

5/20/20 Board Meeting

Present - Jim Grant, Patrick McCabe, Roxanne Rebmann, Robert Masse, Deborah Forrestel, Jody Brege, Heather Cayea, Phil Kenline, Erik Polkowski

Jim - 7:00pm I'd like to call the meeting to order. Pledge to the Flag. I just would like to remind everyone that this meeting is conducted under Zoom. The board will be voting tonight via BoardDocs, and you can follow along by going to www.akronschools.org. Links to both Zoom and the BoardDocs can be found under the latest news column. And please, Board Members, remember to identify yourself before speaking. Item #2 on our agenda are the Committee Reports. Anything to report from the Recreation Board, Ms. Forrestel?

Debbie - No, we don't have anything. No meetings yet or anything.

Jim - Alright. This is Jim Grant from the Delegate Assembly. All of those meetings have been adjourned as well or postponed. There's nothing to report. Legislative, Mr. Polkowski's not on. Mrs. Cayea, anything?

Heather - Sorry, no. There's nothing to report, there hasn't been anything.

Jim - Budget and Finance, Mr. Kenline?

Phil - No, there have been no meetings. There are no meetings scheduled.

Jim - Thank you everyone. Item #3 is our Superintendent's Report. Mr. McCabe?

Pat - Good evening, everyone. There's a number of things that I'd like to update the board on this evening and also receive some feedback as well. I'll start with an overview of instructional update. As you are well aware, we're in complete compliance with Executive Order 202.14 and therefore, the District continues to provide continuity of instruction, meal distribution, and childcare to essential workers. Communicated with our teachers and our parents this last week, letting folks know that the last day of instruction for some students is June 12th, and the final day for teachers will be June 22nd. During that week in between, teachers will obviously be using that period of time for record keeping, closing out the current school year, and making preparations for the new year. In addition, they will be making report cards available, and those will be available through the Parent Portal. Don't have a release date on those yet as we are working out some of the internal strategies for collecting that information and giving students ample time to submit what they need to do. Just a reminder to the board and any community members that are present, teachers are initiating Phase 3 of the distance learning plan and will continue to engage students throughout the end of the academic year. This beautiful weather, and sometimes it's hard to tell if it's a Tuesday or a Wednesday or a Friday or a Saturday, it's going to be challenging I'm sure for some families, but I think the building principals have done a nice job of updating staff and families on an ongoing basis. Just wanted to make a point of emphasis for all, that our high school administrators and teachers are doing to recognize our seniors. I'm sure by now you've seen the 2x3 foot banners that are adorning the flag poles throughout the community. We are having a symbolic celebration on June 5th at 8:20 in the evening with fire trucks and blowing some horns through town. On our district home page there will be a photo gallery designated for our seniors. We will have our blankets for seniors with high honor roll. Community had outpouring of support. I won't go on and name them all, but the adopt-a-senior program sponsored by the PTA, the engraved keychains, the yard signs, the gift boxes. People are really doing all they can both within the district and outside to make this important event for our kids as special as possible. In terms of where we are with summer programming, I got another update today. Based on, according to the Department of Health, it does not look like in-person summer school will likely be available. By that, I'm particularly referring to our children who are on 12-month programs, our students with disabilities that may get alternative instruction. Had a conversation with Erie 1 Boces today, they are planning for that, but they do think it's more likely it will be a virtual basis. One of the hot topics is reopening of schools. I'm sure if you're watching the news, you're well aware. To date, New York State has

