

Regular Meeting
Steel Valley School District Board of Directors
Steel Valley High School Auditorium
April 15, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bulger, President, at 7:01 PM

Roll call as follows:

In attendance: Ms. Adams, Mr. Bulger, Mr. Blick, Mrs. Yuhas and Mr. Colasante

Zoom Teleconference: Mrs. Ligeros, Mr. Rojtas (phone) and Ms. Youngblood

Absent: Mrs. Fitzgerald

Also attending: Mr. Wehrer, Mr. Fetzko (teleconference), Mr. Colebank, Mrs. Borges (teleconference) and Mr. Zenone (teleconference)

Flag Salute

Acknowledgements

Moment of Silence

The School Board acknowledged the passing of Melvin Jackson, father-in law of Tameka Akins, special education teacher, Barrett Elementary; Alan D. Martin, father of Susan Wright, art teacher, senior high school; Connie P. Minchoff, mother-in-law of Vince Natale, former School Board Member 2007-2014; Dr. James B. Schmuck, former acting Superintendent (1997) and Interim Principal at Park School and Franklin Primary Center (1993)

Ms. Adams moved and Mrs. Yuhas seconded to place appropriate books into the district school libraries in memory of the above departed.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Bulger, Colasante, Ligeros, Rojtas, Yuhas, and Youngblood.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

President's Report

Mr. Bulger reported that the district is entering the 4th 9 weeks. The seniors know where they stand as far as rankings. The Griffin Awards will be held May 5th in the High School Auditorium.

He stated that tonight's meeting is the passing of the Preliminary Budget for the 2021-2022 school year. He added about 90% of the school district expenses are out of the control of the actual school district; it is mostly set by the state, collective bargaining units and PSERS obligations.

Student Representatives to the School Board Reports

Ben Novotny, Junior Student Representative to the School Board, started with the reports for the elementary schools. "Spring is Here!" and the 1st graders were able to get their hands dirty by learning what plants actual need to grow. Students recorded everything they learned in their science journals and then planted their plants outside.

Mrs. Callahan's 3rd grade students have grown tremendously as writers. They wrote descriptive Christmas Sweater papers, personal narratives and opinion writing.

Everyone at Park was feeling lucky on St. Patrick's Day, as the school participated in an abundance of St. Patrick Day activities.

The Queen of Hearts came through and spoke to students on how important it is to be kind everyday.

Mason Keesecker and Shay Krynski pinned their opponents when they wrestled at the Pennsylvanian Southwest Wrestling Finals.

Finally, April is Autism Awareness Month, and it is a great time to remind us that Park Elementary School is a better place because everyone here is unique.

For Barrett Elementary, Ben reported that April 7th is National Take a Walk Day, which encourages parents and students to go outside and get some exercise. They also recognized Career Day on April 15th, where the students were asked to dress up in the career position that they would like to be when they grown up.

PSSA exams will be taken on the second half of May. Earth Day will be celebrated on April 22nd.

Lastly, attendance for the children that have returned to in-school learning is approximately at 90% and monthly awards are given to the students with perfect attendance.

Middle School reports that the PSSA testing schedule will be from May 17-19 for ELA; May 24-25 for Math; May 25-26 will be for Science ONLY for 8th graders. Detailed testing schedules will be provided to families in early May. Parents are encouraged to check their student's Sapphire accounts to monitor progress in their academic courses.

High School reports that their Keystone and Final exams are scheduled for May 17-19. A detailed testing schedule will also be available in early May.

The High School Student Government hosted a Blood Drive on April 15th. Mrs. McCallister would like to thank all the students, staff and community members that donated. It was a huge success!

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Wehrer reported that along with the Griffin Awards dinner that will be held on May 5th, earlier that day we will also have the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony that will be held in our High School Auditorium.

Mr. Wehrer shared good news regarding the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation in partnership with Allegheny Intermediate Unit along with the Grava Foundation, he noted that these organizations have stressed the importance of education and they are honoring principals in Allegheny County by the Penguin's "Most Valuable Principal" (MVP). The program highlights the amazing work done over the past year, recognizing principals who demonstrate an innovative approach to learning, continuously striving for excellence and a passion for their schools and students. This pilot program came into existence by the recognition of the difficult and unprecedented times that our local school systems have had to endure during the COVID 19 Pandemic. The Penguins named these MVPs through a monetary donation courtesy of the Grable Foundation and it is to be used for a school project of the choosing of the principal. They will also receive a Penguin Prize package consisting of Penguin goodies including a personalized Penguin jersey. There were 15 winners of this MVP award; one of those winners is one of our own, Kevin Walsh, Barrett Elementary Principal. Mr. Wehrer congratulated him and added that Mr. Walsh goes above and beyond during his duties at Barrett. Whether he is going to students' homes or how he is continually working to have the educational experience for both staff and students at Barrett to be the best they can be, Kevin Walsh is a tireless advocate for excellence and learning at Steel Valley. Congratulations Mr. Walsh!

Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services' Report

No report.

