



**Barker Central School District
Board of Education Meeting
Auditorium
Monday, January 11, 2021 - 7:00 PM**

- PRESENT** R. Atwater, M. Clemens-Harris, H. Ecker, C. Gancasz, E. Gow, J. Sweeney, V. Voss
- EXCUSED** None
- ALSO PRESENT** J. Reimer, M. Eadie, C. Heiligenthaler, M. Kramer
Public: 0
- 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. With no additions or changes, a motion was made by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to approve the agenda as presented.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.
- ACCEPT MINUTES** The Board reviewed the Board minutes. Mr. Atwater noted one correction under Personnel. With regard to William Huenemoerder's retirement, it should say "commendation" and not "accommodation". After review, a motion was made by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris to accept and approve the minutes as amended from the Regular Board Meeting dated of December 14, 2020.
Yes: 7, No: 0
Motion carried.
- PUBLIC FORUM** None.

**PRESENTATIONS**Curriculum Update - M. Kramer

Dr. Kramer provided an update on what the elementary teachers felt were the two priority needs assessment areas for the research project regarding the application of literacy in the elementary classroom planned for next year. The two areas were: (a.) reading comprehension strategies, and (b.) vocabulary. This will be provided to Dr. Blythe Anderson of University at Buffalo. The results of the research will then be utilized to provide professional development around literacy.

Dr. Kramer stated that the District is working on repurposing a candy vending machine into book vending machine in the elementary school as part of its SPARK program as a reward for positive student behavior.

Financial Update/Initial Rollover Budget - C. Heiligenthaler

Ms. Heiligenthaler noted that Erie I BOCES will not be processing W2s as it had done in the past, rather BOCES will just be printing for the District and Ms. Heiligenthaler will be processing them.

She then noted that she had finished the routine monthly (TRS and ERS) and quarterly filings (Fed and NYS tax) for the District.

Ms. Heiligenthaler also noted her appreciation to the Board for the ability to work remotely, the benefits of it, and gave the example of how she was able to work on payroll and accounts payable while out of District and did not need to utilize the backup personnel for these processes in her absence.

Ms. Heiligenthaler reviewed the assumptions of the rollover budget being presented this evening. Some of these included:

- Having last year's budget numbers roll forward;
- Utilized budget to budget comparison;
- No staffing changes to date;
- Increases to salaries were per contracts;
- Supply categories carryover;
- BOCES expenses increased 2-3%;
- Transportation increased 2%;
- Health insurance increased 8%; and
- TRS rate utilized was 11.5%.

SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATION

Mr. Reimer continued his discussion from the last meeting with regard to the proposed tax levy percentage to utilize for building the budget based on subsequent information provided to the Board on what the impact of various percentage levies equate to, as well as additional information he reviewed with the Board tonight. He provided them with the 2020-2021 true value tax rates for the O/N BOCES area for comparison. He noted that these rates may not match the rates on the tax bills as the bills are based off equalization rates. Barker's true value tax rate is very low at \$14.52 in comparison to most rates which start around the



\$20.00 and up range for Western and Upstate regions. Mr. Reimer asked for feedback on what to set the levy rate at based on the information reviewed relative to how the Board would like to build the budget. He noted his opinion that he understands the thought process of the 2% but that it will not generate enough income to cover the deficit that the District has been in for the past eight years. If the Board decides that 2% is the rate to use, the District needs to prepare if other revenue sources are not available to offset expenses for the District. If the District opts for a higher rate, it will begin to build its base, and can always decrease the rate in subsequent years if additional revenue is realized. He noted that a 4% levy increase on a \$19.10 effective tax rate would equal an approximate increase of \$75.00 on a \$100,000 home which is a significant amount for some. That amount would then remain in place each year to build the base. Ultimately, this will reduce the amount of fund balance being used while providing more time for the District to come to a balanced budget. Mr. Reimer noted that looking at this levy truly from a financial perspective, in his opinion, felt the 4% rate was appropriate and if the Board thinks it can go that high, it should. If the Board feels it is too high, it needs to determine what it thinks the community could go up to. The Master Budget information provided to the Board currently reflects a 2% rate through 2024–2025.

Mr. Sweeney inquired as to if Mr. Reimer knew when the next town re-evaluation would be. He did not. Mr. Sweeney noted the issue of reduced funding potential due to COVID. He also noted that the 4% rate would be hard, but the reality is the District does not have the revenue coming in from other sources.

Mr. Reimer emphasized again the need to look at the budget on a five-year basis vs. an annual year approach as the decisions that are made now will have a substantial impact on the District down the road.

