BARKER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes
Herbert F. Ludwig Auditorium
Thursday, August 19, 2021

PRESENT R. Atwater, M. Clemens – Harris, H. Ecker, C. Gancasz, E. Gow, J. Sweeney,

EXCUSED V. Voss

ALSO PRESENT J. Reimer, 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.

PUBLIC FORUM Ms. Eileen Murray of Barker talked about the return to school as it related to masking and protocols; her views and concerns; where the responsibility lies for wearing masks for children and staff; impact of vaccinations; and provided statistics on COVID as it related to the flu, accidents, etc.

SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATION Mr. Reimer stated that the EPC projects continue to move along fast. Most of the equipment for the lighting is now in but the project will not be completed before the start of school due to the delay in materials. Various classrooms across the campus are complete and the remaining areas will be done when the students are not here so to not interfere with classes and activities. The HVAC work is just waiting on two units needing controllers. The boilers will not be turned on until October and Day Automation will be on site when this is done. Mr. Reimer stated that some boiler issues were noted from an inspection performed, and the work may be rolled into the contract. He also noted that some of the lighting controllers were a little different from the testing modules and the differences are being worked through.

Athletics will be commencing August 23, 2021 and to date, the District is fielding all teams. The girls' varsity soccer team is low on numbers and Mr. Carberry is working to try to recruit so the players will have a full team. All the sports fields are set and ready to go with lines complete, and are in good shape after two years of specific work to improve the fields.

Mr. Atwater inquired if the Board would be able to do a walk thru of the work done and improvements on campus before the next Board meeting at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Reimer will coordinate.

Mr. Reimer then presented, and reviewed in detail, information regarding school opening protocols for the 2021-2022 school year. He noted that Admin. is continually monitoring the situation of what it will be able to do at the start of the school year. Official guidance has not been received to date from the NYS Department of Health or NYSED other than to follow the CDC guidance provided earlier this summer. Within the presentation, Mr. Reimer reviewed things to consider, and a draft framework regarding masking guidelines based on the transmission levels which was developed together with local districts, and the Niagara County Department of Health. This was also shared with the District's union groups, District physician, District nurse, and was based on current guidance from the CDC and NYSED to date regarding the opening of schools. District leaders spent considerable time developing the framework and Barker's framework will be similar to what most of the Niagara/Orleans district areas are using. The matrix is how the District will operate when it is in one of the zones per CDC and NYSED guidance. He noted that this is a very divided issue everywhere and people have different opinions based on their experiences since the onset of the pandemic, and so he understands not everyone will agree with the masking guidance, and it is his hope that adults set the example of respect, compassion and tolerance for each other to the children with regard to this controversial issue.

The draft framework template outlines how the District will provide in-person instruction, five days per week, under the guidelines for each particular area (each row) noted based upon the transmission levels (each column) within the school's area. The transmission colors are the same that have been used during COVID. Mr. Reimer outlined the two metrics for zone determination. The first is the rate per positive COVID cases per total tests; and the second is the number of positive COVID cases per 100,000 residents. The CDC goes by the higher of the two metrics. Currently the District is in the blue zone based on numbers but the orange zone for cases per 100,000 as that is the higher number. The seven-day rolling average is utilized for the calculation for the second metric.

Mr. Reimer noted that based on the draft, the only times masks are currently mandated (other than when in a red transmission zone) would be while on buses, when students and staff are navigating through common areas/hallways and in line for food when social distancing can't be maintained. The remainder of the day, when students are in classes, physical education, lunch, extra-curricular activities, masks are recommended to be worn but not mandated. Mr. Reimer noted that any student or staff member may choose to wear a mask even if not required. The CDC recommends masks, but unless required, it will not be mandated by the school. Mr.

Reimer noted that if any guidance changes and requires masks to be worn other than just discussed, masks will be mandated. If the zone changes to a red transmission zone, the masking requirements could significantly change.

