

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

**Regular Meeting          June 22, 2020          Zoom meeting due to COVID restrictions**

Members Present: Niesyty, Ploetz, Kent, Cizdziel, Kowalski, Samborski, Harmony-came in 7:07pm

Others Present: Lawton, Amodeo, O'Brien, Boberg

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Regular Meeting called to order at 7:04pm with Timothy Ploetz presiding.

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

Eric Lawton cautioned the board - he received complaints from the public on the difficulty of hearing what is being said during the meeting. When side conversations are going on it makes it difficult to follow the business of the meeting. The microphone jack is on the top of the projector down there, if you are speaking one at a time your voice can be heard you just have to be loud.

**III. Moved by Cizdziel, seconded by Niesyty to **ADOPT** the **AGENDA** as follows:**

Additions: special BOE meeting 6/29/2020 Young & Wright

Deletions: none

Changes: none

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

**IV. Correspondence/BOE information**

Darla states that an email was received from Brad Frank he wanted to come to the meeting to voice concerns but under the circumstances he could not. He had concerns or cautions about moving forward with contracts and things that may need to be looked at again. I think that we have kind of heard and talked about those things that he was a big part of getting the study going he was on the board when this was first started. Try to make changes and improve things in district and he just wanted to relay his concerns. Is also concerned that the efficiency study information is not posted on the website to review. He is an intelligent man with typically good things to say and can offer information. He is part of the town and wanted to make sure his voice is heard. Dan Amodeo states it is difficult to hear. Mike Harmony states that he had two people that wanted to read the study also.

Kim Cizdziel states that it is not that anyone wants to hold this information back from the public. It is a presentation to the whole board by Western New York Service Council and the public will hear the presentation the same time we do. Darla Kent interjects that this is not a typical situation. She had emailed Eric last week that she would like it on the web page and received no reply except for that he only had it in paper form, nothing about it being presented to the board first. Today everyone is changing their words. She sent an email to President, Vice President. Kim interjects that when you send an email it needs to be the whole board not just some. Darla Kent states that as a taxpayer who I

was last year before I took the position. One of my biggest concerns is that there is not transparency in this district. And considering the fact that there is a pandemic, people and myself are scared. I would like to move on and make decisions. But now we have all this budget stuff and I think the public has a lot of questions. I think the public is also feeling the same way. Any they're nervous and worried. And I think knowledge is power. I do not think they are getting it considering the fact that we're having a zoom meeting and it is livestreamed, but there is no interaction with the public. I don't think it would harm them to have this information today, they can view it while we are. That is all I am saying.

Kim Cizdziel asked Lauree Pless when she goes through her slides could she talk about contracts. If we were to move forward with those contracts is there any harm to anybody because we do need a Principal and Director of Special Education. Lauree states absolutely, not just from my perspective, but Marks background in human resources, working in contracts and working currently with several districts.

#### 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

Efficiency study from Western New York Educational Service Council presented by Lauree Pless and Mark Whyte. Thank you very much for having us in to present the findings of the study. In the midst of this pandemic and everything it definitely threw a wrench in our plans as well but fortunately; we were able to get a lot of information to get what we needed to. Let me just start by saying that Mark and I really very much enjoyed being here and being in the district and everybody who we spoke to and worked with were very accommodating. Nobody showed any resistance, from the kids, community members, staff and administration. So it really has been a pleasure. Just from our perspective, you really do have a pretty special place in terms of the people that make up your district. So we will try to move through this and want to be cognizant of your time and then working out kind of going back and forth. This is just a reminder that on your website is your mission statement and really want to make sure that is outlining your actual statement. With you guys several months ago on our board retreat. We talked about what it was that you wanted out of this study and that was identified with two primary things you wanted to have us assist the district by looking at your operations that are sufficient and also suggest additional ways in which the district could gain efficiencies. And then we wanted to talk with you about a potential strategy structure that could be put in place. If you want to maximize some of those effective operations. And to do this we collected a ton of data, we met with stakeholder groups. We evaluated many documents from the district finances and programming and a lot of other places. And no specifics are outlined in the report. For those who are just listening to this and have been important when you look at the report back to that specific detail is, you certainly couldn't go through it all today so given that we understand that the

