

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

**Regular Meeting September 15, 2020 via ZOOM meeting due to
COVID restrictions**

Members Present: Niesyty, Ploetz, Davis, Harmony, Klahn, Lawrence

Absent: Frank

Others Present: Amodeo, O'Brien, Ward, Gugino, Bryan Hansen, Lindsey Drozd, Jordan Robbins, Orlando Perez, Meghan George-Baker, Kaley McCracken, Alex Fisher, Mark Jagord – Springville Journal, Kay Conrad, Robert Conrad, John Seltzer, Connie Jo and Emily Kazmierczak, Dana Lembke, Steve Kenworthy, Tracy Chai, Lisa Green

I. CALL TO ORDER

Regular Meeting called to order at 7:03pm with Ploetz presiding.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE to the UNITED STATES FLAG

Administration of the Oath of Office to appointed Board Member (BOE CLERK)

- Amanda Lawrence was sworn in as an appointed Board member until the next election.

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

Additions: Dana Lembke - presentation

Deletions: Personnel item (D) Lisa Slisz

Changes: none

6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

IV. Correspondence/BOE information

none

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.

*Meghan George-Baker told the board how good it feels to be back in the classroom with our students. We have an amazing staff that will do whatever it takes to make the best and safest learning environments for students. I am incredibly proud to stand with my fellow teachers and support staff and work beside them every day. She would like to turn her speech into a lesson. I am going to ask you the board to pick out the claim, the evidence and the reasoning from my speech. Here we go. The current Board of Education at West Valley has been fiscally irresponsible. On July 6th Mr. Eric Lawton emailed the staff to inform them that he would be entering into retirement from West Valley Central School in June 2021. He gave his praises to the staff and said you have an outstanding administrative team here with Ann, Dan and Shawna. The teachers here are second to none and truly care for our students. The support staff does an amazing job of keeping things going on a small budget. Effective August 11, 2020 a settlement agreement was signed and agreed to by both the board and Mr. Lawton constituting his irrevocable resignation with the district in this agreement, Mr. Lawton would be paid in two installments, which will equate to \$106,107.09. And on top of this he will receive his health benefits. The terms of the settlement agreement cannot disclose to any third party except his spouse and legal attorneys and they were also bound by the confidentiality of the agreement. Likewise, the board was also bound to the terms of the agreement that the contents could not be disclosed to a third party, then it's a good thing the Freedom of Information Law exists. On August 14 per board policy I requested to see Mr. Lawton annual performance evaluations. On September 4 I received confirmation that evaluation records did not exist for Mr. Lawton. In other words, Mr. Lawton never received an evaluation in the eight years that he was in our district. As of August 18th, appointment for Mr. Mark Ward as interim superintendent of schools was agreed upon. In Mr. Ward's employment agreement, it states that he will be paid a daily per diem rate of \$600 for each full day of actual service rendered to the district and will receive no additional benefits. Why is this evidence important? In the midst of a global pandemic and when state aid to schools have been on the minds of every superintendent and school business official since budget time last spring, the board felt this was a good time to act on this. When other schools were planning on how they would cut back on spending on already small budgets, as Mr. Lawton referenced. The West Valley Board of Education decided to buy off the superintendent and hire an interim superintendent. I think two superintendents when the state aid had already been cut by 20%..... you were being fiscally irresponsible. So, Mr. President what are those upcoming changes ahead for the district that you referenced during the August 11th meeting that justify this action?