With regard to quarantining, Mr. Reimer commented that it will still occur in schools settings and protocols for addressing will remain as they have previously. Anyone within six feet of the person having COVID for more than 15 minutes will likely be quarantined except, by current CDC guidelines, if both were wearing masks, the other individual(s) in close proximity to the infected person may not be quarantined, and they may not if the individual(s) have been vaccinated. The school will continue to do what it has when it has become aware of and individual becoming infected. He emphasized though that the Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) decides who is quarantined, not the District. This review of exposure becomes more difficult than in the past, as the District will need to look at who was masked, within six feet, and the District is not allowed to ask who was vaccinated. Mr. Reimer noted that it currently goes by a six feet radius for quarantining vs. the entire classroom. If a student/staff member is sent home due to symptoms, the process remains the same as last year, and the individual(s) would need to isolate for ten days, or get a test. He noted that there may be a reduction from ten to seven days, but he is not sure as there is conflicting information in the guidance about the isolation period.

Mrs. Clemens-Harris inquired if vaccinated individuals would need to quarantine and Mr. Reimer commented that the NCDOH would determine that. Mrs. Ecker inquired as to if it is known how many staff were vaccinated. Mr. Reimer noted that based on information available without inquiring, the number is high. Mrs. Ecker also asked if the BTU has discussed wearing masks even if vaccinated. Mr. Reimer noted that non-vaccinated teachers should wear masks but the District can't legally require staff to tell the District, so that is on the honor system.

Mr. Reimer also noted that the daily health screening of staff and people in the buildings, and temperature checks of students are no longer required. This has been reviewed with Ms. McKee and the District physician too. This change will be beneficial as the processes were time consuming and not as effective as self-monitoring and staying at home if symptomatic. He stated that hygiene practices will be reviewed and reinforced at the beginning of the year. If testing is to be required, it will be farmed out through NCDOH with a secured third-party for the Niagara County school districts.

Mr. Reimer commented that based on information stated publically by Kathy Hochul, he would be very surprised if the masking decisions are not taken out of the districts' control and that it will be mandated to wear masks indoors. Mr. Reimer reiterated that masks will always be allowed to be worn at any time by any person on campus, regardless of transmission level. There will be no tolerance for harassment regarding an individual's choice to wearing a mask, and if it were to occur, it would be addressed under the Code of Conduct. Mr. Reimer stated that the District's insurance provider, Utica National, will only cover the District if it follows and is in compliance to CDC guidelines as it relates to COVID-related claims.

Mr. Reimer noted that in regard to athletics, the athletes are good to start and masks on the fields are recommended by not required at this point in time. Higher risk sports, such as football and basketball, can continue even if a red zone but it is recommended to do virtually. Mr. Reimer noted that he is having discussions with the NCDOH and the District's physician regard this. If sports need to move inside, clarity regarding masks is still pending, but it will most likely depend on the activity, if distancing can be maintained and other factors. Mr. Reimer noted that additional guidelines will have to work through to ensure the District can provide students with the opportunities to play and participate in those sports safely. Mr. Reimer reiterated that all this can change at any time.

Extra-curricular activities such as field trips, the Department of Health recommends looking at each activity carefully. Mr. Reimer commented that he thought the District should still be able to provide these opportunities to the students and are planning as such, but if circumstances change, they will be looked at on an individual basis.

If the transmission rates change such that the District moves to the red transmission level, the District will look at closely and have discussion with the Department of Health and the school physician on the agreed upon framework as the situation in the community may be different than of other areas around the county. He noted the towns that comprise 90% of the positive cases in the county. Careful monitoring of the seven-day rolling average continues, as well as other factors. Mr. Reimer reviewed the number of positive cases per thousand and positive rates for Orleans and Erie Counties compared to Niagara. Erie County is currently in the red zone, and Niagara could possibly change to it.

Mr. Reimer commented that currently the facilities will be opened back up to visitors, Community Ed, sporting events and outside community events as the way the District is set up gives it the ability to do this for most activities.