school district is committed to providing a comprehensive program. You want to know – Is it education feasible and physically sustainable to continue to function as an independent school district, before we answer that. What if any ideas and/or recommendations can be implemented to restore, promote and grow opportunities for the community and WVCS. If a comprehensive program as it currently exists is not feasible, what options could be considered to reach the goal of maintaining a comprehensive program for WVCS. To do that, we looked at nine different areas. Those are outlined in the report. We went through the study and the title is an efficiency study. Effectiveness is about doing or using the right things – things that yield positive results. Efficiency is simply about doing things right – i.e., completing a task cheaper or faster. But if you focus just of efficiency you are missing out on overall effectiveness, We thought it might be useful to incorporate both of those terms in the study. We looked at a couple of definitions and example of the elements that you would want to have to run an effective school. **Leadership**, the leadership would have to have a clear vision and their priorities and have a cohesive leadership. Needs to be a **decision-making structure**, where there are clear roles on the decisions and organizational structure to support your objectives. We have **people**, the organization and individual talent necessary for success and then to have performance matters, aligned with those objectives. **Work processes and systems**, we have superior execution of programmatic work processes. Effective and efficient work processes and systems. **Culture**, high performance value and behaviors. Capacity to change. And see whether the evaluation component would come in there. Planning and actions are not independent There are many moving parts in any well-functioning system. The components identified in this study should be regarded as single parts of a more complex machine.

The following areas were discussed; District Demographics, Enrollment, Future Enrollment Stability, Tuition charged by West Valley, Programs and Class Sizes and Additional Innovative Ideas-Related to Programs were gone over.

Financial Overview – Tax Levy and Rate graph was gone over, Revenues, Expenditures, Fund Balance and Reserves, Tuition out, cost per student (in district), cost per student (in district and resident), current space utilization, current space utilization, retirement incentive, Transportation Operations and athletics.

Strategic plan – throughout the body of this study, there have been several considerations identified for the district to discuss. With the concept of effectiveness and efficiency in mind, one of the best methods of accomplishing this goal is to develop a strategic plan. Strategic Plan - \*district review study, filter and prioritize items for consideration \*establish agreed areas as formal board goals based on priorities \*determine factors that would allow future feasibility (enrollment, tax rate, etc.), establish timeline for implementation \*commit to executing plan once determined \*make public statements regarding long range strategic plan. Was asked if they could do a strategic plan. They can do this or there are other organizations that do this type of work. Identify your priorities and figure it all out and move it through the process and help you and help you establish that. You can get a certain percentage back. Sometimes it is just getting it off the ground and putting structure to it and then you have identified

individuals in your district to hold responsibility and that is where the Superintendent becomes absolutely critical because it becomes reflective of that work. And then Eric's evaluation process with his folks also becomes reflective of that work. And it allows you to not only make decisions about performance and other things, but also the expenditure., So when something comes up and somebody wants to do something you can very comfortably say wait a minute, let's look at what we had identified as our top three to five goals for the year. How does it fit into everything right now? It just works in a really mindful strategic way and it actually helps everybody because it gives you a more correct and you know intuitively as a board then you evaluate yourselves on the progress we are making, overseeing that progress. Again, you are not doing the work you are overseeing the process.

During the question period of the presentation. Terms of Contracts – as Superintendent is a very unique position. It really does not have an impact on their employment as it stands. Current administrators you can recommend a three or five year contract. And now knowing that maybe in two years let's just say if you did decide to tuition out or merged with another district that becomes obsolete, because the position no longer exists. And you are not in a position where you are creating something different. Reach short or long term agreements. Rules of seniority still apply, the year they were tenure still apply, all of those come into play in those situations. Staff record and figure out who actually has some seniority and what certification areas they have. They're going to put together a list for me to send out to you with our potential projects for Monday's meeting, they will go over this. I do not think it is premature. We have 200 students and our capacity is 540 apparently, we have part of the building that we are not using effectively. We could possibly use the space for something else. Remember we may need more space come September. We do not have to do another building conditions survey for two years, needed every five years. They are looking at three potential projects. From a financial standpoint we stand to benefit a great deal from this. A lot of this stuff we are going to hear on Monday. It is like boring stuff in the project not a lot of wow stuff, rather more efficient. Companies that will do an energy audit and under this will replace LED lighting for the school because it is so much more efficient.