not provided any definitive guidance on reopening schools. However, there are some preliminary guidance documents that are available. I saw this evening that Maryland released their guidance documents. But right now in NYS, it's interesting that we have the Regional Economic Development Committee with guidance, we have the governor's Reimagining Education Council with guidance forthcoming, then we have the Commissioner of Education's in the Board of Regents with their reopening task force. So we have this confluence of 3 different groups formulating some information. The Regents and the Commissioners haven't actually met yet. We're all of course familiar with the CDC guidance. We're in the process here internally of examining those documents and planning our pathway forward. We know that we will need to submit a plan for reopening of schools to NYS Department of Education, and we know from some of the preliminary documents that it is going to be a significant undertaking both to create and implement the plan. Because there isn't a level of clarity yet, there's a certain level of concern about the realities of some of these guidance plans as they would relate to how they function in school. For example, a district of our size, 26 miles square and only one child per seat on a bus, would mean multiple bus runs, and there's the 6 foot guidance for students in classrooms, not forming in groups in cafeterias. I say all this just to give the board an update that we are following these details closely and we're making initial preparations, but it will be a process that we'll take on deliberately and judiciously and most likely be doing throughout the summer. That's not to confuse reopening, and I make this point with our administrators, the difference between reopening schools, which is Phase 4 in NYS, and return to work for essential employees. We're at a period of time now that we know students aren't returning, there are a number of essential tasks that we need to do in terms of closing out the school year. That's packing up classrooms, making preparations of cleaning, we have some as you're well aware, Capital Project work to do. There too, we are using the guidance documents to develop return to work protocols, and we will incrementally bring staff back, particularly our building and grounds staff back, following all the safety protocols for social distancing and scheduling. So that work is underway and we've had some really good planning sessions to date. We do have an agreement with our Employee's Association that we can have people working out of title, so we're hoping to bring back some of the folks that haven't been in to date to support that work and preparation for the closure of the school year and the cleaning and the reopening for next year. I've asked Mark Alexander to coordinate some of that work because obviously with our buses not being run very often, we have some availability in the schedule. Any questions on that before I move on to budget? Hearing none, I just wanted to give the board a very brief update. As you're well aware, this evening you will have an opportunity to approve the budget amount that will be presented to the public by next week during our budget hearing and then ultimately voted on by the taxpayers until June 9th at 5pm. So this final figure that you'll be making a decision on this evening represents the total proposed expenditures that were identified during the various budget meetings that were held throughout the school year. You know, we started the budget process in October, and I remember in December talking about the political landscape, and then throughout January, sometimes twice a month, myself, Mrs. Tretter, our various building and department leaders, giving the board updates in the formulation of the budget. Very interesting how many things changed during those initial planning periods, particularly after March. I did want to let you know that the amount that you will be deciding on this evening reflects all the program and operating costs that have been shared with you previously. There are no significant changes, nothing that we haven't discussed already. It's also important to note that the figure is approximately \$1.49 million less than last year's total budget. A good deal of that has to do with our funding for our capital projects, but also represents some significant cost-saving measures and some eliminations of some requests that we had included earlier on the budget. It really was a team effort. One thing I know the board is aware of is those measurement periods the governor has at his disposal to make adjustments to funding to schools. To date, the governor has not enacted any adjustment to this year or next year's financial aid to school districts. I believe he is waiting to get a clearer picture of what the federal relief package will be to NYS before he makes any adjustments to the state budget. Any questions on that topic? Obviously, we'll be going into detail on the budget next week. A few other items for you then. This one in particular, the capital project discussion is where I think it would advantageous for us to engage in some dialogue. Progress is continuing well with our current capital project as I mentioned I think in a correspondence to you recently. The business suite is in demolition phase, while the elementary office and the nurses' station are being moved to alternate locations. I sent you a picture of the site work that's begun outside of my office. Finally and probably most importantly, as you're well

aware, we had a favorable bid day. Because of that, we have an opportunity to address some items that fall well within the voter-approved budget as well as in the scope of the work. So a list of potential items has been provided, and I would like to take a moment to review that with you and note that I've essentially bundled them into like-categories. I would like to take a moment to walk through that list and I'll open it up for some dialogue. There are essentially 4 options for us to consider to do with the funding that we have available. The first 3 options are all relatively small design scopes. Regardless of the size of these, the SED review timeline won't change. All of these will have to go to SED review, and they're all likely to commence during the 2020-2021 school calendar and perhaps beyond. We haven't developed a schedule for these yet, but should the board select an option or reengage in that process to identify an option, we'd work on a schedule with Campus Construction. These items were identified both in the Project A planning, but also in the Project B discussions, and also in our conversations about the need in the fuel island in the transportation department. The first one is an upgrade to PA systems across elementary, middle, and high. Did some research on this. It's my understanding that our existing PA system, much like our phone system that we just upgraded, was somewhat antiquated. There's no replacement parts. We have very limited ability to do any zoned-based announcements, so therefore we have to stagger them because the middle school can't make an announcement if the elementary or high school are announcing, which is a bit of a safety risk. A newer system would be network-integrated. We could have our police and fire make emergency calls for us if needed, and it would be integrated with our voiceover IP phone systems. I did look into, one of the board members drew to my attention some concerns in our swimming pool, and I did some research on that today. I did find that the original specs for that area included an amplifier that wasn't big enough or to make the sound amplify enough in that area. We had done some internal work on our own, trying to repair using equipment I guess was from our old aud system. It had a marginal impact, it didn't significantly change it. However, based on my conversation today, I'm recommending we just bring in Ronco, who has proprietary ownership over that equipment, to give us a quote on an upgrade. That may be something that we could do right away as opposed to through a capital project. The second option is a bit of a potpourri. We've got an opportunity to address the drinking water treatment system for Legionella, we've got some stairwell stuff that needs to be modified, and playground safety and drainage on the elementary side and sidewalks. Obviously, the third has more of an athletic feel to it. We've got refinishing gym floors in elementary and high, some abatement work to be done, some wall pads, then some exterior work on the tennis court, and fire alarm system in the Morton Building. I did look into the special ed conference room that currently has half of it as unavailable. Speaking to Campus since I provided you with this list, we believe we can address that in the current project through a change order. Finally, is the fuel island, which is something I know the board has had updates on before. I reached out to Jeff Stone from Hodgson Russ, and he confirmed that addressing the fuel island within our current project would fall within the scope of the voter-approved referendum. We would just need to do an additional seeker filing, but an additional public referendum wouldn't be required. It would fit in the scope of the current referendum. Those are the groups, and I did let Campus know that I would be reviewing those with you here at today's meeting for your deliberation and consideration.

