

President Armstrong announced that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting.

Personnel and legal issues were discussed.

A Regular Meeting of the Riverside School Board was held on the above date outside the main entrance at the Riverside High School with President Armstrong presiding and the following members present: George Bieber, Barbara Fedor, Kevin Harchar, Linda Joyce, Mary Antoniaci McHugh, Tara Meredick and Dan Nenish. Absent: Caryn Emiliani.

Also present were Mr. Brennan, William Drazdowski, and Raymond C. Rinaldi II.

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON ANY AGENDA ITEMS: Tom Borthwick, Scranton, Riverside Teacher, stated that he appreciated the opportunity to speak, and he thanked the Board and Administration for their hard work. Although he wishes to go back to school, he is afraid. He asked the board to consider a temporary virtual return to school, which he feels is the safest option. Pam Insalaca, Moosic, Riverside Teacher and parent, stated that as a teacher, she is concerned about bringing the virus home to her at-risk children who will be virtually attending Riverside. She is concerned about students not wearing masks in the classroom. She asked the Board to take as many safety precautions as possible. Cassie Insalaca, Moosic, Riverside student, read a letter to the Board addressing her safety concerns about students not wearing masks in the classroom. Tom Geroulo, Taylor, parent, acknowledged that the Board is in an impossible position. He asked the Board to consider requiring students in at least grades 3-12 to wear masks in the classroom. Katherine

Radle, Scranton, Riverside Teacher, acknowledged the Board's work in designing the back-to-school plan. Due to the continued numbers of COVID cases, she was shocked that we are heading towards Tier II. She felt the virtual experience last year was successful. She feels the virtual option would be the safest at this time. Marilyn Regan, Moosic, parent, also acknowledged that the Board's choices are not easy and the three-tier plan looks great. She is surprised that we are starting in Tier II. She asked the board to consider going virtual for the first quarter. Joy Talerico, Duryea, Riverside Teacher, believes students can tolerate wearing masks in the classroom. She has concerns about being recorded teaching in the classroom while simultaneously teaching virtually to the at-home students. She won't be able to be in two places at once. She is concerned about the confidentiality of students with an IEP, 504, etc. She is worried about being scrutinized over her actions while being on video. She stated that when she had previously emailed Mr. Brennan to ask about why the teachers had to return to school in Tier III, he replied that we are in a negative perception society. This is one reason she is worried about being critiqued by the public. Mr. Brennan asked to clarify. He reminded Mrs. Talerico that she previously stated to him that she was comfortable with Tier II. He stated that teachers would be required to come back in Tier III to avoid a negative perception and that we are starting many new curriculums in elementary schools and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade along with many new electives at the high school. Teachers need to work side by side with their principals. He stated that our survey showed 71% of parents want their children in Tier II. Students are suffering from high anxiety and mental health issues. He stated that the American Pediatric Society has stated that 3 feet apart is safe. He asked if masks were worn all day and social distancing is 3 feet, would the teachers feel safe coming back to school full time? Mrs. Talerico asked if the union could speak before deciding going back full time. Mrs. Talerico stated that she is okay with coming back full time. Mr. Brennan stated that he didn't think the union was organized

on these issues as different teachers are saying different things. He also mentioned that the REA put an inaccurate post on Facebook. Mrs. Talerico stated she put information on Facebook and had a lot of messages, calls and texts. Mr. Brennan stated that she did email him 24 hours before her Facebook post and she was okay coming back full-time. She stated that teachers are concerned about masking and being recorded. Mr. Brennan stated that there is a lot of misinformation in the public. He stated that we shouldn't say "the kids can't do it or that teachers can't do it." Public educators are essential. Compulsory education is the law for K-12 students. Our public duty is to listen to the 71% of parents. Teachers can ask the students to put on their masks if they are not 6 feet apart and the district has no problem with that. PDE recommends a 6-foot distance without masks. Mrs. Talerico stated that no elementary teachers were on the health committee. Mr. Brennan asked her how many times has the union surveyed the teachers? How many meetings have you had? She stated that there were several surveys and they didn't meet due to social distancing. Mr. Brennan didn't believe that to be true. Mr. Brennan recommended the union come back with their two most important issues—narrow the focus and come up with ways to see what we can do. The district is not in the business of making anyone feel unsafe. Public school districts are at war with the cyber schools on an uneven battleground. For every five students who leave to attend cyber school, it can cost the district one teacher. Mrs. Armstrong thanked Mrs. Talerico for her time and energy. She stated that the School District is faced with misinformation on Facebook. The REA post that was sent out for all teachers, parents, students was misrepresented on Facebook. The Board wants to make sure you understand we value our teachers, parents, and students above all else. We are never going to ask anyone to be in an incredibly unsafe environment. The Board had reasonable expectation that union reps would attend meetings and the Board hasn't had a quick response from the union. A reasonable expectation would be for the union to get back to the committee within one