Darla states, there is so much stuff to consider I just feel it is happening too fast and I just do not know. Lauree Pless states that she really does understand that but, on the flip side of that there are items that need to be done because of health and safety. We have already budgeted for the \$100,000 capital outlay project and capital bonds act. Darla States that the state capital project is what I have a problem with. I would ask the architects what areas are needed. Lauree states that our state aid ratio is very good, and it would be a good investment. The rest of the money needed will come out of reserves with no additional cost to the taxpayers. So, to not upgrade the building, even if you end up eventually, leasing out parts of the building or do something else with the building, you are going to get a much better value and the opportunity for a project might not be there. Either way, there is going to be a building that is used in one way or another, and so when you are getting new doors, windows, lighting and wiring it is important to be up to speed. Steve Kowalski states that he was always taught that capital projects are good to have a rotation is the same as purchasing your school

buses. You are knocking off items that are on the last building and conditions survey that need to be done for upkeep, safety and health reasons. These surveys have to be done every five years, you have to have items upgraded and updated. The Building Condition survey is continuing, and it seems to be so fully funded by the state. They want to make sure that what you said you will do with the money you actually do, and it is off your building conditions survey the next time. To be honest, I think that the area that the community is, it is effectively run. It is a great school, district it is financially stable. The strategic plan to me is a suggestion, use as a guidance for you to do all of the big things that we all wanted. Throughout our months with folks here with yourselves first, many students and teachers everybody has a passion for the school district. There are differing opinions and what appears to have happened is that different opinions on problematic issues maybe through like I don't know specifically with some form of absence or miscommunication. And our recommendation really, is why we put transparent communication for support throughout all the things that we believe in thinking about it. Good. And if you've got structure, you've got a cohesive plan and it is for now, and it is the long-term timeline. And if you take a look at that paper of the elements of practice if you thought about those components, reflect and think about are we this, are we that, are we doing this, and I think that would be that, to me, that would be a piece of it, we would need more correspondence with the planning board, and the town, Mike Harmony states. Lauree states maybe a public hearing format to get community input. But before any of that happens and to answer kind of your question Mike, like you really have to identify as a board where your priorities are, in terms of the outcomes. There is a lot to look at. Make a plan to look toward the next two years, five years. If there are areas that you felt we needed to expand on talk with Eric about those specific to some of the things and but otherwise compound specific question to Eric, and the we will make sure that they're sent to all of you. Do a survey to see what the community wants. Eric states that he will open it up over the next two weeks for the community input.

## VII. REPORTS

A. Superintendent, Eric Lawton recommends Rachel Frascella, Morgan Drake and Leah Seltzer as summer helpers, Molly Bly as a long-term substitute in the elementary special education area for the 2020/2021 school year. Rachel Mulhisen to a four-year probationary appointment in the elementary area. Approve book donations, reorganizational meeting to be set for July 7<sup>th</sup>, Moe, and executive session is needed to discuss contracts.

B. Principal, Daniel Amodeo reports appointments for staffing – Rachel Mulhisen was our long-term substitute, Molly Bly has been working for us a long time and she will be doing a long term substitute this year. Conducted student returns of school items last week. Currently in gym. PreK through eight ELA and Math professional development for three days. Then throughout the summer, we will be looing for updates from the State Education Department on what school may look like in the fall, so that we can

appropriately plan and develop a schedule that will meet all the requirements that SED will have for schools opening in the fall. Mike Harmony asked about returning instruments. A lot of our students rent instruments over the summer, so we are going to let the students keep them for right now.

C. Business Official, Ann O'Brien reported that the audit committee will be meeting on Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> at five o'clock in the library conference room and will report on that next week.

