

Dr. Rasmus called the Millville Area School District Finance Committee Meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

Those present in the High School Library were Joseph Rasmus, Superintendent; William Berger, Co-Curricular Committee member; Michael Farrell, Co-Curricular Committee member; Gena Maize, Co-Curricular Committee member; Jessica Whitmoyer, Board member; Matthew Deihl, Board member Brandi Roberts, Cheerleading Coach; Matt Mills, High School Principal; Rachel Verstraeten, Athletic Director; Carolyn Sweeney, High School Music Teacher; JD Stanley, community member; Corey Whitmoyer, community member; and Chelsea Rosenberger, Board Recording Secretary.

### **Fall 2025 Positive Happenings**

- Ms. Verstraeten began with a summary of the fall athletic season, highlighting both student performance and community support. She also thanked the Athletic Association (and booster volunteers) for running the concession stand and fundraisers; supporting team needs such as warm-ups, hoodies, and fan buses; and contributing toward transportation costs for events such as playoff trips.
- Ms. Verstraeten then shared that our student sections at games were consistently strong, especially given the district's small size, praising the students for their themed nights that were well-received. Then, she thanked the school and community for their generous support with the White-Out event for our Athletic Trainer, Brian Craven, who is battling stage 4 cancer. Ms. Verstraeten said that the event raised approximately \$6,000 for him. Additionally, the Red-Out/Prayer Vigil event for Carter Conklin had a strong student and community turnout. Finally, she communicated that the students organized pink-out activities for breast cancer whereby the boys' team wore themed shirts.
- Then, Ms. Verstraeten shared some team highlights for the fall athletic season. She shared that for the Golf Co-Op (with Benton), the team won the conference championship, in which Millville golfers participated. The combined team had a successful season and qualified for playoffs. The Girls' Soccer team (Co-Op with Benton) missed the playoffs by one game. The Boys' Soccer team finished with an 18–3–1 record. Ms. Verstraeten praised them for reaching the district final and advancing to the first round of states. She also noted improvement in their sportsmanship and conduct compared to previous years, with officials and representatives from other schools complimenting the team's behavior and unity. For the Volleyball Co-Op with Berwick, Ms. Verstraeten shared that the team was the conference champion, being undefeated in the conference and that they advanced to the state semifinals.
  - Mr. Mills noted that the school organized send-offs inside the building for teams heading to postseason competitions, which were well received by both athletes and the broader student body.

### **Diving Co-Op / Dive Independent Agreement**

- Ms. Verstraeten reported that one student had expressed interest in competitive diving. However, Millville does not have a diving facility. Therefore, she reached out to the neighboring districts with swimming/diving programs (e.g., Danville, Central Columbia and others), but many currently have no divers and therefore, no diving coach. Some schools already participate in co-ops with other schools and were not interested in adding another partner.
- The Committee discussed some options to dive independently. The student could potentially train and compete as an independent, using another school's facility. However, there are limitations on the number of divers allowed and no guarantee of lane/event availability. Additionally, the student would need a qualified coach and must work within another program's

practice and meet schedule. However, the student has since chosen to participate in cheerleading instead of pursuing diving.

- The Committee agreed that no immediate action on a dive co-op will be taken at this time, but the possibility remains for future students if there is interest and the logistics could be organized.

### **Transportation Availability for Northwest Track Co-Op**

- Dr. Rasmus and Ms. Verstraeten shared a review of the existing track and field co-op with Northwest and transportation responsibilities approved last school year. They shared that the district currently participates in a track and field co-op with Northwest. On March 10, 2025, the Board approved contributing transportation costs to Northwest for the remainder of the 2024–2025 spring track season, not to exceed \$8,750. This calculation was based on the transportation vendor pricing for one van (driver plus up to eight student-athletes). However, the administration believed that the actual amount spent was less than that figure.
- The Committee discussed a variety of considerations with this co-op including whether or not to replicate transportation support for the upcoming track season as well as if the transportation arrangement should be adjusted in light of costs, driver availability, and equity with other co-ops. Additionally, the committee raised concerns with the reliance on a single student driver who transported other students last season, the appropriateness of that level of responsibility for a new driver, as well as, liability and safety considerations.
- In addition, the Committee discussed that the district also has a successful volleyball co-op with Berwick, for which the district does not provide transportation. To this, Committee members raised concerns about equity.
  - Providing transportation for one non-boundary co-op (track with Northwest) but not for another (volleyball with Berwick) could create fairness and precedent issues.
  - Others shared concerns about the historical practice of limiting transportation commitments primarily to boundary districts.
  - However, the lack of a formal, written policy addressing both transportation for co-ops with non-boundary schools and the thresholds for number of students that justify district-provided transportation has not been set.
- The Committee asked that the Athletic Director survey students in grades 7–12 via a sign-up to gauge interest and projected participation in track & field for the coming season. Additionally, the Committee asked administration to confirm how much of the prior \$8,750 authorization was actually used; review and share the updated transportation costs under the new vendor contract; and develop draft guidance and/or policy language regarding transportation for non-boundary co-ops; the potential thresholds (e.g., minimum number of student participants) for providing district-funded transportation; and to consider placing this guidance in the Athletic Handbook, and/or proposing a formal Board policy for consistency.