week. Kristy Vassell, Moosic, parent, stated that while she understands the teachers' concerns, she sees the same kids mingling with each other in various sports. She stated that one of her children did not shine with virtual learning. She is well aware of risks but believes children belong in school. As a social worker, she has seen a huge increase in child abuse with students being at home. Eugene Gallagher, Taylor, stated that most schools in our area are going back going back full time or hybrid. He stated some drawbacks of not going back would be that Shop, Home Economics, Art, Gym, Music could result in potential teacher layoffs. Layoffs could also occur in cleaning, facilities, and cafeteria staff. He is concerned about the mental health of students. He suggested teachers take a leave of absence if they are afraid to come back. Patrick Abdalla, Moosic, parent, sees all sides of debate. He suggested better listening and communication. He stated that Riverside was a fantastic district. John Gilchrist, Moosic, parent, stated his children want to go back to school. He thanked the Board for all the hard work on the plan. He is concerned about the long-term effects on his children. They need social interaction. He asked how do teachers know what the students are learning virtually? Kim Hoskins, Moosic, parent, stated that the hybrid option is an amazing option. As a teacher, she understands the teachers' concerns. She suggested some teachers teach only virtually while others teach only in the school building. She thanked the District for a safe football practice season. She has no worries about her children coming back to school. She stated that they need the social interaction. She feels that her children did not get what they needed educationally during the virtual classes. She had to teach them. She feels that kids left home alone are not learning or doing what they should be doing. She feels that an all virtual environment is not a positive choice. Heidi Kelley, Taylor, Riverside Teacher, thanked everyone for the time and effort put into the plan. She is currently conducting Kindergarten screenings for the 2020-2021 school year. She stated that all the 5-year olds are wearing their masks, keeping them on, not touching their

masks, and are able to perform all the tasks she required them to do. She realizes that this is a short period of testing. She suggested being creative with the mask; offering a break when the students can take off their masks. She mentioned that Riverside is offering Kindergarten-age students who may not be 100% ready to come to school another year. The program is being called “give them the gift of time.” She asked that the Administration and Board to give the gift of time to students to wear masks during the school day to see what works. The decision for students to wear masks in the classroom could always be reversed. Dr. Jeff Manzo, Moosic, presented data from the Veterans Affairs regarding the spread of the virus and how to come back safely. He gave Mr. Brennan a handout. Michael Kolessar, Exeter, Teacher, President REA apologized to the committee for his health committee meeting absences. He is the caregiver to his elderly father and sister with down syndrome. He stated that he wants to go back. As a teacher, his motto is “it’s not what I want, it’s what the kids need.” He has listened to the REA members concerns and he would favor of virtual start to school for now. He hoped the Administration and the Board would reconsider and take teachers’ ideas and concerns with the utmost priority. He stated to Mr. Brennan that he did give two items from the union to be added to the plan but they were both deemed unreasonable. The two items were that teachers have the option to have students to wear masks in the classroom, and that the Administration will not ask a teacher either explicitly or otherwise to risk a teachers’ safety by violating any of the safety revisions put into place by the district or state federal agencies. This includes but is not limited to standing in the hallways, supervising a group of students in an area that will endanger their safety guidelines, or supervising students who may show symptoms of illness. Mr. Kolessar stated that safety should include all things and not just two things. The Elementary and High School teachers have different concerns. Mr. Brennan stated that it is not practical to put a safety disclaimer that has such broad guidelines in the plan. Supervising students in the hallway is essential for their safety and to prevent congregating. When he previously spoke about the union not