Jody - In option 2, resurface the playgrounds, is that both elementary playgrounds? Because the one that sits sandwiched between the buildings, we just did that one in the last capital project.

Pat - No, I don't believe it's that one.

Jody - Ok.

Phil - I was curious on the fuel island. We had the two estimates from Campus regarding the transportation area. On the estimate from Campus that covered the entire project, the fuel island cost came in at about half a million, \$500k. On the list that we just went over the price tag is set at \$800k. The \$300k, can you explain how that was derived?

Pat - Yes. In our conversation at our last project with Campus, we talked about the \$500k being allocated to the fuel island, fuel delivery system. Then we also talked about the opportunity to address some of the site work, including the

drainage, and the fencing, and the storm requirements. Building into that, fuel island was some of the exterior work, but not including it would be exclusive of the renovations to the building itself, to the facility. This wouldn't include any of the ADA compliant issues or the additional bus bay. It would strictly be site work and fuel island. They would scope out as much as they could and tackle all of that they could again, excluding the building itself. I did provide another copy of that estimate that they gave us in BoardDocs.

Jim - I just want to confirm that each of these options are within the available balance on the capital project?

Pat - Correct.

Jim - Any comments from the board on which direction we should go?

Heather - I just want to be clear. Is this replacement of the fuel tanks that we talked about previously?

Pat - Yes, Heather. It would be an opportunity for us to address that need now. It would be the above-ground storage system, the removal of the inground storage system and the fuel delivery system, which is the monitoring the computer software and the tracking. And again, the thought process by including this here is knowing that it's a need, not only for the district, but for the community because of the town and village fueling various emergency response fleets through that fuel station.

Heather - For me, I think that's the best option. It's something that we talked about that was needed. Didn't sound like we were going to pass approval for the fuel tanks previously, so I think that's our number one priority at this point.

Jim - I agree with Mrs. Cayea completely.

Erik - Pat, you said this also covers the abatement of the existing fuel island?

Pat - That was my understanding in our conversation with Campus.

Erik - Ok.

Pat - I can double down and check on that.

Erik - No, my support would be for that as well since it's an immediate need. It would address some other issues too, in regards to the drainage. It totally falls within the scope of what is currently out there, so I don't think there should be any issues. So that looks really good.

Bob - Do you know by doing it, I mean I know we have the whole project set up, we were going to do the whole bus garage and everything else. By separating this out, is it costing us anything to piecemeal this out and do just the fuel island or is this something we can go back and do the transportation part of it down the road? See what I'm saying? By breaking it up, sometimes it costs a little bit more when you have to go back.

Pat - I wasn't led to believe that, Mr. Masse. I was led to believe that we would just be phasing it in on an incremental basis, but we would be including the structure up there, the bug garage, as part of a second project, second referendum.

Bob - Ok, thanks.

Pat - I would add though, that pricing and costs can vary from year to year. This was based on projections that were evolved in the 19-20 school year. Under the current economic conditions and deliverables and materials and equipment, obviously some of these projected costs could change in a year from now.