### **End-of-Season Coaching Evaluation Process**

- Dr. Rasmus and Mr. Mills reviewed the existing process for evaluating coaches at the conclusion of each season.
  - Mr. Mills stated that within 30 days of the end of each season:
    - The Head coaches complete evaluations of their assistant coaches.

- The Head coaches complete a self-evaluation, using the rubric/evaluation tool in the athletic handbook.
  - The Coaches then submit an end-of-season packet, including their uniform inventory/turn-in status as well as their statistics, records, and other required documentation.
  - The Athletic Director and the Principal then meet with each coach to review their evaluation and their self-assessment as well as discuss their program's strengths, areas for growth, and concerns.
  - Following these meetings, administration makes a recommendation to the Co-Curricular Committee and then to the full Board regarding rehiring.
- Mr. Mills reiterated that coaching positions are one-year appointments and that if a coach receives any "unsatisfactory" rating(s), administration may recommend that the position be opened or the Board may choose to open the position based on the evaluations and any additional considerations. Additionally, he shared, the Board, at its discretion, may open a position even if the evaluation is generally satisfactory, based on the broader program needs or other factors.
  - The Committee agreed that in those cases, it is best practice for administration to have a direct conversation with the coach prior to the Board opening the position, then allow the coach to reapply and be considered alongside other candidates.
  - Dr. Rasmus shared that at the current time, one fall coach evaluation remained outstanding at the time of the meeting due to an incomplete self-evaluation but that the meeting was scheduled for the next day. In conclusion, he shared that the administration anticipated having all fall coaching evaluations completed in time to present recommendations to the Board at the December 3, 2025 meeting.

### **Status of Cheerleading Team**

- Ms. Verstraeten then updated the committee on the cheerleading program. She shared that as of October 30, only three students had signed up. However, the current interest had grown to approximately 12 students at the same time that a new Head Coach was identified.
- Dr. Rasmus added that there was a prospective volunteer cheerleading coach who wanted to start with the team who was already a district employee and had all prerequisites that were needed. He asked the Committee to consider allowing her to start prior to the Board meeting on December 3, 2025.
  - The Committee was amenable to retroactively approving the volunteer coach at the December 3rd meeting.
- Ms. Verstraeten shared that a question was raised about whether 7th and 8th graders may participate in the varsity cheer team. Because the squad is non-competitive, there is no PIAA eligibility restriction preventing junior high students from cheering with older students.
  - The Committee agreed that the decision on including junior high students should be guided by the coach's comfort level with group size and skill levels as well as safety considerations in stunts, formations, and supervision.

**Potential Jr. High Volleyball Co-Op with Berwick**

- Dr. Rasmus introduced the discussion on a potential junior high volleyball co-op with Berwick being that a parent has expressed willingness to provide transportation for their child in the co-op.
  - The Committee discussed the season in which junior high volleyball would occur (likely winter) and whether it would conflict with existing Millville programs. Additionally, there were concerns about not drawing students away from Millville's own offerings where possible. Finally, they cited consistency with transportation practices being that Berwick is a non-boundary district and that the district does not currently provide transportation for the high school volleyball co-op with Berwick.
- The Committee asked that the administration confirm the season/timeframe of junior high volleyball at Berwick as well as consider potential conflicts with Millville activities. Additionally, they asked that administration develop a recommendation for the Board that addresses both student opportunity and equity/precedent with transportation.

**Co-Op with Benton for Girls Soccer**

- Next, Dr. Rasmus provided clarification on the girls' soccer co-op with Benton and the PIAA rules governing multi-year cooperative agreements.
  - Mr. Mills explained that PIAA cooperative agreements are structured around two-year enrollment classification cycles. He reviewed the PIAA guidelines on the subject, and some key points were that cooperative agreements may be terminated by the PIAA Board of Directors after one two-year cycle upon request by all parties, if there is no good cause to refuse the termination. After two two-year cycles (four years total), agreements may be terminated upon request by any participant (not necessarily all parties), assuming they remain in good standing.
  - Mr. Mills clarified that the district completed one two-year cycle so far with Benton and that the Millville Board previously decided not to dissolve the co-op, opting to maintain it into the second two-year cycle. He added that this effectively commits the parties to a four-year total term unless PIAA approves early dissolution for good cause.
- Dr. Rasmus shared that Benton's administration has communicated that they will support and honor Millville's decision to continue or not continue the co-op as they understand the rationale for continuing. Historically, Benton's numbers were low, and the co-op allowed them to have a girls' soccer team.
- The Committee asked administration to work towards a better team culture for next year and to maintain a positive, collaborative relationship with Benton, similar to successful co-op experiences in other sports.