being organized, he stated that someone from the organization put out inaccurate information on Facebook. Maybe the union authorized that person to put the information on Facebook. Was this person voted in to speak for the union? This inaccurate information put every union member in a bad spot. The information caused the board to react and put out the correct information. Mr. Brennan agrees with everyone who spoke tonight—safety comes first. He is recommending the proposed plan be passed tonight with the additional item--if a teacher, staff member, or student visits a location on Pennsylvania's travel advisory list to self-quarantine for 14 days. Studies have been done by both Stanford and Penn State showing that students need to be back in school for face to face instruction. 71% of our parents want their children back in school. Mr. Brennan asked Mr. Kolessar to have one teacher representative from each school and one special education teacher representative come to the safety committee with two concerns and solutions. Mr. Brennan stated that Governor Wolfe surveyed the Pennsylvania school districts. The results from PASBO were 59% were going back with hybrid, 25% going back full time, and 15% going back virtually. Mr. Kolessar stated that he is concerned with the teachers' safety. Mrs. Armstrong stated that misinformation being put out undermined all the committee's hard work. The inaccurate information caused unnecessary panic for educators, board, parents, and students. The Board wants to be as safe as possible for our teachers, staff, parents, and students. Heidi Gowden, Moosic, parent, has concerns over no high school transportation. She doesn't know how her 9<sup>th</sup> grade daughter will get to and from school. She mentioned that amount of traffic that will be at the high school due to parents getting their children to and from school. Tom Geroulo, Taylor, parent, stated his children will be attending virtually. He had questions about the virtual setting. The process will be developed and given to parents. Mr. Brennan also stated that parents will be asked to sign an Education Declaration. Mr. Brennan stated that due to social distancing guidelines, the high school

transportation had to be eliminated. Both Mr. Brennan and Mrs. Armstrong gave a short synopsis of the plan.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Mrs. Joyce to approve the attached Resolution regarding the District's Health and Safety Plan, to include a statement that if a teacher, staff member, or student visit a location on Pennsylvania's travel advisory list, they will have to self-quarantine for 14 days. Roll call vote: YES, Antoniaci McHugh, Joyce, Bieber, Harchar, Meredick, Nenish, Fedor, Armstrong.

