



**BARKER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education Meeting Minutes
Pratt Elementary Cafetorium
Monday, March 7, 2022**

Present R. Atwater, M. Clemens-Harris, C. Gancasz, E. Gow, J. Sweeney, V. Voss

Excused H. Ecker

Also Present J. Reimer, M. Carter, M. Eadie, C. Heiligenthaler, M. Kramer
Public: 18

Call to Order President Atwater welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge to the Flag was given.

**Approve
Agenda** The agenda was reviewed. Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the agenda as presented.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

**Accept
Minutes** The Board reviewed the minutes. Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, to accept the minutes as presented from the Regular Board Meeting dated of February 7, 2022.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Public Forum On behalf of a number of Grade 6 students, Miss Arianna Sturtevant and Miss Addisyn Weller presented to the Board their request to have tables restored (vs. desks) for meals in the cafeteria. They provided their justification and the benefits to the students of such a change. Mr. Reimer will look at what can be done within the current COVID-19 guidelines and update the students.

Presentations Art Presentation – Ms. Feltz & Students
Ms. Feltz and a few art students presented the Board with what opportunities the Art Department has made available to them through regular high school art programs, college credit courses in animation and digital design, and EClub. They discussed how these opportunities enable them to give back to the community and provided examples of their

work. The students also talked about how the courses have provided an understanding of different career and/or post-secondary opportunities, and what art means to them. They gave the Board and Administration pieces of art made by the students. Miss Feltz discussed what the students are doing and noted four individuals who were selected to be in the University at Buffalo 2022 Western New York Regional High School Art Exhibition.

Principal's Update - M. Carter

Mr. Carter provided an update to the Board of Education regarding events for grades Prek-12. He stated Cameron Kiner, a Senior is serving as a student representative with the New York State Board of Regents Review Board addressing graduation requirements. Aidan Moen, a 4th grade student, won a creative writing contest for black history month from Tops Supermarket. He received a prize for himself and one for his class which will be used for a special event or SPARK activity. Ryan Santarsiero was named Swimmer the Year for the Niagara Orleans Boys League. The District is moving ahead with the planned trip to Washington, DC for the eighth graders. A letter was sent to family's this week to provide an update. The Senior trip to New York City is being reexamined due to the number of current mandates as a result of COVID. The musical, Little Women, will be presented this weekend with shows on Friday and Saturday 7:00 PM and Sunday at 2:00 PM. Allison Finitz has started as a counselor with students and families of the District, and will work primarily in the elementary school area. She is a great addition to the team. The elementary students had a dental hygiene presentation from students at UB Dental School. It was done virtually and the teachers provided very good feedback on the event. Next week, the elementary school is starting the one book, one school project. Everyone will be reading Friendship According to Humphrey. Last week was Dr. Seuss week with different themes each day in the elementary.

Curriculum Update - M. Kramer

Dr. Kramer discussed the use of the stimulus funds available to the District. She talked about a small homeless grant in the amount of \$3,000 which was received. Given the size, Barker will join a consortium with Lyndonville, Roy-Hart, and Wilson to pool the funds for the needs of area students, and to pay for transportation requirements. This money is available until September 2024. Dr. Kramer discussed the Resource Committee, which consisted of all volunteers in elementary to discuss literacy and math. The staff took quite a bit of time to work on this and were very dedicated to the project. The committee determined to continue with the Wonder Series and fill in gaps with the use of Words Our Way, and use of the Orton-Gillingham Approach. She commented that a writing component will also be used at a later date.

Dr. Kramer discussed, that as a result of annual reviews performed, there is an increased need for outside placements which is very difficult to fill. This is not just a concern and challenge for Barker but for other districts as well. Dr. Kramer is investigating how to meet the needs of these students.

Financial Update - C. Heiligenthaler

Ms. Heiligenthaler reported that the tax cap was filed on March 1, 2022, with a \$124,767 carry over, resulted in the cap limited being adjusted to just over \$5 million and equating to an increase of \$236,661 or 4.96%. As this amount does not exceed the tax cap, the District would only need a simple majority to pass the budget.

Ms. Heiligenthaler continued with a review of the grants submitted by the District noting that she received the last of the outstanding approvals today. The grant funds were used to upgrade the phone system which was completed over February break; to complete repairs to heating units not covered under the Capital Project; for salaries of new instructional staff; and will also be used towards repairing the playground.