As the District continues to wait on guidance, Mr. Reimer asked the Board if the draft framework looks sound at this point in time given what is known, and if the Board had suggested changes as he would like to provide the community with an update. He commented that there are many people on both sides based on community discussions and the goal is to get the students back safely five days per week. Mrs. Ecker asked if masks are mandated, do vaccinated individuals need to wear them and was informed that both vaccinated and unvaccinated would likely need to wear the masks. Mrs. Ecker noted that the framework is better than she anticipated and Mrs. Clemens-Harris agreed. She also asked about the layout of the cafeteria. Currently the students will be sitting at desks 3-feet apart. If guidance requires it to change to 6-feet distancing for meals, the space would not work for all the meals. As such, plans are being worked through to address this and limit transmission exposure. Mrs. Clemens-Harris asked if masks were required during meal times if the students are moving around the area. Mr. Reimer noted that at this time, masks are only needed when in line due to distancing but this may need to be adjusted based on the situation.

Mr. Reimer stated that if the Board agrees with the overall draft framework, he would plan to post a letter regarding the opening of school and the draft framework to the community tomorrow and that at the August 30, 2021 meeting, have a discussion and approval based on the most up to date guidance known.

Mrs. Ecker inquired as to the number of students that opted for remote learning. Mr. Reimer noted that only one student will be learning remotely. The number is lower than anticipated but Mr. Reimer commented that this was not unique to Barker, as the entire Niagara/Orleans area was lower than anticipated. The cost to provide this service through the Capital Region BOCES will be approximately $5,000 per student and paid for through stimulus funds.

Mr. Reimer noted that if anyone has questions or suggestions about any of the items discussed to please reach out to him so that at the August 30th meeting, the framework will be in a final form based on information and guidance at that point in time.

PERSONNEL ITEMS

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the appointment of Bethany Duchow as a full-time Teacher Aide effective September 1, 2021 at a rate of $12.50 per hour, subject to background check and fingerprint clearance.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the appointment of Rene Kalynycz as a full-time Teacher Aide effective September 1, 2021 at a rate of $12.50 per hour, subject to background check and fingerprint clearance.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the appointment of Janelle McAdoo as a part-time Lunch Monitor effective September 1, 2021 at a rate of $12.50 per hour, subject to background check and fingerprint clearance.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the appointment of Cynthia Smith as a Part-time Food Service Helper effective August 20, 2021 at a rate of $12.50 per hour.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the appointment of Ryan Carberry for the 2021-2022 school year for the Fall season as the Varsity Girls Soccer Coach, Step 2, with a stipend of $4,946 as per the BTU Agreement.

Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney to approve the appointment of Rachel Hutter as a Modified Field Hockey Assistant volunteer effective September 1, 2021 for the Fall season of the 2021-2022 school year.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL ITEMS

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the adoption of the resolution pertaining to the Tax Warrant for collection of property taxes for 2021 – 2022.

WHEREAS: Chapter 73 of the Laws of 1977, amended Section 1318, subdivision 1 of the Real Property Tax Law; and

WHEREAS: the unencumbered, unreserved fund balance at the close of the last fiscal year must be applied in determining the amount of the school tax levy except for an amount not to exceed 4% of the current year budget; and

WHEREAS: this latter amount may be held as surplus funds during the current school year;

NOW THERFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Board of Education retain as surplus funds $690,188 from the fund balance of $9,251,718 there by applying $0 to the reduction of the tax levy.

BE IT ADDITIONALLY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:
To the collector of Barker School District Town(s) of Somerset, Hartland, Newfane, Ridgeway and Yates of Counties of Niagara and Orleans of New York State.

You are hereby commanded:

To give notice and start tax collection on September 1, 2021, in accordance with the provision of Section 1322 of the Real Property Tax Law.

To give notice that the collection will end on November 1, 2021.

To collect taxes in the sum of $4,767,964 to meet the estimated expenses of the school district plus $79,590 for library purposes in the same manner that collectors are authorized to collect town and county taxes in accordance with the provisions of Section 1318 of the Real Property Tax Law.
To make no changes or alterations in this tax warrant or the attached tax rolls but shall return the same to the Board of Education. The Board may recall its warrant and tax roll for correction of errors or omissions in

accordance with the provisions of Section 1316 of the Real Property Tax Law.

