

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

**Special Meeting August 17, 2020 via ZOOM meeting due to COVID restrictions**

Members Present: Niesyty, Ploetz, Klahn, Davis, Harmony, Frank, Kent via ZOOM  
Others Present: Amodeo, O'Brien via ZOOM, Boberg, Gugino via ZOOM, Bryan Hansen, Scott Payne, Mark Ward

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Special Meeting called to order at 7:02pm with Ploetz presiding.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE to the UNITED STATES FLAG**

**III.** Moved by Davis, seconded by Frank to **ADOPT** the amended AGENDA

Additions: Personnel item (A) wording

Deletions: none

Changes: none

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

**IV. Correspondence/BOE information**

Timothy Ploetz told the board that he did not know how to handle a letter that the board received. He asked the board if everyone read the letter.

Gary Niesyty states that there is misinformation that is going around about the board wanting to close the school and everything else as far as using COVID to hide behind and doing things secretly. No one ever shows up to our meetings. Mike Harmony would like to know where this information is coming from also. Tim Ploetz states that between COVID, contractual meetings, interviews there has been a lot to take care of. Mike states that we lost 3 meetings due to COVID April and May. For Steve to say that we are doing these things during COVID and the community cannot come into our meetings and not comment on ZOOM. Gary Niesyty just does not understand, we have done everything on the up and up. As far as Eric's stuff were we supposed to have the community vote, we have talked to the lawyer and followed his advice. Heather Klahn states that we have to make sure that we represent everybody as a whole, instead of just one individual. Represent everybody fairly, whether it be people inside, people watching live on zoom, people in this room. Charlie states that the board that sits here has inherited how the meetings were being conducted by prior boards. Mike agrees. Heather states that we need to make changes and we need to show that we want to be transparent. Mike states that his first meeting as a member was told to sit down and shut up. Yeah, I know we are getting something done. And that I just don't know where the misinformation is coming from. So, if we can clear it up through the website, Facebook, whatever we can do. I was thinking about is there a way we can get the data from the people that are calling in and using zoom since Zoom is going to be a new thing. Heather states that the people outside I feel that they do truly care and why they weren't here two years ago, I do not know. I don't have the answers to that. But I think now, they feel they are just not being heard, they not being listened to and not being

represented fairly. Darla states that it definitely seems like that is how the community is feeling by what I am hearing. The letters that we have received are very heartfelt and I appreciated people reaching out and sharing their voice with us. But every letter has the tone that we have made a decision and we are closing the school. And that is not true. We have not discussed that, and everybody keeps saying we are trying to annex. We have openly as a board said we are not annexing, and we are not interested in annexing. That is not something we want to do as a board, which is why we moved forward with an efficiency study so that we can figure out what to do with our school. How to make the best changes and as we are putting forth our best faith effort to do that. I feel like the community is very misinformed on what it is that we are actually trying to do. And in collecting data and getting information so that we can say we are making the best decision for the entire community as a whole, as you guys keep saying we are not moving fast enough. And we are not making what they claim our knee jerk reactions. We are trying to get all the information and all of our ducks in a row before we start making any kind of decisions about where we want to go, what we want to do. It is really difficult to be in a volunteer position that we have been elected to or appointed to and trusted by the community to make these decisions and we are trying to do the best we can. You know we are all community members. I just do not understand. Mike states that maybe they looked at the efficiency study as a negative instead of a start. Maybe they looked into building conditions survey as a negative instead of a start because we had, no information on any of them. And now that we are getting the information and getting the information the correct way. Now we can make very well-informed decisions Instead of just blank decisions like before. So maybe we are getting too much done for you guys.

## **V. 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.

## **VI. PRESENTATIONS**

none

## **VII. REPORTS**

A. Principal, Daniel Amodeo reported on parent meetings and many of the questions were regarding mask wearing, social distancing and what happens if we do have a case of COVID 19 what our protocol is. Screening children and staff at home. Where we are with our plan. We have two more parent meeting and staff. We can then start moving forward to officially decide on what model we will go with. We are going to go forward with the start of the school year. Regardless of the model we talked about last week, changing our calendar and moving our superintendent conference days to the week after Labor Day. Two of those days that are in the calendar later will be regular days of school. This will allow us time that is needed to properly train the staff. And the event in the hopes of having 100% in person school with all the new requirements, the health and safety protocols, as well as our other trainings that we need to have done so that