Jim - I've seen a number of head nods and thumbs up. Are there any dissenting opinions or can we get Mr. McCabe to go ahead to pursue this option?

Bob - As long as he's going to look into the PA system in the pool, then yes I'm all for it.

Phil - Do we need to make a formal motion on that or is a simple yes from each of us sufficient?

Pat - I don't think that's necessary. It's just getting guidance from the board so that I can develop, working with Campus and our CPL, a proposal to put in front of the board down the line. I just needed to know what direction and the will of the board was at this time.

Jim - I think you have a clear direction, unless you want a role call, I think that's where you need to go.

Pat - No, I appreciate the feedback. I just wanted to make sure the board knew what options were on the table. That's it, are there any questions for me on anything I had to share this evening or anything else that I didn't share?

Jim - Thank you very much, Mr. McCabe. I do have some comments, but I'll get to them when we get into the district items and cover those. Item #4 is Personnel Non-Instructional. The recommendation is that we approve the permanent appointment of the following employees after the successful completion of the 26-week civil service period.

Jody - Moved.

Bob - Second.

Jim - We have a motion and a second. We will be voting on BoardDocs. Are there any questions or comments?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Item #5 is District Items. Our recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education, upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, hereby approve the following district items, consent items #5A-5G.

Debbie - Moved.

Erik - Second.

Jim - We have a motion and a second. Questions, comments? I do have some comments on the budget to follow-up on Mr. McCabe. I do appreciate the fact that the school administrators have gone back and looked at and confirmed the items we considered as pulling out of the budget to reduce the expense out of the budget. The board at our last meeting did discuss what we could do with the tax cap. Again, we had set that at 1.95%. We're eligible to increase that to 3.2% under the tax cap. The board, looking at all options and considerations including the impact of increasing the tax rate on the residents in the district, have decided to leave that rate at the 1.95% that was agreed upon several meetings ago. I appreciate the board's input and consideration of all of the factors as we move forward in the budget. Are there any other questions or comments? Again, we'll be voting on BoardDocs.

Roxanne - All were in favor. Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #6 is Special Education. Our recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education approve the classifications and placements as per the lists received as recommended by the Committee on Preschool Special Education and the Committee on Special Education. These recommendations are for the least restrictive environment at this time.

Bob - Moved.

Heather - Second.

Jim - We have a motion and a second. Are there any questions or comments on this?

Roxanne - All were in favor, motion carried.

Jim - Item #7 is Upcoming Dates. Next week Wednesday is Meet the Candidates Night and the 2020-2021 Budget Hearing via Zoom at 7pm. We do have 2 candidates on the slated ballots. Myself and Mr. Masse are both running for reelection. So look forward to hearing from both of us. Immediately following that presentation and Meet the Candidates Night will be our workshop business meeting via Zoom. Tuesday, June 9th, will be the election of members and the budget vote all by absentee ballots, which are due by 5pm. As a reminder to any of the community members and for the public record, those ballots will be being mailed in the immediate near future and have to be returned to the District Office by that deadline to count.

Item #8 is Executive Session. We do have a motion to go into executive session. May we have a motion?

Bob - Motion.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Alright, any questions or comments? We need to vote please.

Roxanne - All were in favor, motion carried.

Jim - The Board of Education will now leave this teleconference and move into executive session. We do not anticipate conducting any additional business. However, we will resume this meeting when we are done with executive session. So the members of the board, we are going to exit this meeting and join our separate meeting and then we will come back to this meeting when we are done with executive session.

Roxanne - Jim, I've already closed out of BoardDocs, so we'll do a role call to adjourn.

Jim - Alright. Record keeping item, I never declared what time we declared into executive session. If you could take care of that, if you know that.

Roxanne - Yes, I wrote it down. 7:35.

Jim - Ok, thank you. We are back out of executive session at 9:35pm. The final item on our agenda is Adjournment. If I may have a motion to adjourn.

Debbie - Motion.

Heather - Second.

Jim - So we do have to vote by role call to accept the adjournment, since we're signed out officially out of BoardDocs. I'll role based on the way we're here. Jody?

Jody - Yes.

Jim - Heather?

Heather - Yes.

Jim - Phil?

Phil - Yes.

Jim - Debbie?

Debbie - Yes.

Jim - Erik? I see he voiced yes. Bob?

Bob - Yes.

Jim - Alright. I say yes, all are in favor. We are adjourned at 9:37pm. Everybody have a good week, we will be back next week Wednesday at 7pm.