

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

Regular Meeting June 16, 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 7:05pm with Timothy Ploetz presiding.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE to the UNITED STATES FLAG

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

Additions: none

Deletions: none

Changes: none

6 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

IV. Correspondence/BOE information

Eric read a letter from Steve Howe - he wanted to come to the meeting, but he emailed Eric the following:

In the past several months as I've been traveling around town, I've talked to families about how they like the distance learning. Some hate it, some love it, some are having mixed feeling about it or have issues with specific classes. I think it would be a good idea for the BOE to get some parents who didn't like it, some who did, some teachers, and an administrator together to discuss what did and didn't work & bring recommendations to the district so that next school year we can make it even smoother and if (when?) we have to do distance learning with the students in the future.

This is just from me as a resident, not as WVSEA president.

Stephen Howe, WVSEA President, WVCS Bio-hazard Cleanup Team

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. Superintendent, Eric Lawton reported on graduation taking place in front of the school. We are now permitted to have up to 150 people socially distanced. We will look at the weather and if no rain, we will set up chairs 10 for each graduate. If it is raining,

we will operate out of cars like originally planned. Let know if you would like to attend and I will set up a chair for you.

Ann, Bill, Bryan and I had a meeting with Young and Wright about 3 potential projects. One would be the Smart schools bond act project. This is over \$400,000 that we have available and do not have to pay back. The second is the \$100,000 capital outlay project that we would have to complete in the 20-21 school year and would be paid back at about 80 cents on the dollar the following year. The third is a Capital project that could be as high as 5 million dollars with no cost to the local taxpayer by using our reserve. They would like to meet with the board to present all of the items that could be in these three projects. The board would then have the opportunity to help select the scope of the project.

Mark and Lauree will report out at the June 22nd meeting. We will have to work out the details. We will not be able to have an audience. I know this is not ideal, but we are still restricted at this point. If there are changes to that, we can make adjustments. Please read through the report and write down any questions for the next meeting.

There are many considerations to our reopening plan and below is one examples of how things get difficult:

Clear materials used to construct sneeze guards in reception areas, cafeteria service lines and other school locations where people have face-to-face contact must be flame-resistant, according to the State Education Department's Office of Facilities Planning. In a May 29 notification, SED said that Plexiglas ® and similar plastic glazing materials called plexiglass are flammable and do not meet New York State 2020 Building and Fire Codes or SED's Manual of Planning Standards 1998 requirements. [Plexiglass was mentioned in an On Board Extra sent earlier today.]

"An alternative clear plastic glazing product is available and is known as polycarbonate," according to the notification. "It has a different chemical composition from acrylic plastic and is much less flammable. Districts are advised to investigate polycarbonate products for test data. Another option is tempered safety glass."

Posted for summer help at school. Recommend all motions on the agenda.

B. Principal, Daniel Amodeo reports that on Tuesday the 23rd we are planning to have our kindergarten graduation in the front circle at 6:30pm with a rain date of Wednesday the 24th. The next week, we've been working with CABOCES over the last few weeks developing some professional development in the area of ELA and Math specifically focusing on our 3rd – 8th grade assessments, looking at our data from 2019 ELA assessments and Math assessments. Then on Tuesday the 23rd look at our historical trend data. Look at next generation standards on the third day the 25th. We're going to look at developing at least two if not a three-year plan on things that we can do to improve instruction and the growth and performance of our students across all area's PK through 8th grade in the ELA and Math. So, its just the beginning stages of that

