



**BARKER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education Meeting Minutes
Pratt Elementary Cafetorium
Monday, January 10, 2022**

PRESENT R. Atwater, M. Clemens-Harris, H. Ecker, E. Gow, J. Sweeney, V. Voss

EXCUSED C. Gancasz

**ALSO
PRESENT** J. Reimer, M. Carter, M. Eadie, C. Heiligenthaler
Public: 2

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

**ACCEPT
MINUTES** The Board reviewed the minutes. A motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to accept the minutes from the Regular Board Meetings dated of December 13, 2021, as presented.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

PUBLIC FORUM Mr. Doug Lewis spoke about Superintendent Reimer and thanked him for the approach he took and work he did pertaining to the solar project, which included reaching out to the neighbors, asking for input on the project, communicating with them, as well as communicating to the community. He said Mr. Reimer did a very good job responding to questions and concerns, and clarifying information which definitely helped as not everyone is in favor of solar projects in the area. He stated that his outreach definitely helped.

**PRESENTATIONS**Principal's Update - M. Carter

Mr. Carter reported that the first round of interviews for the mental health counseling position were held today. The second round of interviews will be held next week. The final candidate interview will then be scheduled in order to have an appointment brought forward for approval at the February Board meeting.

Mr. Carter has continued to plan the evacuation drill for the spring as discussed last month. He met with the fire department before winter recess, and with the church today to view the facility and plan.

Mr. Mallon will be taking students to Tech Wars at NCCC on January 5, 2022.

The peanut butter and jelly food drive to support the local food banks was very successful with approximately 129 jars of peanut butter and 177 jars of jelly being collected.

Mr. Carter noted that as per his letter to parents, tomorrow, grades 3-8 will be doing the simulation trial of the computer-based testing for ELA and math. It will take approximately 30 – 45 minutes and is meant to prepare and familiarize the students to the online platform as well as test the District's technology to ensure any issues are worked out in advance of the state testing. He noted that classroom teachers can also have students do more practice tests in the future or if they are absent tomorrow. The letter also noted the cancellation of state testing in January. He also noted he is unsure at this time if testing in June will be cancelled.

Mr. Sweeney asked if Mr. Carter would coordinate a presentation by Mr. Mallon and some of the students attending Tech Wars so the Board is able to see the work by the students.

Financial Update/Initial Rollover Budget - C. Heiligenthaler

As Mr. Reimer discussed the tax cap at last month's Board meeting, Ms. Heiligenthaler provided a quick update of the tax cap calculation with the current growth factor, assuming a 2% increase in the tax levy, and using the current carryover which would allow the District to increase the tax levy \$115,918, which equates to 2.43%. This percentage would only require a simple majority vote. As the District is still able to modify last year's calculation, she and Mr. Reimer continue to review the best-case scenario. Any modification to the calculation would increase the District's allowable carryover and therefore, increase the calculated tax cap, which again, would only need a simple majority.

Ms. Heiligenthaler presented and reviewed the 2022-2023 rollover budget. It is based off last year's budget with no changes other than allowances for contractual obligations, while projecting a reasonable increase in costs to the 2021-2022 budget. The current projected figures result in a rollover budget increase of \$714,099 or 4.14%. She highlighted a few of the increases which included: (a.) \$326,189, approximately 46% change in projected cost increases in health insurance and TRS contributions; (b.) added a full-time maintenance department worker; (c.) inclusion of the PreK teacher as funding was reduced last year due



to lower enrollment numbers, receipt of the full grant also occurred this year due to reduced enrollment; (d.) the addition of a BOCES social worker personnel, which also generates aid in subsequent years without any of the legacy costs; and (e.) the addition of two teacher aides and two part-time lunch monitors. Ms. Heiligenthaler noted that actual expenditures of the projected budget were reviewed and compared to the prior year, and resulted in a 3.2% increase. She commented that this is the beginning point for the budget. It is a fluid document. As more information is ascertained, it will be incorporated, such as the health care increase expected by the end of February.

Mr. Reimer reinforced that this is the starting point and assumes that the District maintains everything but anticipates the figures should decrease as the process continues. He estimated it would be a budget increase around the 3% range once more is incorporated. The Board of Education and the Budget Advisory Committee's input will be reflected as the process continues. He stated that this projected rollover budget only includes expenses at this point in time, and not revenues. The District has not received information from the state yet with regard to aid but he anticipates a substantial foundation aid increase of approximately \$1 million if the Governor's statements pertaining to aid transpire. He is hoping to have this information to incorporate to the figures for the February Board meeting.

