

GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Regular Meeting – October 25, 2021

MINUTES

President Sara Clark Pierson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Superintendent Marcus Davenport indicated the presence of **Board Members**: Sara Clark Pierson, Nicole Shannon, Jon Shiflett, Denise DuFort, Patrick McKennon and Ben Cwayna. Mr. Smith joined the meeting at 6:02 p.m. **Central Office Administrators**: Marcus Davenport, Steve Gabriel, Bill Barnes, Julie Waterbury, Sara Holding, Mark Deschaine and John Ellsworth. **Others in Attendance** Margaret Bierstetel, Tyler Hubert, Kim Laforet, Tara Kopietz, Jason Devenbaugh, Barb Henderson, Erin Jones, Jenna Snyder, Dan McNeilly, Helene McNeilly, Amber Sinke, Greg Almy, Ginny Patrick, Kathy Forgie, Donna Ristow, Allie Bennett, Lana Wise, Jon Wise, Deborah Diesen, Mary Carlson, Jeff McNeilly, Mary Moore, Sally Jo Nelton, Lena Shaffer, Kyle Dymond, Josh Austin, Elyse Fox, Dains Reynnef, Kris Stroud, Troy Stroud, Jody Lyon, Tim Totten, Howard Pizzo, Nell Pizzo, John Ledesma, Jenny Waybright, Gina Johnson, Kellie Hathaway, Melissa Mazzola, A. Walczah, Robin Bessette, Ginny Batcheller and Kim Manning

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Mr. Shiflett or the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the October 25, 2021 agenda items, as presented. The motion carried 5-1.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Ms. Shannon for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the October 25, 2021 Consent Agenda Items, as presented.

Included on the Consent Agenda was the September 27, 2021 Closed Session Minutes, the October 11, 2021 Work Session and Closed Session Meeting Minutes and the Hiring of Julie Darden and Crystal Mena.

The motion carried unanimously..

REPORTS

A. Audit Report

Steve Piesko from Maner Costerisan, CPA presented the 2020-2021 Audit noting this represents the district's financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2021. He commented all financial statements present fairly in all instances noting this is an unmodified opinion and represents a clean audit report, which is the best the district can receive. He reviewed each of the district budgets noting the continued deficit reporting in light of the unfunded pension liability of the district. He reviewed the unassigned portion of the budget. He reviewed the capital projects funds, expenditures and changes in the fund balance. He noted they audit the bond funds in detail. He reviewed the capital assets in detail. He noted the pupil foundation

allowance cut did not come to fruition. Non major funds – food service fund, large increase in federal revenues due to the free lunch and breakfast last year and this year. In a healthy ballpark for the fund balance in the account but this money cannot be moved over to the general fund. No findings or issues. Compliance has been clean for quite some time. Did audit ESSER funds. In closing, Mr. Piesko noted this is a strong audit report and he appreciates the opportunity to present the findings.

President Clark Pierson noted last year the district ended with a surplus but notes public schools are not piggy banks and the money is meant to spent. The district has always been good stewards and she is glad to see the additional monies got out there and were used. She noted the district mobilized to take care of the students when we could commenting we weren't perfect. She noted the board is grateful for the staff and all the things they have done, and continue to do, to keep the focus. In closing she commented Maner Costerisan is one of the most outstanding auditing firms in the state and the district is fortunate to have them as our auditors.

B. Capitol Connections Report

Mr. Smith provided information regarding newly introduced House Bill 5190, Senate Bills 687 and 688 and their House Bill counter parts House Bill 5404 and 5405. He further noted House Bill 4953. He pointed out there was no movement on anything reported on previously.

Mr. Shiflett pointed out there is a water supplemental bill in the Senate that would provide monies for school districts to improve water pipes and drinking fountains.

C. Eaton RESA Report

Mrs. DuFort noted the Eaton RESA received their audit report noting it was clean, received a personnel report, approve the Summer Tax Resolution, renewed many contracts and received a COVID-19 update.

D. Grand Ledge Education Foundation Report

Ms. Shannon noted the Foundation has recently awarded their 2021-2022 Teacher Grants sharing there were many innovative and fun applications. She noted the Foundation will hold more of a celebration at a later date to be determined in January or February 2022.

E. Governance Committee

Mrs. DuFort noted the committee met to discuss the upcoming Superintendent Evaluation noting all members of the board have completed the training on the evaluation tool. In keeping with the Superintendent's Contract, the board will need to hold a Special Meeting on Monday, November 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting the Superintendent's Evaluation in keeping with the contractual and statutory obligations.

F. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

President Clark Pierson noted the committee has not met.

G. Bond Update

Dr. Mike Johnson provided a detailed update with regard to Holbrook, Beagle, the roundabout and the High School track and athletic field. He noted the district has begun planning for staging at the High School so work can begin on the Fine Arts and Athletics addition and planning meetings are beginning for Delta Center and Wacousta.

H. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Davenport noted the district continues to struggle to fill staff vacancies due to educational substitute staff shortages. He commended staff for continuing to step up to cover those shortages, but notes this is not sustainable. In an effort to help alleviate this, the district has raised our substitute pay rate to make us competitive with other districts. He noted the district has reached a tentative agreement with our paraprofessionals group and the administration will provide the board with an update on that agreement prior to board action to approve. He then introduced staff from Hayes Intermediate School noting each month a different school will present to the board sharing information about what is going on at their respective buildings.