*Orlando Perez directs a comment regarding the Spring Journal not mentioning John Zerfas, Steve Wedvik or Kevin Murray comments from the last meeting. Article was one sided and would really like the board to consider a different paper reporting on the meetings, to give both sides. Last meeting, I listened to the Vice President of the WVTa speak about children not politics. This meeting she stated that the board is not being fiscally responsible and essentially, we have more in common than I thought. In 2013 NYS Controller issued a report, I suggest that the board of education read it, it said that the district was irresponsibly over budgeting and the reserve was too great, that was

beyond the legal limit of 4% and at that that time almost 9%. The district, Mr. Lawton superintendent and President Steve Kowalski wrote a letter back and they created a corrective action plan which they were supposed to do. The corrective action plan basically stated that we will try budget as low as possible and spend out reserve to meet legal limit. July 2018 the controllers issued another report. This report says that not only did he not follow your corrective action, but your reserve is even bigger to the point of 12% unrestricted funds and 52% of your budget is in reserve, but in various categories. So rather than spending it down and giving taxpayers relief. Utilize this money to improve the facility or enhancing education traditions, but instead the district continues to take our money. So, I heard rumors that there were issues with the facility, it is a small town. I took time to look at the building condition report from 2015 and the itemized deficiencies. I believe there were 38 unsatisfactory and as I look many still exist, ceiling tiles, OSHA violation and the list goes on and on. We have money in the bank where is the disconnect – fix things. Where was the WVTA, they should have been asking him for his resignation eight years, he was not fixing the problems. The problem is not with this board it was with who was on the board in 2013 and 2018. Well I work in a facility, doors that do not latch properly, outlets that do not work and I am hearing teachers and staff saying what a great school this is and leave it all the same. To me all this is trying to say is that you are worried about your jobs. If you really care about what your responsibility is give an education in a facility that has been maintained and not overtaxing the public. You have to stop allowing this to happen and allowing the school to continue over taxing us. We have the money in the bank.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

Dana Lembke presented on an Outdoor Recreation Club proposal. He would like to restart the WVCS Outdoor Recreation & Science Adventure Club with changes to the original form. The philosophy as to the importance of restarting the club is to teach leadership skills, provide physical activity, low risk and pandemic permissible and increase awareness of surroundings. Proposed activities for this school year are hiking on area trails, disc golf, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, snow tubing, mountain biking, mountain biking, rafting, fishing, kayaking/rafting, geocaching, ropes course, guided nature walk, paleontological dig and camping trip. Activities will depend on what the students are interested in.

With COVID and the constant flux of restrictions/ guidance/etc. We will start the program small and then increase the amount of times we get together and where we can travel. Showing students how enjoyable the outdoors can be will be beneficial for them personally and educationally. There is a lot of flexibility within this club and I feel the students would really enjoy this.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Interim Superintendent, Mark Ward reports on a few things - there is a bubble or two on the roof and flashing that need to be repaired - we have already called Jamestown roofing and Trimco roofing which are the original installers to come take a look at it. Parking lot lights are near the end of its useful life. If we move forward with a

capital project we will need to fix. The first four days of school have been great as well as the first two days of school for students. The four superintendent days that we had at the beginning of school were very well thought out and planned. Teachers were very dedicated and focused on learning how instruction will be different than years previous. There has been a lot of separation over this period of time and getting back together and a lot of excitement over the first two days. Traded days with the teacher December 23 will be a student day as opposed to a day off. This will give us an additional snow day. Lindsey will be doing sub calling this year. Microsoft certification is quite a program – we are doing to do a press release to Springville Journal on OTH to promote achievement of teachers. The maintenance room is going to be made into a conference room. This will help to achieve COVID rules and safety in general. Maintenance will be sharing a room with the cleaners. The board has agreed to move forward with the capital project. Will need to address deficiencies first. Would like board to review Building Conditions Survey and the scope of work that was previously proposed. He believes a project needs to be done, but the board has to agree. I did a walk around with Bill Sloand and there are things that need repair. It is just like your home – it needs to be maintained. You can have a maintenance program to help but you still need things to be done now.

B. Principal, Daniel Amodeo would like to thank students and families in being brave to come for in person instruction. Would like to thank staff for flexibility and patience during the process of returning. Will continue working on the kinks. Thinks the livestreaming of classes is a unique thing that West Valley is doing. We will be setting a new date and format for open house. Parks grant may assist with Dana Lembke's proposal for an outdoor recreation club. Would like to thank Dana for proposal.