it'll be basically a three-day professional development. All of our teacher's PK through 8th grade and our teacher systems have been invited to attend. Most have notified me that they will be attending. These are our first initial steps in trying to address some of the shortfalls that we have seen in our accountability data through ESSA since the change in the law. Or I shouldn't say change, but the adoption of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The most recent iteration of that and is the new accountability reporting requirements. So, we're very excited about that. But I just want you to keep in mind that you know this is going to be a process and it is not going to change overnight. We have shown growth and steady growth since 2016 but it's not enough growth according to the federal government in the State. We need to take a look at that and address it. But again, it is going to be a process and there is going to be more professional development needs, training, support and resources. That we will need to look at utilizing them in order to get where we want to be. But you know, I think taking our time and doing it the right way. Looking at the data, standards, and what are the priorities standards. We need to be focusing on and developing a plan to implement the instructional changes that we need to make over a two to three-year period of time is what is going to be best for us in the long run. With that, I just wanted to comment. One last thing on a point that Eric had brought up about reopening school or when he read, Steve Howe's letter. So that is definitely something we have talked about in our weekly staff meetings. In fact, we have done a couple of surveys with our staff from their perspective, asking them how the students are responding, how the students have been engaged. You know, have you seen a decrease in student engagement is what we are doing. Distance learning meeting the needs of our students. So, a lot of questions were asked in that framework and we have had a lot of input from our staff. We certainly want to be able to reach out to students and then families to see how we can improve. An idea that was brought up is potentially having parents come in the fall, provided that we are open somewhat, like shadowing their student. They would actually sit through or we would simulate something of a virtual lesson. This would help provide parents a better understanding of what we are doing on our end and what the students need to do on their end. Just to get that learning and understanding built in for the parents and for the students because while we were caught off guard this year with this closure. We want to be prepared in the event that we may have to close next school year at some point in time. And if we do that, we don't really want to be in a situation where we are just kind of going through the motions, sort of speak, not that we did that. We did far more than what I know most school districts have done and implemented, but we have to not maintain current student status and they're learning. We have to continue to grow our students and be able to do that even if we have to do it virtually or through distance learning we have to optimize that. So, if we are continually falling behind with their learning and opportunities. We will definitely continue trying to engage our students and our families over the next few months, and hopefully being face to face at the beginning of the school year be better prepared and situated to deliver distance learning and get the most out of it that we can for our students. I would be glad to answer any questions at this time.

Mike Harmony asks the questions – how do you know the difference between a kid not getting on to a kid that does not want to? Dan Amodeo states that on the back end of Microsoft Teams, which is our primary format that we use. We can see when a student views an assignment. We can see when students log on, like, for example, right now, if I want to open up Microsoft Teams, I can type in a student's name and it'll give me a green, yellow, red, or an offline indicator, so I can tell if the student is online. And then again from the teacher's perspective and even on the back end on the administrative side, we can see when students open and view assignments. But we can also see when they don't turn the assignment in. And you know, not every single assignment is an assignment that you need to utilize a computer for. The assignments posted virtually or online, but it is not something necessarily that a student might have to use their computer to do. And again, that is something that we would want to look at, for example, in the elementary if all the students had their math workbooks at home, you know, a teacher would be able to do the lesson post the assignment, then the student could do the assignment on paper. There is a way that they can show the teacher that, you know, pretty much - if I just hold it up to my screen, you know someone's like taking a screenshot of it and then the teacher can look at that and view it. So, there's a lot of different ways we can utilize teams, but we can definitely tell when students are able to log on when they are viewing assignments. With the older students, the other giveaway is, even, 4th grade is when the students are creating their own teams, they're inviting me to chat on accident and we know them. They are emailing or chatting each other through the Microsoft Teams, we can see that as well. Daily attendance is something that we would definitely need to be looking at moving forward. We will always have connectivity issues in our region. It is a problem across the state with the broadband access. We are always going to have some of those issues, specifically in the fifth and sixth grade, the laptops that they were utilizing were our first- or second-generation devices that are very outdated. We have already purchased new devices for those students in those rooms. I think something to keep in mind, that for the most part we understand that connectivity and hardware can be an issue on both sides. If a student is getting booted off or not being able to connect to a specific meeting, we will not give the student negative consequence in their grade for that occurring. Because at the end of the day, they might miss part of the lesson, but whatever assignment comes along with that. They would still be able to view and complete and connect with the teacher during a free time.

C. Business Official, Ann O'Brien – In light of COVID-19 the IRS put out notices to give individuals flexibility for their section 125 plans. Section 125 allows employees to say if they know they are going to have medical expenses that are not covered by insurance, for example braces, they can set aside money for that by putting it into a section 125 plan. What the IRS has done is say we are going to allow you, just for this, plan year, to stop your contributions and give you another month to make claims. This is to help people that possibly weren't able to get services during COVID-19 to receive their money back. There is a resolution to amend the plan for the IRS provisions.

