position, effective December 11, 2020 and substitute cleaner position, effective January 9, 2021. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

XI. OLD BUSINESS:

none

XII: NEW BUSINESS:

A. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Klahn to approve the following resolution; The Summer Food Service Program Emergency Contract between the West Valley Central School District and Personal Touch Food Service, Inc. effective September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to approve the CSE recommendations. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Klahn, seconded by Harmony to approve the following job descriptions; Trap club advisor, Boys on the Right Track advisor/coach and National Honor Society advisor. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

D. Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to approve the collective bargaining agreement between West Valley Central School District and West Valley Administrators' Association for three school years, commencing on July 1, 2020 and terminating on June 30, 2023, unless further extended, modified, or sooner terminated as hereinafter provided. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

E. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the West Valley Central School District and the West Valley Administrators Association who are currently engaged in negotiations for a Collective Bargaining Agreement. The District has recognized the Association as the exclusive representative of the Principal and Director of Special Education and whereas, at the time of the MOA, the District and Association are negotiating the Parties' first CBA, which is expected to have a term of three (3) years from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

F. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Davis to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the West Valley Service Employees Association and West Valley Central School District, who are parties to a Collective Bargaining Agreement dated July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022 regarding additional work performed by Donna Gerlach.
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

G. Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to increase the hourly rate of pay for the substitute nurse position from \$20 to \$25, effective December 11, 2020.
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

The board of education agreed to move forward with the capital project.

XIII: Moved by Frank, seconded by Davis **ADJOURN** at 8:34pm
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

District Clerk
Meeting minutes from transcribed dictation and audio