She noted that budget projections have not changed significantly since the last meeting, with an approximate reduction of \$100,000 from last month, results in projected expenses of \$17,012,731.

Instruction & Updated Undistributed Budgets; Review staffing and programming scenarios and alternatives - C. Heiligenthaler & J. Reimer

Mr. Reimer provided additional 2022-2023 budget information to the Board as he has over the last four months. Undistributed totals \$4,188,733 representing an \$88,300 increase from the projected.

Mr. Reimer reviewed the main sections of the Instruction Budget components which, in general, includes the carry forward of all current in-house staff into the 2022-2023. He commented that the current staffing levels should be able to manage all the District's needs next year. He noted that it is the first time there was not a staff reduction in a few years, which is positive, and reflects the movement forward towards a stabilized and sustainable budget. Administration continues to look at what and how things will fit together from the instruction side as the budget progresses.

Office of Instruction experienced a small change, primarily due to salaries. Supervision, which includes the principal's salary, SRO, clerical support and related items to manage the overall business changed 0.81%. In-Service Training-Instruction increased substantially due to BOCES-in-service training and more use of their services. Teaching-Regular School account changes of 1.87% are due to salaries of teacher staff and aides, outside contracts, and supplies. He noted that supplies are now broken out by area and category to allow for closer projections to actual, with very little change from last year. He discussed the needs vs. wants build-out of the budget for this area. Programs for Students with Disabilities were reviewed next. This section increased 10.89% due in large part due to the need for student placements which increased approximately \$155,000. He noted that there are not a lot of placements available. Other changes included salary increase due to the movement of individuals. There are some additional funds allocated to this area based on projected needs. Occupational Education remained stable with a decrease of 0.17%. Summer School remained flat. The District is looking at summer school programs to determine what method and cost will be best, but estimate the current allocation will cover the expense. Library and Audio-visual's increase was the result of salaries and contracts but remains stable. Computer Assisted Instruction remained the same, the increase from the prior year was due to devices and COVID but is stable now. Guidance's structure budget area is now set, as what is needed for this section is now known. Health Services' increase represents the addition of the part-time nurse to support the current nurse to cover increased student needs. Psychological Services increased 14.56%. Co-curricular Activities increased substantially due to higher numbers of student engaged in what is available. Mr. Reimer noted that this was a Board goal, and now new clubs and past clubs that were not running have started.

Interscholastic Athletics did not increase much as what the District is able to offer is based on student participation projections. The District is looking at working with other districts for shared opportunities for the students.

Mr. Reimer noted that over all the biggest take away is that the District is literally rolling the budget into the next year and having the same offerings for the students with a proposed 2022-2023 total instruction budget of \$10,152,526.

Undistributed budget total reflects the change in health insurance since last month as health care premiums came in lower than anticipated. There was also a slight change to the ERS line as the rate decrease and was incorporated. The budget is based on what was expended, which has been pretty close. The EPC bond increased and the aid will offset it and the savings from solar, lighting and the HVAC projects will offset this even more. The transfer Capital Fund is the \$100,000 capital outlay incorporated into the budget which could be tied to clocks, bell and PA systems which need to be updated. Additionally, the District is looking at security, including at entrances to potentially have a double door entry with an additional interior door installed for enhanced safety. As this capital outlay is being planned, the Board will be presented a SEQR which describes the proposed project which would need to be reviewed and approved this evening to move forward so to meet the 45-day prior to budget vote requirement.

Superintendent's Report

& Discussion Mr. Reimer noted that the solar project commenced late last week. He did reach out to the neighbors and staff prior to regarding the potential noise impact due to the installation of the iron pilings in the ground. The noise has been better than anticipated and work is progressing with the installation of the racks scheduled for next week. To date, there has been no issues with the installation and there is a potential to have the system running by May. The screening and planting of trees, weather permitting, will be done in April. Solar Liberty will provide instructional classes regarding solar once the project is complete. A review of what would be offered will take place to see if it fits with classes. With regard to the other EPC projects, there are no updates.