Mr. Atwater asked the Board's opinion on the levy rate.

Mrs. Clemens-Harris agreed with Mr. Sweeney, the concerns noted, and that the 4% rate is appropriate at this time.

Mrs. Voss concurred.

Mrs. Ecker agreed, noting the District has done everything it can at this point in time.

Mrs. Gancasz noted it is a hard time and no one likes the idea of 4% but we want to see the school survive.

Mrs. Gow agreed.

Mr. Atwater concurred and agreed that it was the consensus of the Board to use a 4% tax levy rate, and noted that it was an important to do now as the District does not need a supermajority at this point to address the District's need for financial stability and longevity.



Mr. Reimer noted that the budget forecasting will be based off this and noted that it can be adjusted throughout the process.

Mr. Reimer reviewed the projected financial statement from 2020-2021 through 2024-2025. The goal is to try to get to a sustainable budget and get out of a structural deficit. He discussed the energy cessation funds not in the current plan that will assist in offsetting the deficit, currently projected to be \$5.7 million at the end of 2024-2025. These funds will be approximately \$2.6 - \$2.7 million this year and decrease approximately \$300,000 each year over six years, but even still the District is utilizing the fund balance. Mr. Reimer noted that in the rollover budget audited expense figures were utilized from 2017-2018 through 2019-2020 which represent the actual dollars spent as a comparison to the proposed for 2021-2022. The projected year-end total expense of \$16,690,946 for 2020-2021 was also compared to the projected year-end 2021-2022 of \$17,077,301 and represents an approximate increase of \$386,000 that is based on what the District believes will happen, such as contractual salary increases, health care, FICA, etc. One large increase is due to transportation given the reduced expense from the past year when the District was fully remote due to COVID, compared to projected for next year. Overall, the rollover budget represents a 2.67% increase. The goal for administration between now and April is to develop a budget that reflects the best the District can do for the students that is fiscally responsible.

With regard to the Somerset Power Plant, Mr. Reimer noted that the Energy Cessation Fund application, which is a joint application with the county, town and school, is anticipated to be complete next week. The county has a couple items to finalize, and he is hopeful this will work out and reflect the best possible outcome.

Mr. Reimer discussed ongoing broadband advocacy efforts and letters issued by other districts and superintendents in order to get a much more robust signal through the buildout of satellite, cell towers, and lines which would enable quicker and more reliable access for those in areas such as Barker. There is a drive to put mechanisms in place to help those who need access but are unable to financially afford it.

Mr. Reimer noted that he has a meeting scheduled with financial advisors on the solar project and he will report out on the outcome, noting there is a possibility that the District may be able to commence with the project in March.

The HVAC project will require a negative declaration resolution of the Board pursuant to the SEQRA Act. Mr. Reimer noted that this will be put together and presented for review and consideration at the February Board meeting. Once all approvals are received, it is projected that work might commence in the Fall. He noted that much of the work could be done even when school is in session with minimal to no disruption.

Mr. Reimer provided an update on positive cases of COVID noting that there are currently three staff members and eleven students impacted by the virus and the District's numbers remain low in comparison to other areas. Most individual instances were the result of outside the school contact. There are approximately 2,200 active cases in Niagara County. Contact



tracing remains slow by the Department of Health, so the District remains proactive when it learns of a positive case to protect the staff, students and community by removing individuals who might be impacted by any positive cases.

Mr. Reimer then discussed the Federal Family First Coronavirus Response Act, known as FFCRA, that expired December 31, 2020, which required certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19, and noted that the new stimulus approved extended some but not all of the provisions of FFCRA and that entities had to opt-in to it. Mr. Reimer discussed the pros and cons of opting into the extended provisions, as well as the different options for the District noting the ultimate goal is to keep everyone safe. Mr. Reimer asked the Board if it would allow the District flexibility to all staff to use accumulated sick time (as opposed the contractual sick-time language) for COVID-related illnesses (not other illnesses) in order to take care of themselves or family members through the end of the school year, with the option to extend should the pandemic circumstances continue. After discussion, the Board provided their views and all were in agreement that it was a good idea to do so. Mr. Reimer thanked the Board for their consideration, noted he would act upon this now and bring a resolution forward for their review and adoption at the next meeting.

Mr. Reimer noted that the District's 2021–2022 calendar is being preliminarily built out and the new Juneteenth holiday needs to be added into the calendar which will affect the 180 days and must be considered when scheduling instructional days around contracts, holidays, breaks, and potential snow days. This has been discussed across the region and Mr. Reimer noted that there are different options and solutions proposed by all. He noted that he is not sure at this point if it will be implemented for the District this year given the schedule is set and not knowing how the pandemic might further impact the District but he would keep the Board apprised.