we are well positioned to prepare for the start of the school year. So, that is on the agenda tonight. We did an inventory of desks and we believe we have enough for everyone. We will be able to have the maximum capacity allowed in the classroom space, such as the cafeteria, the round tables are not six foot in diameter. We will have three lunch times. Facility use request for the baseball field. Last meeting it was approved for Mr. Cole to take an unpaid leave to finish his Administrative internship. So, we posted for a long-term music substitute position and we have a couple of applicants. We have screened applicants to fill our elementary special education vacancy. I will hopefully have an appointment for you on August 25<sup>th</sup>. A question last week, if we were to go 100% in person instruction and there are students that we have to provide the opportunity to do remote learning for whatever reason the family has decided. We have to provide them with an option of remote. So, while the class is going on in the building those students at home will be videoing into that classroom. Are we violating any of the students FERPA rights? We reached out BOCES and we are okay. How many schools are planning on opening full time? Three in the region.

B. Business Official, Ann O'Brien resolution on the agenda for the tax warrant. The 2020/21 tax warrant that we discussed during the budget process. It is 2,883,716 that is a reduction in the tax levy from the prior year 1.03% or \$30,000. I would like to point out that our overall assessed value did increase by \$298,390. So, what is going to happen with that is the rate on true that we projected during the budget process is even going to be less than what we anticipated. So, it will be 33 cents less so rate on true will go down to \$17.21 an overall decrease of 51 cents over the prior year. And what I would like to point out tonight is that in 2014/15 our tax rate was \$23.65 per thousand rate on true and in 2020/21 it will be \$17.21 that is a reduction overall of \$6.44. I did provide you with a calculation of the tax and a comparison. So, you can look at what the assessed values were in each town. Last year compared to this year and the equalization rates as well as they all play a role in the computation of the final tax rate.

### **VIII. CONSENT AGENDA**

none

### **IX. PERSONNEL**

A. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Frank to the following;

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the West Valley Central School District hereby appoints Mark J. Ward as interim superintendent of schools, effective August 18, 2020, pursuant to the Employment Agreement between the Board and Mr. Ward, which is also hereby approved as presented. Roll call; Davis – aye, Frank – aye, Kent – aye, Harmony – aye, Klahn – nay, Niesyty – aye, Ploetz – aye.  
6 ayes, 1 nay motion accepted

B. Moved by Frank, seconded by Davis to approve an amount of \$165 per day, effective August 12, 2020, for Daniel Amodeo (PreK-12 Principal and Curriculum Coordinator) as acting superintendent of schools. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Frank to approve a Memorandum of Agreement Between the West Valley Central School District and the West Valley Service Employees Association to provide a one-time waiver to Article 14, Section 4 – will be changed to state, “All other accrued annual leave will be forfeited on December 1st. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

**X. OLD BUSINESS:**

none

**XI: NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to approve a revised school calendar for the 2020-2021 School year. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Davis, seconded by Frank to approve the 2020-2021 tax warrant in the total sum of \$2,883,716.00. (signed tax warrant attached).  
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve a facility request from Matt Spittler, President of the Franklinville Little League to use our baseball field on August 24, 27 and September 10 and 21, pending a copy of their Insurance Certificate.  
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Gary states that he would love to say something about the Mark Ward motion, we did not have any discussion when the motion was first read under personnel. Mark can you say in front of everyone that your intention is not to do anything or any harm or malicious stuff to the school. As far as working it and doing something manipulative to make the school not function properly. Brad Frank states that we would not have hired him if we thought that. Gary Niesyty states that we really did not have any other choice. Brad Frank states that is not public. Mark Ward states that you are questioning my integrity. That is just not a place to go. Gary states no, no, it isn't. But it is just us and there is a lot of hostility and stuff from the community and I want to put some minds at ease. Mike states that he sees where he is going. Mark Ward states that he will work with the community and to certainly see what is going on and assure people that we are here to do the best for their children and get through the various steps and the various things that need to follow suit here. Do not know what those are and really need to talk to people. Communicate, sit down whether it is the Union, whether it is the neighbor, whether it is someone who has special education children, in high school, middle school it is a process. I am not going to come in like a bull in a china shop. Like I said in the interview. I am not going to have a knee jerk reaction just like the board is not going to.

**August 17, 2020**

**page 5**

Mike Harmony states we have lost connection with Darla Kent

Moved by Harmony, seconded by Frank to go into Executive session at 7:30pm for the purpose of a discussion with Scott Payne, District Superintendent of Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming BOCES as the consultant in a search for Superintendent of Schools at West Valley Central School District. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to come out of Executive session at 9:10pm. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

**XII:** Moved by Frank, seconded by Harmony to **ADJOURN** at 9:12pm. 6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

---

District Clerk  
Meeting minutes from transcribed dictation and audio