Typically, in June the board needs to approve the transfer of money into and out of reserve funds. What I have are three various resolutions we talked about during budget time. We have money in our debt service reserve. As of last year, it was \$386,114. This must be used towards outstanding debt. The first resolution is to transfer to the General fund from the Debit Service Fund in the amount of \$23,352. This would be to cover debt for the well project back in 2010 and other remaining capital project items done at that time. There are five years remaining on the bond issue over the next five years. So, what we need to do is to start using and putting money towards the outstanding debt in our budget. What is going to happen is most of the transferred funds will come back to the general fund because we are getting back 85% aid on the remaining debt. The second resolution would be to return the retirement contribution assigned fund balance to the reserves. We appropriated \$30,870 towards the retirement contribution toward the ERS retirement. We are going to have money left over so we won't really need to use the appropriation. The third resolution will be for transferring funds into the TRS reserve. As you recall last year, we were allowed to create a TRS reserve and they allowed you to put 2% of the TRS salaries from the previous year into this reserve. This year the amount is capped at \$56,270. It is important to continue to grow this. I can't tell you what is going to happen with state aid. We are still not hearing anything. There is a good chance if the federal government doesn't come through, or they don't come through with the total we need we are going to need some of our reserves to offset some of our expenses in next year's budget. One of the suggestions made by Lauree and Mark and I wholeheartedly agree with this, is that we are going to need to start looking at our reserves. We need to come up with a plan, reflect on what we need to use the reserves for and how much we need in reserve funds. I hope we can start this process in September. It will take some time. Any questions?

Eric states that maybe what we will do is run through our agenda items skip the budget results and go into executive session with business afterwards. Board members agreed.

VIII. **CONSENT AGENDA**

none

IX. **PERSONNEL**

none

X. **OLD BUSINESS:**

none

XI: **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Niesyty to amend the District's Section 125 plan, for the plan year starting 10/1/2019 and ending 9/30/2020 to allow for election change rules and extension of the deadline for incurring eligible expenses through December 31, 2020 as per the IRS's COVID relief provisions.

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

B. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Niesyty to approve the following:
RESOLVED, that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education of the West Valley Central School District hereby authorizes and directs the following fund transfers:

1. Transfer to the General Fund from the Debt Service Fund in the amount of \$23,352
2. Transfer of \$30,870 from the unassigned fund balance to the District's previously established Retirement Contribution Fund
3. Transfer of \$56,270 (2% of the total compensation or salaries of all teachers employed by the District who are members of TRS paid during the immediately preceding fiscal year) from unassigned fund balance to the District's previously established TRS Retirement Contribution Reserve Fund

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

C. Moved by Cizdziel, seconded by Samborski to approve the following:

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Between the

West Valley Central School District and the West Valley Teachers' Association

This memorandum of agreement is entered into and between the West Valley Central School District and the West Valley Teachers' Association to provide payment for the 7th and 8th Grade Advisor, the 7th and 8th grade assistant, and any associated chaperone(s) for the 8th grade trip in May of 2019. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

D. Moved by Niesyty, seconded by Harmony to approve a transportation request from Audrey Seeley for Aston Seeley to attend St. Aloysius Regional School during the 2020/21 school year. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to go into Executive session at 7:59pm for the purpose of contracts and evaluation, with business afterwards. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to come out of Executive session at 8:35pm. 7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

E. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Niesyty to certify the outcome of the 2020/2021 Annual Budget.

PROPOSITION 1

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET \$8,696,714

YES 371

NO 239

7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

(Complete results attached to minutes in official book)

F. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Niesyty to certify the outcome of the 2020/2021 Board of Education member

PROPOSITION 2

Heather Klahn	YES 532
Write In	13

Heather Klahn will start her 5-year term on July 1, 2020
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

G. Moved by Harmony, seconded by Kent to certify the outcome of the 2020/2021 Board of Education member

PROPOSITION 3

Charles Davis	YES 335
Richard Gerlach	YES 216
Write In	14

Charles Davis will start his 5-year term on July 1, 2020
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

XIII. Moved by Samborski, seconded by Harmony to **ADJOURN** at 9:20 pm
7 ayes, 0 nays, motion accepted

District Clerk
Meeting minutes from transcribed dictation and audio