C. Business Official, Ann O'Brien – no report

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve the unofficial minutes from the following ZOOM meetings; June 1st, 16th, 22nd, 29th, July 7th reorganizational and regular, July 27th, August 10th and August 11th, 2020. May Treasurer's report, budget status, revenue status, extra classroom activities; May Warrants. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

X. PERSONNEL

A. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Davis to approve Mark J Ward, Interim Superintendent as the Safety Coordinator, Civil Rights Compliance Officer and a member of the Emergency Management Team during his time as Interim Superintendent, at no additional pay. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Harmony to accept the resignation, with regret, of Bonnie Frank as a substitute for the elementary office during the 2020/21 school year. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Davis, seconded by Klahn to approve the following list of advisors for the 2020/2021 school year:

- *co senior class advisor and co senior class assistant – Dana Lembke & Meghan George-Baker
 - *Sophomore class advisor – Lindsey Drozd
 - *7th & 8th grade advisor – Rachel Mychajluk
 - *National Junior Honor Society advisor – Bryan Hansen
 - *Student Council advisor – Rachel Mychajluk
 - *Yearbook advisor – Jackie Mumbach
 - *Safety Patrol Coordinator – Natalie Galvin
 - *PreK Grant writer – Pat Rinko
 - *7th & 8th grade assistant – Natalie Galvin
 - *Yearbook assistant – Hannah Mazzuto
 - *Junior class advisor – Hannah Mazzuto
- 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

D. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve Donna Gerlach and Lisa Slisz as substitute cleaners for the 2020/2021 school year, effective September 8th. Fingerprint clearance is complete and on file. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

E. Moved by Lawrence, seconded by Niesyty to approve Kendall Aldridge as a substitute certified teacher for the 2020/2021 school year, effective September 16th. Fingerprint clearance is complete and on file. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

F. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Davis to approve Ashley Foster as a substitute monitor and a substitute clerk for the 2020/2021 school year, effective September 16th. Fingerprint clearance is on file. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

G. Moved by Lawrence, seconded by Davis to approve Lindsey Drozd as the substitute caller, \$3,800 stipend for position and Wellness Coordinator, \$1,000 stipend for this position during the 2020/2021 school year. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

XI. OLD BUSINESS:

none

XII: NEW BUSINESS:

A. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Davis to accept a very generous donation of \$2,190 from Merry-Go-Round Playhouse to be applied to our general fund for Arts in Education programming. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Lawrence to surplus outdated Science textbooks by McGraw-Hill; (27) textbooks ISBN-0-02-280036-0/3, (1) each of the following; reading in survival resources ISBN-0-02-280168-5/3, transparencies ISBN-0-02-280236-3/3, teacher edition ISBN-0-02-280091-3/3, activity resource ISBN-0-02-280175-8/3, test preparation ISBN-0-02-280242-8/3, assessment ISBN-0-02-280148-0/3, teacher edition ISBN-0-02-280090-5/3 and Teacher edition ISBN 0-02-280092-1/3
6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Davis, seconded by Lawrence to designate the following Representative – Mike Harmony (BOE member) to the Legislative Committee of the Cattaraugus/Allegany County School Boards' Association for the 2020/21 school year. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

D. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Lawrence to appoint the following Board of Education member, Heather Klahn to be on the policy committee, to review existing policies, for the 2020/21 school year. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

E. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve a revised school calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

F. Moved by Klahn, seconded by Harmony to surplus library books that are outdated and worn. **(list attached to the minutes)** 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to go into Executive session at 7:48pm pm for legal. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Moved by Harmony, seconded by Davis to come out of Executive session at 9:05pm. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

XIII: Moved by Harmony, seconded by Davis to **ADJOURN** at 9:06pm
6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

District Clerk
Meeting minutes from transcribed dictation and audio