Motion by Ms. Antoniaci McHugh, seconded by Mrs. Meredick to approve minutes of July 13, 2020 Regular Meeting and to dispense with the reading and accept as delivered. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Meredick, seconded by Mr. Harchar to approve payrolls of 10 July 2020 of \$370,028.90 and 24 July 2020 of \$368,076.18. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Joyce, seconded by Mrs. Fedor to approve estimated payrolls of 7 August 2020 of \$371,500 and 21 August 2020 of \$372,000. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Mr. Harchar to approve Treasurer's Reports for June 2020 and the unreconciled balances as of July 31, 2020. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Ms. Antoniaci McHugh to approve and pay bills when found correct and funds are available. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Mrs. Joyce to appoint Katherine Radle as Teacher Mentor effective the 2020-2021 school year at a stipend to be established as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Mrs. Meredick to appoint Mallory Gana as Teacher Mentor effective the 2020-2021 school year at a stipend to be established as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Mr. Nenish to appoint Elizabeth Dempsey as Teacher Mentor effective the 2020-2021 school year at a stipend to be established as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Ms. Antoniaci McHugh, seconded by Mr. Harchar to approve the Shared Services Agreement with Old Forge School District for an occupational therapist for the 2020-2021 school year. Said Agreement is conditioned upon the approval of the Agreement by the Old Forge School District. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Meredick, seconded by Mr. Bieber to approve the posting for District-Wide Telecommunications, Internet Services, and Internal Connection for the 2020-2021 school year on the USAC School and Libraries website as per E-Rate grant guidelines. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Mr. Nenish to authorize the Superintendent to enter the District into the Safe and Drug Free School Consortium between the Riverside School District and NEIU #19 for the 2020-2021 school year. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Mr. Bieber to comply with Section 205 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 as mandated by the USDA Food and Nutrition Department and set lunch prices for the 2020-2021 school year at follows: High School Lunch – Free, High School Breakfast – Free, Elementary Lunch – Free, and Elementary Breakfast – Free. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Nenish, seconded by Mrs. Meredick to allow the Superintendent to fill any position that may occur prior to the September 14, 2020 Board Meeting. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Mr. Bieber to appoint Francis Antoniaci as Maintenance Seasonal Help Assignment Worker at \$10 per hour (29 hours per week) from July 27, 2020 until August 7, 2020. Roll call vote: YES, Joyce, Bieber, Harchar, Meredick, Nenish, Fedor, Armstrong. ABSTAIN, Antoniaci McHugh. MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Mrs. Joyce, seconded by Mrs. Meredick to approve the attached Settlement Agreement and Release between the Riverside School District and parents and natural guardians for Student ID Number 212004. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Mr. Nenish to approve the Leave Request of Robert Davis, Jr. as outlined in his letter on file in the Superintendent's Office. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Joyce, seconded by Mr. Harchar to authorize the Superintendent to adjust us graduation requirements as needed for the 2020-2021 school year. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Nenish, seconded by Mr. Harchar to approve the attached Settlement Agreement and Release between the Riverside School District and parents and natural guardians for Student ID Number 292089. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Mrs. Meredick to approve the attached Resolution authorizing and directing issuance of General Obligation Bonds in a maximum aggregate principal amount of \$2,560,000.00. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Mr. Nenish to authorize Atty. Raymond C. Rinaldi, II to execute Stipulation for Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas Case number 2019 CV 6557 in the matter of Birney 1, LP vs. Lackawanna County Board of Assessment Appeals. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Motion by Mrs. Fedor, seconded by Ms. Antoniaci McHugh to authorize Atty. Raymond C. Rinaldi, II to execute Stipulation for Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas Case number 2018 CV 5977 in the matter of Light Acadia 1189 LLC vs. Lackawanna County Board of Assessment Appeals. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Superintendent's Report – Mr. Brennan thanked the Board and Health & Safety Committee for all their hard work on health plan. He also recognized all the hard work by Mr. Drazdowski, Mrs. Gilroy, and the Business Office regarding the free lunch program.

Business Manager's Report – Mr. Drazdowski also thanked everyone for their hard work on the health plan. He thanked the Board for passing the free lunch program, which will benefit the students.

Solicitor's Report – None

Academic Affairs Committee – Mrs. Joyce reported on the hard work getting 30 new courses available for the 2020-2021 school year. She stated that the “Viking ship will sail again.”

Facilities Committee – Mrs. Fedor reported on the current list of projects including banners, planters, and new cafeteria tables for the high school. Classrooms at West are back together.

Commons area in the high school is being used to deploy Chromebooks to our students.

Finance Committee – None

Alternative Funding Options & Resources Committee – Ms. Antoniaci McHugh is hoping the dialogue with the Union tonight will result in mutual satisfactory conclusions. She also stated that there are 3,287 school districts in Pennsylvania, with 59% using a hybrid, 25% in-school, and 15% using virtual for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Athletic Committee – Mr. Nenish stated that we are waiting on instruction from the PIAA.

NEIU 19 - None

OLD BUSINESS - None

OPEN – Mike Gretz, Taylor, asked about approving motions for the land sale. He asked if the proceeds from the land sale have been earmarked for a specific project. Mr. Bieber answered that it has not been determined yet. He asked if the location for the new Administrative Office was on Main Street near the football stadium, and if the District had design plan. Mr. Bieber answered yes to both questions.

Motion by Mr. Bieber, seconded by Mrs. Meredick to adjourn. Roll call vote: All in favor.