Mr. Reimer reported out for Mr. Carter noting the social and emotional survey responses are being reviewed with staff and the District is looking for ways to put supports in place for the students. Some of these include extra activities in a safe environment here for the students, as well as ways to help the students find ways to vent and/or find healthy outlets. The overall goal is to continue to develop and improve the social and emotional wellbeing of the students.

Mr. Reimer stated that the District is sending out a postcard to the community on Tuesday regarding Pre-K and Kindergarten enrollment for the upcoming year, and the level of interest there might be for a full day vs. half-day Pre-K program. The earlier information is pulled together on numbers the better it is for budgeting and staffing purposes. He noted that the grant for a full day was looked at last year to offset the higher expense of a potential full day Pre-K. He also noted that overall, there would be a minimal cost increase to the District to provide an all-day UPK as it could eliminate the need for a mid-day bus run, and other related items would be moved around or combined. This option will depend on the level of interest received back which will be analyzed before a decision is made.



Mr. Atwater noted the conference on the agenda for Mr. Reimer. A motion was made by Mr. Sweeney, seconded Mrs. Voss to approve the attendance of Jacob L. Reimer, Superintendent, at the 2021 NYSCOSS LEAF Winter Institute & Lobby Day - The Time is Now, Sunday, March 7 - Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at the Albany Capital Center, Albany, NY was approved as presented.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Ms. Heiligenthaler and Dr. Kramer were excused at 7:47 p.m.

POLICIES

Mr. Atwater then presented the second reading of the policies listed below. There were no comments or changes made from the last reading. Upon motion by Mrs. Voss, seconded by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, to approve the following policies:

Policy #	Policy Name
6320	Supplementary School Personnel
6410	Staff Use of Computerized Information Resources
6411	Use of Email in the School District
6420	Employee Personnel Records and Release of Information
6430	Employee Activities
6440	Negotiations
6450	Theft of Services or Property
6460	Jury Duty

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Mr. Atwater presented the following policies for the first review and comment:

Policy #	Policy Name
6510	Health Insurance
6520	Workers' Compensation
6540	Defense and Indemnification of Board Members and Employees
6550	Leaves of Absence
6551	Family and Medical Leave Act Policy
6552	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)/ Military Leaves of Absence
6560	Determination of Employment Status: Employee or Independent Contractor
6561	Professional Services Providers
6562	Employment of Retired Persons

No comments were received.

EDUCATION None

**PERSONNEL****ITEMS**

Upon motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to approve the probationary appointment of Alexander McCabe as a full-time Cleaner effective January 12, 2021 with a probationary period from January 12, 2021 through January 11, 2022 at a rate in accordance with the Barker Central Central Services Contract.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Upon motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to approve the appointments of Amanda Lamb and Jessica Haseley as Substitute/Part-time Cleaners effective January 12, 2021 at a rate of \$12.50/hour subject to background and credit check.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Upon motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to accept the resignation of Melissa A. Bundrock, Teacher, Instructional Support Specialist, National Honor Society Advisor, and Senior High Student Council Advisor effective January 14, 2021.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Upon motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to approve the appointment of Michael O'Sullivan for the 2020 - 2021 school year as the Club Advisor for National Honor Society effective January 15, 2021, at a rate based on Category D, Step 1 of the BTU Agreement, prorated based on an annual stipend of \$747.00.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Upon motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, to approve Rachel Hutter as a student teacher for Messrs. Bruning and Carson from January to May, 2021 as part of her Physical Education Teacher Certification with SUNY Brockport.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL**ITEMS**

Upon motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to accept the Warrant Report dated January 11, 2021.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to accept the Extraclassroom Report through December 2020.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Sweeney, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, to accept the Treasurer's Report dated December 2020.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

OTHER**MATTERS**

Mrs. Voss asked for clarification pertaining to scheduling the Juneteenth holiday if it fell Saturday or Sunday and would it have the potential to impact exams. She was informed it



would be taken on the Friday or Monday if it occurred on a weekend, and it could potentially impact the scheduling of exams.

With regard to vaccines, Mr. Reimer noted that the Governor allowed public education staff in the 1B category to start getting vaccinated. Some staff have already done so, and some are scheduling on Wednesdays or during break times to minimize disruption during the school day.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

The Board agreed that an Executive Session was not needed.

**PUBLIC SESSION/
ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mrs. Clemens-Harris, seconded by Mrs. Gancasz, that the Board approve the adjournment of the Public Session and adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Yes: 7, No: 0

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary H. Eadie
District Clerk