Mary Carlson, Josh Austin, Holly Bierstetel and Allison McCann represented Hayes Intermediate School sharing information regarding their newly implemented program: Comet Actions for Success that highlights positive character traits, the opening of the Maker Space in the library and bringing back enrichment classes for 30 minutes every day that provide students with opportunities they might have ever experienced, such as gardening, job exploration, interview skills. In closing they expressed their appreciation for the continued support from the Board of Education.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. McKennon read the rules for addressing the board.

Kim Laforet addressed the board regarding President Clark Pierson's WILX interview, the loss of students, test scores and resolving issues to get kids an education.

Ginny Batcheller addressed the board regarding vaccines, quarantine, President Clark Pierson's WILX interview and opposing masks..

Amber Redman addressed the board regarding President Clark Pierson's WILX interview.

Tara Kopietz addressed the board regarding President Clark Pierson's WILX interview.

Mike Perrine addressed the board regarding President Clark Pierson's WILX interview.

Tim Totten addressed the board regarding CRT and a letter from the NSBA sent to President Biden.

Gina Johnson addressed the board opposing masks and encouraging the board to bring their focus back to educational basics.

Jeff McNeilly addressed the board regarding President Clark Pierson's WILX interview and encourage the board to stick with reading, writing and arithmetic.

Ginny Patrick addressed the board regarding President Clark Pierson's WILX interview.

Kelly Hathaway addressed the board encouraging them to allow the parents to make the choice regarding masks.

Valerie Holly addressed each board member and Dr. Davenport, individually.

John Ledesma addressed the board to give positive vibes.

Dawne Velianoff addressed the board agreeing with previous speakers and asking why no one is looking into the curriculum.

Erin Jones addressed the board opposing masks.

Kyle Dymond addressed the board supporting masks.

OLD BUSINESS

A. ACCEPTANCE OF THE 2020-2021 AUDIT

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Mr. Cwayna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to accept the 2020-2021 Audit, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

B. COVID-19 MITIGATION DISCUSSION

Dr. Davenport led a detailed discussion among the board related to the district's current reality with regarding the pandemic, optional test to stay including the cost, staff and noting this would be a parent choice, clarifying quarantine protocols, keeping kids in school, expansions of vaccine availability, what is the benchmark to make masks optional, the positivity rate in the county and in our district, allowing parents to make the decision, moderating the position of the board on what has become a political issue, masks do not protect the wearing they are meant to protect those around the wearer, the CDC is still recommending masks.

Motion by Mr. Cwayna, seconded by Mr. McKennon for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to rescind the mask mandate and make it optional.

Further discussion continued noting a recent article in the Detroit Free Press, vaccination availability that will significantly cover everyone in our district, continuing the discussion if the board is not ready to rescind the mask mandate, getting rid of the confusion with regard to quarantine requirements, being mindful that one positive case has a ripple effect, holes in the system we have to continue to improve, the availability of the vaccine to cover our population still doesn't ensure everyone will get the vaccine, upcoming holidays, masks not being required at football games, or the homecoming parade – but required going from classroom to classroom, not a black and white issue, the increased use of masks decreases the spread of the disease – doesn't work perfectly but that doesn't mean it is ineffective.

The motion failed 5-2.

NEW BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL OF BUS PURCHASE

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the purchase of four conventional, 77-passenger school buses from Midwest Transit using Proposal 1, Series 1 and Series 2 Bond Funds in the amount of \$409,032, as presented.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD

Dr. Barnes noted the district is aware the social studies curriculum is 10 years old and advising the district is looking into new social studies, science and math curriculum. He advised parents will have the opportunity to review the curriculum prior to anything being brought forward for board consideration.

Mr. McKennon thanked the staff for their continued dedication noting there are brighter times ahead. He thanked the members of the Hayes staff for their presentation noting his son comes home from Hayes every day excited about the opportunities mentioned by Mrs. Carlson.

Mrs. DuFort supported Mr. McKennon's comments and noted that she personally cares very much about the staff, students and their family's health. She noted the strategies may not be perfect but she feels she is doing her best to protect those the board serve. She understands people have differing opinions but she does not appreciate being personally attacked when there are no clear-cut answers on this pandemic. She looks forward to moving forward and noted she will continue to err on the side of caution.

CLOSED SESSION – Negotiations & Attorney / Client Privilege

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to move into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Negotiations Strategies and receiving Attorney/Client Privilege Communication, as per Section 8(c) and Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, PA 267 of 1976.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Mr. Shiflett	<u>YES</u>	Mrs. DuFort	<u>YES</u>
Ms. Shannon	<u>YES</u>	Mr. McKennon	<u>YES</u>
Mr. Smith	<u>YES</u>	Mr. Cwayna	<u>YES</u>
President Clark Pierson	<u>YES</u>		

The motion carried at 8:15 p.m.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 8: 54p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL OF EMPLOYEE CONTRACT

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Employee Contract with the MEA/NEA Unit IV – Teacher Assistants / Health Care Assistants / Bus Assistants, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:



Nicole Shannon, Secretary



Sara Clark Pierson, President