Director of Academics, Information & Technology's Report

Mr. Colebank started off his report with a very serious message. He said that the devices that are issued to the students are to be used for the student's use only, please do not utilize personal files or messaging on these devices. The reasoning is because other students and / or staff can view the information when the devices are brought back to school. These devices are issued to the students; they are not family devices. In regards to that, he also pointed out that no one should use these devices to

log into any messaging system or Zoom and falsify your name as someone else. These devices are tracked to the household IP address.

He also reported that Sapphire will be used more next year within the classrooms. Students will need to practice and know how to log into the Sapphire account to be able to utilize it for these purposes. The Technology Department asks that if you want your Sapphire password changed, please see them, they will assist with that task. Moving forward, the principal messages will be sent out through Sapphire. They are trying to limit the phone calls that are going out.

Finally, he said that smart televisions are being put in more and more of our classrooms and cafeterias. Also, a whole new sound system will be going into our High School Library.

Solicitor's Report

No report.

Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

Donna Dreshman asked about the expense for the swimming pool.

Mr. Zenone explained that we are below the budget for the pool and the water consumption is at a historical low because we are not leaking. We are roughly saving \$75,000.

Donna Dreshman asked in regards to (1.2) was the property reassessed, what was it previously assessed at, and what is the new assessment?

Mr. Fetzko answered that this is the bike path along the Monongahela River at the Waterfront; they were assessed at \$24,000.

Donna Dreshman asked about (1.3) what is the amount that is in the General Fund balance as of April 15, 2021?

Mr. Zenone responded that this number takes days to complete, but he will be projecting that figure at next month's meeting. He did say that in the beginning of the year we were at \$7.6 million in the Fund Balance and that amount changes daily.

Donna Dreshman also asked about (7.1) if anyone on the Board or Administration related the person being hired?

Mr. Bulger asked the Board if anyone was related to Ms. Abigail Slezak, the Board responded, no.

Christine Schott asked about (2.2) she asked if the referenced Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) refers to a Resource Officer?

Mr. Wehrer explained that this is not in direct to a School Resource Officer; it is an agreement that there is a relationship between the school and the municipalities. This is part of the Safe Schools Act.

Christine Schott asked about (2.3) the doors, are they replacements of broken doors or are they old doors?

Mr. Wehrer explained that these are doors for the Middle School Campbell Gymnasium. The Exterior doors are not consistently closing and the quality is not as good as the quality of our other exterior doors.

Christine Schott referred to the Worksession meeting. She said regarding to Denny Keesecker and John Zenone's positions, it was said that they may be contracted out. Ms. Schott asked what would that look like, would the person be here full time?

Mr. Bulger answered saying that the basic whole idea behind it, especially regarding the Business Office, there can be a service or entity that will provide you with a full time person, the real question is going to be what will it cost of that compared to salary, health benefits, PSERS contributions. The AIU does provide a person full-time, it's called shared services. Also, in regards to Administrator positions, can the duties be spread out over our other Administrators? We are looking at the efficiency of our entire managerial organization to minimize costs.

Jim Deutsch reaffirmed that the budget will be finalized by June 30, 2021. He also asked about the millage increase. Mr. Bulger explained that it was only increased to the Act 1 index. Mr. Deutsch asked if there was going to be an increase in Administrations salaries. Mr. Zenone confirmed that other than a slight increase because of benefits, but there is not any increase in total administrative salaries.

Jim Deutsch referred to increase of charter schools students from 270 to 300 students; Mr. Deutsch asked why that has increased so much? Mr. Bulger said because of the Pandemic a lot of students have gone to cyber charter schools.

Jim Deutsch referred to Superintendent's budget and that is was \$42,660 and that it increased to \$48,360. He asked what the money is spent on?

Mr. Wehrer answered that this money is spent on contracted services, for professional development or specific projects. Money is in there for books and supplies. This is also used for the volunteer recognition dinner. Mr. Bulger added that one year the money from that budget was used for bussing students for an event. Mr. Wehrer added it gives us flexibility to assist the buildings if necessary.

Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Colasante moved and Mrs. Yuhás seconded the motion to approve the following meeting minutes:

March 22, 2021 Worksession Meeting

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhás and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

March 25, 2021 Regular Meeting

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhás and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

1.0 Financial Management

Mr. Blick moved and Mrs. Ligeros seconded the motion to approve the following:

1.1 Motion to approve the list of bills:

1.1.01 General Fund invoices for April 2021 in the amount of \$300,200.17

1.1.02 General Fund hand checks for March 2021 in the amount of \$2,836,951.59

1.1.03 Food Service invoices for March 2021 in the amount of \$28,547.28

1.1.04 Athletics Fund Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for March 2021

1.1.05 High School Student Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for March 2021

1.1.06 Middle School Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for March 2021

1.1.07 External Groups Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for March 2021

1.2 Motion to approve a refund to Waterfront Owners Association, Wilkow, M&J, Lot & Block

130-E-201, in the amount of \$589.88 for year 2020.