**VIII. CONSENT AGENDA**

none

**IX. PERSONNEL**

A. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to approve Rachel Frascella as a summer maintenance and grounds worker at minimum wage starting on July 8, 2020. Fingerprint clearance is on file. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Harmony to approve Morgan Drake as a summer cleaner at minimum wage starting on July 8, 2020. Pending fingerprint clearance. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Kent, seconded by Niesyty to approve Leah Seltzer as a summer helper to work as a computer technology assistant at minimum wage starting on July 8, 2020. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

D. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Cizdziel to approve Molly Bly to a 1-year long-term substitute appointment in the area of Elementary Special Education. Pay according to the WVTA/WVCS contract. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

E. Moved by Kowalski, seconded by Cizdziel to appoint Rachel Mulhisen, who holds an Initial New York State Teaching Certificate in Childhood Education (Grades 1-6) permitting her to teach in the Elementary Education tenure area, is hereby conditionally appoint to the position of 1.0 FTE Elementary teacher for a probationary period of four (4) years, to commence on 9/1/2020 and to end on 6/30/2024. Eligibility for tenure at the end of the probationary period is dependent on Rachel Mulhisen receiving APPR ratings of Effective or Highly Effective in 3 of 4 preceding years and no Ineffective composite or overall rating in the final year. The salary during the first year of this appointment will be paid in accordance with the salary schedule as outlined in the Teachers' Collective Bargaining Agreement. During the decision section of the motion Darla Kent asked if she will be paid extra days over the summer to get ready for the next school year. Eric Lawton stated no, because she is already an employee of ours this year. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

F. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Cizdziel to approve the West Valley Central School District Working Agreement and Conditions of Employment for Classified Confidential Staff -Administrative Secretary to the Superintendent; District Clerk; District Treasurer for three (3) school years, commencing July 1, 2019 and terminating on June 30, 2022.

During the discussion part of motion Darla Kent asked if the pay retroactive pay. Eric stated yes due to no approved contract last year.

G. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Niesyty to approve the following:

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

**Between the**

**West Valley Central School District and the West Valley Service Employees Association**

This memorandum of agreement is entered into and between the West Valley Central School District and the West Valley Service Employees Association to provide a correction to the pay that Matt Trimm received in 2019-20 school year and what will be paid in the 2020-21 school year. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to go into executive session at 9pm for the purpose of discussion on contracts. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted.

Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to come out of Executive session at 9:22pm. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

H. Moved by Samborski, Tim asked for second and Darla Kent states that she would like to say her stance on it. I feel like we have a lot of information, a lot of things that we need to figure out, and a lot of moving parts and I still don't feel comfortable with making a decision now. It is not that I do not want to, but I feel we still have too much to discuss. Tim asked if anyone else has something to discuss then asked for a second and Cizdziel seconded to approve the Principal (PreK-12) Employment Agreement by and between West Valley Central School District and Mr. Daniel Amodeo for three (3) school years, commencing July 1, 2020 and terminating on June 30, 2023. Tim asked who was in favor and it could not be determined how many aye or nays, Tim asked for a roll call – Cizdziel – aye, Kent – nay, Samborski – aye, Harmony – nay, Gary asked if we do not approve this tonight would it be retroactive? Cizdziel stated yes. Kent stated that the discussion is over. Cizdziel stated no it is not. Kent stated that we are voting. Niesyty – aye, Kowalski – aye, Ploetz – nay. 4 ayes, 3 nays, motion accepted

I. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Kowalski to approve the Director of Special Education Employment Terms and Conditions by and between West Valley Central School District and Mrs. Shawna Gugino for three (3) school years, commencing July 1, 2020 and terminating on June 30, 2023. Tim asked if there was any discussion – no need. Tim asked for roll call – Cizdziel – aye, Kent – nay, Samborski – aye, Harmony – nay, Niesyty – nay, Ploetz – nay 3 ayes, 4 nays, motion declined.

X. **OLD BUSINESS:**

none

XI: **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to accept the following book donations from the WVTA in memory of Diane Pfeffer to the school library:

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst  
The Hidden Rainbow by Christie Matheson.

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Harmony to approve the Reorganizational/Regular meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 6:30pm.  
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to approve adding June 29, 2020 as a special meeting for Young and Wright Architectural to give a presentation on projects. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

XII: Moved by Samborski, seconded by Kowalski to **ADJOURN** at 9:40 pm  
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

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District Clerk  
Meeting minutes from transcribed dictation and audio