Ms. Heiligenthaler provided an update on the two separate applications for the American Rescue Plan. She noted that the District has not received final approval as they have been kicked back more than once in order to provide more detail and clarification on pieces of them. Mr. Atwater thanked Mr. Reimer, Ms. Heiligenthaler and Dr. Kramer for their work on all of these and for keeping the Board informed.

Mr. Reimer noted that these applications have been very challenging as each time the information is requested and provided exactly as asked for, subsequent requests have been made. He discussed the effect on the District, as many of the things the school is doing currently are being covered by the ARP and with the delay in funding, are at present, being covered with general funds. In addition, it is impacting the school from a functional operational perspective too as different items are on hold as a result of the prolonged process. He also thanked Ms. Heiligenthaler and Dr. Kramer for their work with regard to the applications which has taken a considerable amount of their time.

Superintendent's Information

Mr. Reimer discussed revisiting the tax cap calculation from last year with regard to shifts in funding from the plant, the plant values, the three hypothetical scenarios provided last month, and how they impact planning. He noted that the calculation last year was based on what the District thought would occur which it did not. Based on review to date, the projected change in funding would result in a carryover of approximately \$71,000. Determination has not been made to date if the District will want to adjust this as he and Ms. Heiligenthaler are analyzing what would financially be best for the District. Mr. Reimer stated a concern that if the plant were to go on a PILOT it would result in the plant/data center paying less taxes and shifting more of the burden to the local taxpayers, as well as the potential for a negative



levy change and a decrease to the formula in the calculation. For that reason, Mr. Reimer would not advocate for a PILOT.

Mr. Atwater commented that he did not want a PILOT and noted that he asked at the town board meeting if they were considering a PILOT, and the board stated they are not considering one for the data center. Mr. Reimer noted that he hoped others were not considering a PILOT for the data center, but to date, he did not have information with regard to this. Mr. Sweeney thought the county and state both opted out of a PILOT. Mr. Reimer stated he did not know at this time.

Mr. Reimer commented that with the three hypothetical scenarios presented, the District must look at what is best for the long-term financial stability of the school as the outcome will impact the utilization of reserve funds.

The Energy Cessation Mitigation Fund application was approved by the Empire State Development Agency and funding is anticipated at the end of January, beginning of February in the approximately amount of \$2,419,000. Funding will take place over seven years and decrease 10% each year. The results of the funding/application were different for the District than the county or town as the school approached the process differently. Overall, this resulted in the best possible outcome for the District. The funding, along with the levy, must continue to be looked at strategically for the long-term benefit and stability of the District.

Mr. Reimer then provided an EPC update. He noted that the District is waiting receipt of the solar equipment. One more unit needs to be converted for the HVAC project in the pool area and the decision was made to wait until after swim season. Lighting needs to be completed in the elementary gym, technology area, and the auditorium. The auditorium will be done in April after the musical has ended. The walk-thru was completed with Day and the third-party energy consultant, and architects signed off on the Certificate of Substantial Completion and submitted to NYSED in order for the funding process to begin.

Mr. Reimer discussed the small fire which occurred during break when the annual generator testing was being performed. He stated that as Messrs. Goodlander and McGee addressed the situation immediately, it prevented additional damage. A quote for the repair is out now and the backup generator is on site.

Mr. Reimer provided a District COVID-19 update. He commented that since December 17th guidance has change at least five times and what is provided by the CDC, state, and county do not always align. The definition of "fully vaccinated" has changed over the last two weeks with additional information received today just before the meeting which he is reviewing. He discussed the changes in isolation and quarantine to five days depending on symptoms and return on day six; the additional anticipated receipt of test kits for families; distribution of test kits over a two-day period last week; that PCR tests are no longer needed to return to work/school; and that every positive case reported to the District this week, except two, have been from the home test kits. He then discussed the request and need for a part-time nurse to support all the work that Ms. McKee is doing during and after the school day due to COVID



and especially with regard to contact tracing. He noted that Niagara County is continuing to do contact tracing but only for students and those over the age of 65 but also noted that given the numbers the county is dealing with, receipt of information by the District is often not timely and with the change to five days quarantine, the District has been notified of a case in which the individual is already back. Mr. Reimer noted that the approval of this position may require movement of positions, but would not cost the District money because of other factors with how it would be structured. Mrs. Ecker inquired if the position, given one which is hard to recruit for, would be just until the end of the school year or longer. Mr. Reimer noted that he would like to create a structure to keep the position beyond the end of this year as a regular position so there is coverage in the office at all times if Ms. McKee was unavailable.