- 1.3 Motion to adopt the Proposed Final General Fund Budget for the 2021-2022 school year with a millage rate of 26.1082, an increase of 1.0282 mill. The General Fund Revenues are projected at \$37,599,107 and the Expenditures are projected to be \$40,488,886. The deficit of \$2,889,779 will be partially absorbed by the General Fund's Fund Balance.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Colasante, Blick, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

Mr. Bulger added that we have been a running with some sort of deficit or at least a projected deficit for the past 6 years that he has been on the board and this is the lowest projected deficit within the last 4 years.

Mrs. Yuhas made a comment that she is not in agreement with the raising of the millage increase under motion (1.3).

2.0 Operations

Ms. Youngblood moved and Ms. Adams seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 2.1 Motion to approve the "**Amended**" facility usage requests as discussed in session.
- 2.2 Motion to authorize district officials to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the school district and the Homestead, Munhall and West Homestead Police Departments to be in compliance with the Safe Schools Act effective for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
- 2.3 Motion to accept the quote from AB Specialties, Inc., to supply and install three double exterior doors and two single exterior doors to the Middle School Campbell gym in the amount of \$30,400.00 as presented.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

Mr. Bulger noted that under (2.1) for the permits #4915 and # 4921 for the adult soccer leagues might coincide with the SVSC facility rental times. Details will be worked out about field usage.

3.0 Co-Curricular Leadership

No update.

4.0 Special Assignments

Mrs. Ligeros reported on Steel Center, congratulating Marianly Maria-Antigua for receiving the cosmetology extra effort award for the 3rd marking period.

Since the beginning of February, in-person learning for the hybrid students has been increasing to 4 days per week. Adjustments have been made for the cleaning / sanitizing to accommodate their 4 day per week attendance. Everyone seems to be making the transition well. As of March 29th, there are 138 students enrolled in full remote and 563 doing the hybrid model. Currently, 26 students and staff members have had the COVID-19 vaccination. That is about 55% of the staff and they are working to make it available to their remaining 21 employees.

The 2021-2022-student recruitment-scheduling plan has planned activities for 9th and 10th grade students and families. March 31st the was deadline for the first round for submitting 2021-2022 student applications, a total of 327 students have applied to enroll in Steel Center next year. Of these students, 238 students, their high school guidance counselors have sent in their approval letters. The other 89 students are pending that approval. These numbers are relatively close to the application enrollment process of previous years. Applications may continue to be accepted until September 30th although program availability may be limited.

Steel Center hosted their 3rd blood drive on March 30th and it was a huge success.

Steel Center is still advertising for candidates for the Exercise / Science Rehabilitation Services and Veterinarian Assistant Program teaching positions. Their goal is to recommend candidates for hire by May 2021.

Steel Center's Senior Recognition will be held on June 2nd at Baldwin Stadium with a rain date of June 3rd.

Mrs. Ligeros reported that Mon Valley's art teacher assisted the students with putting together a virtual art show. The art show can be viewed at:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSVcWIqaLSUjx6ed2wSHyn8QhbpRkoUuVFsfz9dN1-tVoJPwHUC9pXu4ahMNt437c427Upu9DZy3QMi/pub?start=true&loop=true&delayms=2000&slide=id.g7fecff51ba_0_27

Mon Valley also received a generous donation of a violin for the music department from #theeducationpartnership and #farinafoundation. The school does not have many in-person instruments for their students to touch, feel and learn about, so this was a great addition for their music program.

5.0 Educational Leadership

Ms. Adams moved and Mr. Colasante seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 5.1 Motion to adopt the 2021-2022 Official School Calendar as presented
- 5.2 Motion to accept a donation of a \$50 gift card from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds for the purchase of vegetable seeds.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

6.0 Communication & Technology

No update.

7.0 Personnel Management

Mr. Rojtas moved and Ms. Youngblood seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 7.1 Motion to approve Abigail Slezak as a day-to-day substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year at the approved daily rate of \$120 per day, contingent upon receipt of current clearances, compliance with Act 168 and passing mandated employment screenings, which must be completed within 30 days.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

Citizen Comments

Christine Schott wanted to add that she will be doing a plant giveaway this year in the beginning of May.

Christine Schott also brought up the uniform policy. She urged that the Board reconsider the uniform dress code policy. She said that the uniform policy is enforced strongly in the elementary and middle schools, however she does not feel that it is enforced strongly on the high school level.

Mrs. Yuhas asked Mrs. Schott if she was for or against the uniform policy. Mrs. Schott replied she can go either way on the issue. She expressed it does not seem fair to the students in the younger grades to have the uniform dress code enforced more than the high school students.

Ms. Colasante added that he was originally against the uniform code and still is pretty much against it in the High School. He noted that his daughter-in-laws, especially for the elementary students, love

the uniform dress code, it makes it easier to dress the kids. Mr. Blick added that his wife is in favor of it as well.

Mrs. Yuhas added it is an enforcement issue.

Jim Deutsch brought up the millage amount of 1 equates to \$630,000.00 for the district. He said that if we can bring back some of our Propel students maybe we can get some of that money back and taxes will not have to be raised.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 8:04 PM

Exited Regular Session to go into Executive Session to discuss a Real Estate Matter with the solicitor.