Mr. Reimer discussed the ongoing issue of masking, noting the mandate lapsed right at the end of break on Sunday, February 27 and updated guidance was not released until 7:00 PM on Tuesday, the day before, which did not provide much time to plan for districts. As of today, there is no change in the guidance. In some instances masks will still be needed for days 6-10 of quarantine if the test-to-stay option is utilized by staff or students. The change to the use of masks as optional, with no guidance change, could result in more people potentially being quarantined. Mr. Reimer used the example that if all the class has the masks off for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period and students were not distanced, if someone tests positive, the entire class vs. immediately close individuals, will be quarantined. Although the county is not doing contact tracing as it has been, the school will still need to manage the contact tracing. Mr. Reimer noted that fortunately, the school is eight days post break and has not experienced a spike as it has with other breaks, but it is still unknown for a few more days.

Mr. Reimer noted that with regard to the students' request for tables in the cafeteria, he will see what the District can do but noted that guidance per the county and state must be followed. He also noted guidance has changed for other businesses and community areas but not for the schools. He will discuss this at his next weekly meeting with area superintendents and Niagara County staff. Mr. Reimer responded to questions from Mrs. Voss regarding distancing and to comments from a community member regarding what other schools are doing.

Mr. Reimer asked the Board their views on whether or not the District should utilize and pay for the benefits offered through NYS School Board Association and if the return on the \$6,219 per year dues is justifiable. He noted some the benefits of membership which include staff training, resources, new board member training, news information, and advocacy. He also noted however that the advocacy tends to focus on larger schools more so than rural or small schools in his opinion. After review and discussion, the consensus was to not re-join NYSSBA this year.

Policies/Plans The second reading was completed of the following policies.

Policy #	Policy Name
3430	Uniform Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting System (VADIR)
3510	Emergency School Closings
4110	Administrative Personnel
4210	Administrative Organization and Operation
4211	Organizational Chart
4220	Administrative Authority
4230	District Committees
4240	Evaluation of the Superintendent and Other Administrative Staff

A motion was made by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the policies as presented.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

The first reading of the following policies was completed and there were no questions raised.

Policy #	Policy Name
4310	Superintendent of Schools
4320	Superintendent - Board of Education Relations
4410	Professional Development Opportunities
4420	Compensation and Related Benefits
5110	Budget Planning and Development
5120	School District Budget Hearing
5130	Budget Adoption
5140	Administration of the Budget

Board Goal Review: Reach a balanced budget that is sustainable for the future

Mr. Reimer noted that last month the Board discussed its Strategic Plan and review of goals. As a result, the Board agreed that one of each goal will be reviewed and then at the July Board meeting, discuss if the Board will want to adjust or change the goals or do something different. The first goal presented this evening was to reach a balanced budget that is sustainable for the future. Mr. Reimer reviewed the action steps associated with this goal. The first action step was to ensure the greatest efficiency of taxpayer resources. He reviewed the projected fund balance based on information known during March for year's 2019-2026 based on the five-year budget plan for each year. The green numbers represented the actual fund balance after audited expenses and revenues were done. In 2018-2019 the District made significant changes in efficiencies and in 2019-2020 with continued work, along with retirements, you see the impact of the changes which has shifted the narrative down the road that the budget will be pretty sustainable for the foreseeable future. With regard to the second action step, advocate for fair and equitable distribution of foundation aid to the District, the District has experienced a substantial increase in foundation aid last year, this year, and it is anticipated that it will again next year before leveling off as a result of the foundation aid formula being adjusted so it is calculated and distributed as it was actually designed to work. He noted that the advocacy by the District may or may not have helped. He could not say for sure. The third action step was to refine the budgeting processes to ensure proper budgeting practices lead to more accurate and effective budgets. In order to access the results of this goal, Mr. Reimer reviewed variances and movement between budget lines. Movement occurred when a line did not have enough funds and excess funds were transferred out of a line into the one with a negative balance. The use of extra monies beyond what were budgeted overall did not occur. In 2019, variances totaled \$758,265; 2020 the total was \$384,948. With the exception of 2021, with higher variances resulting from addressing COVID-related educational needs, variances continue to decline. To date total variances for this year equal \$165,778. This change is due to breaking down in finer detail the budget lines and analyzing usage and needs to ensure the District is being the most efficient with funds and making projections as accurate as possible. These changes also have a positive impact and improve the District's financial standing moving forward. He noted that the fiscal stress rating discussed last month is not projected to be an issue next year. Mr. Reimer stated that the reporting for 2018-2019 was pretty accurate and in the grand scheme of things, with continued improvement, will be realized.