To forward by mail to each owner of real property listed on the tax rolls within ten days after the start of collection a statement of taxes due on his property on press-numbered tax bill forms provided by the school district in accordance with the provisions of Section 922 of the Real Property Tax Law. To forward by mail, without interest penalties, to the office of the county treasurer a detailed tax bill of all state land parcels liable for taxes on the school tax rolls in accordance with provisions of Section 540 and 544 of the Real Property Tax Law.

To receive from each of the taxable corporations and natural persons the sums listed on the attached tax rolls without interest penalties to all taxes collected during the first month of the tax collection period from September 1 to September 30, 2021. To add two percent interest penalties to all taxes collected during the second month of the tax collection between October 1 and November 1, 2021, and to add an additional three percent interest penalties to all taxes collected during any part of the third month which is after November 1, 2021 and to account for such sums as income due the school district.

To issue press-numbered receipts only on forms provided by the school district in acknowledgment of receipt of payments of taxes and to retain, preserve, and file exact copies of all such receipts issued as required by Section 986 of the Real Property Tax Law.

To promptly return this warrant at the expiration and if any taxes on the attached tax rolls shall be unpaid at that time, deliver an accounting thereof on forms showing by town the total assessed valuation, tax rate, the total tax levy, the total amounts collected, and the total amounts remaining uncollected as required by Section 1330 of the Real Property Tax Law.

This warrant is issued pursuant to Sections 910, 912, and 914 of the Real Property Tax Law and is delivered in accordance with Sections 1306 and 1318 of this law. It is effective immediately after it is properly signed by a majority of the members of the Board of Education. This warrant shall expire on the date stated above unless a renewal of extension has been endorsed on the fact of the warrant in writing in accordance with Section 1318, subdivision 2 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Given under our hand(s) this **19th** day of **August, 2021**
Signatures of the Members of the Board of Education

Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Mr. Reimer discussed property tax rates, the potential tax rates to decrease of 4-9% next year for many property owners due to the valuation of the power plant moving

from exempt to the tax roll, which is different than anticipated when the budget was developed. Mr. Reimer noted that he would like to send a letter to the community with the tax bills explaining why, with a 4% tax levy increase, that some people experienced a tax decrease and that they likely will see an increase in 2022–2023 taxes depending on how revenue is received from the plant and the valuation.

Motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to approve the adoption of the resolution pertaining to the property tax rates for 2021-2022 as outlined below.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has been authorized by the voters at the Annual School Meeting to raise for the current budget of the 2021-2022 school year a sum not to exceed $17,254,712;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board fix the equalized tax rates by towns and confirm the extension of the taxes as they appear on the following described tax roll:

Name of Town	Total Assessed Valuations	Equalized Tax Rate by Towns	Total Tax Levy by Towns
Somerset	167,189,252	18.060382	3,020,376.85
Hartland	87,044,835	15.830694	1,378,681.44
Newfane	11,363,470	19.727140	224,168.76
Ridgeway	4,740,659	14.571183	69,077.01
Yates	5,723,481	13.219217	75,659.94
Totals	276,061,697		4,767,964

AND BE IT HEREBY DIRECTED THAT, the tax warrant of this board, duly signed shall be affixed to the above-described tax rolls authorizing the collection of said taxes to begin September 1, 2021 and end November 1, 2021 giving the tax warrant an effective period of 60 days at the expiration of which time the tax collector shall make an accounting in writing to the board;

AND IT IS FURTHER DIRECTED THAT, the delinquent tax penalties shall be fixed as follows:

1st month free period,
2nd month interest of 2 percent added,
3rd month or fraction thereof, interest of 3 percent added.

Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

END OF PUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Mrs. Ecker, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to end the Public Session and enter into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m. for the purpose of discussing negotiations and the Superintendent's evaluation.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to approve the adjournment of the Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. and return to Public Session.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

PUBLIC SESSION/ ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Ecker, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, that the Board approve the end of the Public Session and adjournment of the meeting at 8:25 p.m.
Yes: 6, No: 0
Motion carried.

Prepared by,

Mary H. Eadie
District Clerk