**Band Enrollment Growth & Resource Needs**

- The High School Band Director, Mrs. Carolyn Sweeney presented data showing significant growth in band participation:
  - In 2021, there were 22 students in band (combined junior and senior high).
  - In 2025, there are currently 56 students in band (32 junior high, 24 senior high).

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- Additionally, she was projecting, based upon Elementary numbers, that up to 25 additional 7th graders may join next year, bringing the total participation close to 80 students.
- Mrs. Sweeney explained that the large increase has created logistical and safety challenges, especially for events like the homecoming parade as we have many first-time participants in uniforms. She shared that there are a limited number of adults to assist with uniform fittings and adjustments; instrument troubleshooting and emergency repairs; and crowd control and student supervision, particularly after dark. Mrs. Sweeney added that two parent chaperones were originally scheduled for the parade, and one had to cancel, underscoring the need for more structured adult support.
- The Committee then discussed the band uniforms. They noted that the current marching uniforms are older, wool-based, and dry-clean only; they require annual dry cleaning at district expense; they are not easily adjustable for rapidly growing students; and they are increasingly insufficient in quantity and sizes given enrollment growth.
  - Mrs. Sweeney noted that other districts are reporting very high costs for small additional uniform orders (e.g., one local director was quoted around \$12,000 for 10 more uniforms due to custom manufacturing). She shared that a full new set of uniforms for 80 students (jacket and pants only) from one vendor was roughly estimated at \$9,600, though that example did not include hats or accessories and may not match final quality expectations.
- The Committee made some considerations for new uniforms including: machine-washable fabrics; better breathability and comfort; and adjustable features (e.g., bib-style pants with snaps or adjustable hems) to reduce annual hemming and alterations.
  - Mrs. Sweeney explained that the current supply of shared marching shoes is dwindling and many pairs are worn out (soles separating, hygiene concerns). At approximately \$35 per pair, replacement costs will be significant if the district continues to supply shoes. She added that in many districts, parents purchase marching shoes, polos, and other essential items themselves.
  - The Committee discussed transitioning to a model where families purchase their own shoes (and possibly polos), with the district and/or boosters providing assistance for students with financial need.
- Then, Mrs. Sweeney shared that many students use school-owned instruments, so the district bears those repair costs. With more instruments in circulation, repair and maintenance costs are expected to increase as well.
  - The Committee asked Mrs. Sweeney to gather more precise cost estimates for new marching uniforms as well as additional shoes and accessories. They asked that she explore alternate uniform vendors and modern, machine-washable options. The administration was asked to factor anticipated music department increases into the 2026–2027 budget.
- Mrs. Sweeney then shared that the junior high chorus is currently nine dresses short, primarily in smaller sizes due to the number of smaller students. She explained that the approximate cost is \$68 per dress, with a total projected cost of about \$600. Given supply and production timelines, it is unlikely new dresses will arrive in time for the December holiday concert. Therefore, she said that for the Christmas concert, the Junior high chorus will perform in all black concert attire if dresses do not arrive in time while senior high chorus will wear the existing formalwear.

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- The Committee was supportive of ordering the additional dresses, recognizing their necessity for upcoming performances (e.g., spring concerts).
- Dr. Rasmus reminded the Committee that the Board recently elected to add a new Band Assistant position to the co-curricular/activity matrix this year to support the band director. The rationale for this was the rapidly growing band numbers that make one-director coverage insufficient at events. He explained that the assistant helps with student supervision and safety, instrument troubleshooting and logistics, and uniform management. He added that Ms. Harding was appointed to serve in that role for this school year. However, future staffing beyond this year remains to be determined and would need to be revisited.
- Mrs. Sweeney shared that approximately \$150 was donated in memory of the deceased student, Carter Conklin. She was proposing to use the funds to purchase high-quality choral music folders embossed with “Millville High School Chorus” on the front and inside would be “In memory of Carter Conklin”. She estimated that 20–25 folders may be purchased with the available funds.
  - The Committee members expressed support for this idea as a meaningful and lasting tribute. They asked Mrs. Sweeney to obtain quotes and proceed with purchasing memorial folders within the donated amount.

## **Topical Items**

- Appreciation was expressed for the district’s volunteer photographer, JD Stanley, whose athletic photos are widely used and valued by families and students. The committee acknowledged the quality of the work and thanked the individual for their contributions.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:57 pm.

Chelsea Rosenberger  
Assistant Board Secretary