Mr. Atwater commented that the grim situation the District was in financially has begun to turn around. Mr. Sweeney felt there were a lot of assumptions in past years with regard to budgeting, and going line by line has brought it back in line.

The Board then discussed and agreed to leave it up to Administration to decide if the next goal to be reviewed would be increase student engagement and learning, or improve/increase the well-being of the school community.

Education

Mr. Reimer discussed the proposed 2022-2023 school calendar, noting that he personally did not feel this calendar being presented was the best for the students given the long time without a break during the last part of the year, but that this calendar does align with the WNY regional and BOCES calendars which was what the majority of the stakeholders

wanted. He noted that April 10th was added as a closed day to meet contractual requirements and the conference days will now be August 31 and September 1 to provide for a long weekend prior to school commencing. This change he noted, will require MOAs if the contracts have the start date of September 1 for employees. He also commented that if a person was to add the total days for teacher work days, it will not add up correctly as it does not show if the teachers work evenings during conferences as an offset in order to actually have the November 24th day off as per their contract.

After conclusion of the discussion, a motion was made by Mrs. Voss, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the 2022-2023 school calendar.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Personnel Items

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the revised appointment of Allison Finitz to be appointed as a full-time probationary Mental Health Counselor effective February 28, 2022, and as per the Agreement between the Barker Central School District and Barker Teachers' Union, probationary period effective February 28, 2022, through February 27, 2026, tenure area of School Counselor. The expiration date is tentative and conditional only. In order to be eligible for and considered for tenure, she must meet all requirements of the Educational Law and corresponding regulations. Her annual salary rate of \$49,961, MA30 Step 1 remains unchanged.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the appointment of Audra Lakeman as mentor for Allison Finitz for the 2021-2022 school year with a prorated stipend of \$500.00.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the appointment of Jessica Haseley as a Substitute Teacher Aide effective February 2, 2022, for Grades Pre-K - 12 at a rate of \$13.20 per hour.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the appointment of Chloe Goodlander as a Substitute Teacher at a per diem rate, and as a Substitute Teaching Assistant and Substitute Teacher Aide at a rate of \$13.20 per hour for Grades Pre-K-12 effective March 8, 2022, subject to fingerprint and background check.

Yes: 5, No: 0, Mrs. Gow abstained due to the family relationship.

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the appointment of Karen DeMorest, Grace Bodine, Marcia Frost, and Janet Kerth as Election Inspectors for

the May 17, 2022 Annual Meeting, at a rate of \$40.00 per shift with two shifts planned for May 17, 2022 and one shift, if needed, May 18, 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the leave of absence for Melissa Phillips with an effective date to be determined.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve Janna Garcia-Rosario as a parent/community volunteer.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Business & Financial

Items

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to accept the Treasurer's Report dated February 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to accept the Extraclassroom Report dated February 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to accept the Warrant Report dated March 7, 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Gancasz, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the SEQR resolution pursuant to a 2022-2023 Capital Outlay project in conjunction with enhancements at the Central School Building for the 2022-2023 school budget.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Barker Central School District will be considering a proposition to undertake the 2022-2023 Capital Outlay Project consisting of door, security, communication and entry enhancements at the Central School Building; and

WHEREAS, the proposed elements of the 2022-2023 Capital Outlay Project are routine activities of an educational institution for the purpose of maintenance or repair of existing structures and facilities; replacement, rehabilitation or reconstruction of a structure or facility, in kind; and/or routine activities of educational institutions including expansion of existing facilities by less than 10,000 feet of gross floor area; and

WHEREAS, such actions are deemed, pursuant to the regulations adopted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, to be "Type II"

actions and are not subject to the requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act;

NOW THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED, that the proposed proposition is a Type II action pursuant to 6 NYCRR § 617.5(c) and that review pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act is not necessary.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

**End of Public
Session**

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to end the Public Session and enter into Executive Session at 8:37 p.m., the purpose of which was to review a potential litigation, matters of tenure, and negotiations.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

**Executive
Session**

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, to approve the adjournment of the Executive Session at 9:55 p.m., and return to Public Session.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

**Public Session/
Adjournment**

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, that the Board approve the end of the Public Session and adjournment of the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Prepared by,

Mary H. Eadie
District Clerk