Mr. Reimer noted that Test to Stay is still being reviewed by the Niagara County schools and may not be needed as a result of the new five-day guidance. Availability of tests may also be a determining factor. Mr. Reimer talked about managing in-house if implemented and what would be needed such as parent permission and staff to administer tests. More may be known after a meeting tomorrow with district superintendents and Mr. Stapleton from the NCDOH. Mrs. Clemens-Harris asked if the availability of tests would be an issue. Mr. Reimer stated it may be and provided an example based on current numbers what would be needed, and consideration of the implications of if the District were to start and were unable to continue due to lack of test kits or, wait and be able to provide through year-end. Mr. Reimer thought the District may have enough tests if it receives those anticipated in a timely manner, but not knowing when it will be received and volatility of COVID must be considered.

The Board Facilities Advisory Committee met on December 17, 2021. Mr. Reimer summarized the meeting which addressed: introductions; setting the norm for how the group interacts and works together; charge of the committee; tour of the inside of the facilities – outside not done as it was too dark and members were familiar with it; review and discussion of the building condition report, and timing of the next report; review of annual inspection reports, how to interpret, and review of items that have been completed or are in process; as well as reviewing bigger picture items and what the Committee wants to address which included flexible structures and space, life systems, outside facilities, larger projects, and how building aid works. At the next meeting, the Committee will have Mr. Carberry join and discuss athletics and what he sees needs to be addressed, ideas he has, and information based on his work with coaches and other staff. The meeting after that is planned to address flexible space and Mr. Reimer is trying to coordinate to bring in some professionals who address this issue as well as the District architect. Mr. Atwater said it was a very positive meeting and participants wanted to contribute.

Mr. Reimer noted that the Budget Advisory Committee will meet on January 24, 2022, and he is hopeful to have more information from the state to provide updated revenue information to the Committee.

Mr. Reimer commented that he received input from various Board members with regard to goals and times to meet to further discuss this subject. The consensus based on information



received to date, was the goals seem to be comprehensive but changes could be made to better guide the District into the future. After review of dates and times, the Board agreed to meet on February 1, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. for a Board Retreat to discuss process and prepare for a future Board meeting on this topic. Mr. Reimer asked the members to send any additional input the members have to him so he is able to compile it for the retreat as the foundation of starting the review process.

POLICIES/PLANS The first reading of the following policies were completed and there were no questions raised.

3282	Naming of School District Facilities
3290	Operation of Motor-Driven Vehicles on District Property
3310	Public Access to Records
3320	Confidentiality of Computerized Information
3410	Code of Conduct on School Property
3411	Prohibition of Weapons on School Grounds
3412	Threats of Violence in School
3420	Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District

The second reading of the following policies were completed.

Policy #	Policy Name
3210	Visitors to the School
3230	Public Complaints
3250	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
3260	Use of Service Animals
3271	Solicitation of Charitable Donations
3272	Advertising in the Schools
3280	Use of School Facilities, Materials and Equipment
3281	Use of Facilities By The Boy Scouts of America and Patriotic Youth Groups

There were no questions, comments, or changes brought forward. A motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the above referenced policies as presented.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

EDUCATION None

**PERSONNEL
ITEMS**

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the permanent appointment of Alexander McCabe as a full-time Cleaner effective January 12, 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.



Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of Jessica Haseley as a Substitute Teacher at the per diem rate, and as Teaching Assistant at a rate of \$13.20/per hour both for Grades PreK-12 effective January 11, 2022, subject to background and credit check approval.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the appointment of the following individuals as a Lifeguard for interscholastic events effective December 6, 2021, at a rate of \$16.00/hour.

- Sharon Lamb
- Ashley Atwater
- Heather McIntyre
- Bill Bruning
- Bill Wilson
- Lynn Wilson
- Karin Menz
- Lori Costello
- Paul DerSarkissian
- Cynthia Calandra
- Brianne Strong

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the following Musical Theater Production Advisors for the 2021-2022 musical at a stipend based on the BTU Agreement.

Name	Advisor Position	Category	Step	Stipend
Lewis, Sandra	Vocal Director	D	4	\$902.00
Scofill, Ruth	Production Assistant	E	1	\$611.00
Anderson, Rachel	Accompanist	n/a	n/a	\$700/year

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mrs. Voss to approve the creation of a 0.625 FTE School Nurse.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL

ITEMS

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to accept the Warrant Report dated January 10, 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.



Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to accept the Treasurer's Report dated December 31, 2021.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the following cafeteria items be declared excess property and that the Superintendent, or his designee, be authorized to dispose of said items as presented.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the budget appropriation and expenditure transfers for 2021-2022 in the amounts of \$5,600 and \$3,990 respectively as outline.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the Purchase of Service Contract between Barker Central School District and Niagara County Department of Health effective December 1, 2021 - November 30, 2022.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

**END OF PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board agreed that an executive session was not needed.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to end the Public Session and adjournment of the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Yes: 6, No: 0

Motion carried.

Prepared by,

Mary H. Eadie
District Clerk