

GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS *Board of Education*

Virtual Meeting– September 14, 2020

MINUTES

President DuFort called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Interim Superintendent Dave Chapin indicated the presence of **Board Members**: Denise DuFort, Jarrod Smith, Jon Shiflett, Sara Clark Pierson, Kim Mulvenna, Patrick McKennon and Ben Cwayna. **Central Office Administrators**: Dave Chapin, Steve Gabriel, Bill Barnes, Nancy Rasinske, Sara Holding, Mark Deschaine and John Ellsworth. **Others in Attendance** Ann Paquette-Lukens, Bri Dennis, Dawne Velianoff, Denise Clarity, Denise Green, Erica Ledesma, Erin Ries, Greg Almy, Jamie McKennon, Kristy Merignac, Lindsey Fender, Lisa Powers, Lisa Swem, Lucinda Shier, Margo Susnjar, Megan Spedoske, Melissa Mazzola, Nicole Shannon, Ranjit Singh, Lisa Singh, Rene Brown, Shannon Bauer, Tamela Jones, Tamra Hunt-Williams, Theresa Abed and Kim Manning

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Secretary Shiflett read the rules for addressing the board.

There was no public comment.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AD HOC UPDATE

Ms. Clark Pierson advised the committee met with Dr. Carter and discussed establishing the infrastructure and the expectations for the first year. She advised a core committee of approximately 20 people will be established and community members are encouraged to submit an application to join the committee. The application will be available on the district website until September 30, 2020. She further explained the core committee does not make up the entirety of the work needed and noted there will be several opportunities for people to be involved. She advised the application process should not deter people from applying, it is a very simple application. She further explained people who apply to join the core committee should be able to commit to monthly meetings. The board committee will meet with Dr. Carter again on October 8 to review the applications received and begin to establish the core group ensuring it is a diverse group of participants.

Mr. Cwayna noted he wants to be clear that this core committee is not inclusive of all the individuals that will be involved in this process. This is just the next step in moving

forward while trying to ensure the work is efficient. This core group will work to hone in on the charter and the language as to its' direction.

B. INTERIM-SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Dr. Chapin expressed his appreciation for the work of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee noting he had a chance to speak with Dr. Carter offline and she is very enthusiastic to work with the committee.

He gave a shout out to our students, families, teachers, principals, administrators and all of our staff for a successful first week of school. He noted there were lots of adjustments, and certainly a few glitches, but the first week was long on positive outcomes with information numbers of approximately 90% participation across the district. He further noted the administrative team has not lost sight of bringing students back to in-person learning and the district is monitoring active programs at our preschool buildings and the kick off of fall sports. He referenced at present there are no incidents reported from the preschool programs or athletics while these programs work within the guidance of the Health Department, CDC and MHSAA protocols. Additionally, the district will begin to bring in small, core groups of special education students for in-person instruction over the next few weeks.

He closed advising he, Dr. Gabriel, Dr. Barnes and Mrs. Holding are attending regular zoom meetings with the Health Department for updates and guidance as we move through this unprecedented time.

C. ACADEMIC SERVICES UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, Dr. Bill Barnes thanked and gave a shout out to our families in helping us get this on-line learning launched. He recognized the work our of teachers, principals and support staff in this process. He noted he felt it was a pretty smooth start, noting there will always be some bumps but the district moved 5,400 students into a brand-new format of learning. He advised district staff participated in approximately 40-hours of professional development in the weeks leading up to the school year kick off and approximately 1,500 parents and students joined us for the zoom sessions we held to give an overview of the new online format. He noted starting at the next meeting, he will provide the board with a report, as required under the Return to Learn Plan. In closing he expressed he couldn't be prouder of the families, our staff noting this was a huge undertaking and while we continue to work through individual issues to find solution, he is really proud to be a comet.

D. HUMAN RESOURCES & OPERATIONS UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Operations Dr. Steve Gabriel complimented all our employees noting it takes a village and all of our employee groups are doing what is asked of them and going above and beyond, as are our students and families.

Dr. Gabriel went on to advise the Dynamic Air Cleaners have been ordered and will be installed by the end of October. He reminded everyone these will be add-ons to our

exiting HVAC systems and will provide improved air quality in every area of our buildings. He advised our Food Service Department, under the direction of Darrin Gyurich began serving meals last week noting the FDA has expanded the program so we will begin offering this service district wide until the waiver expires. Families can sign up on the website or by calling the Food Service Department at 517-925-5733. He reported last week we provided this service to 350 students, providing breakfast and lunch, for a total of 2,700 meals. This week, we added 100 students and anticipate delivering 4,500 meals foreseeing this number will continue to expand. He commended Mr. Gyurich and his team for the work they have done.

E. GOVERNANCE POLICIES

Mr. McKennon advised the Governance Committee intends to bring forward Governance Policy 206 to revise the Public Comment on Agenda Items is the first public comment on the agenda and Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items is second. Additionally, the committee cleaned up the language on what the secretary reads prior to public comment for consistency.

President DuFort noted the committee has opted to put the Superintendent’s Evaluation on hold at this time.

ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Meeting Minutes, as presented.

Included were the minutes of the July 20, 2020 Closed Session and the August 24, 2020 Virtual Meeting and Closed Session.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL OF TEACHER HIRINGS

Motion by Mr. McKennon, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Teacher Hirings, as presented.

Included was the hiring of Lindsey Fender as a District-Wide Permanent Substitute Teacher, Chelsea Wheeler as a Special Education teacher at Willow Ridge, and Timothy Cornman as a Health & Wellness teacher at Hayes Middle School.

Dr. Gabriel provided the board with background information on each of the candidates and advised the district-wide permanent substitute teacher position was something the

district had been talking about in trying to help alleviate the problem of finding subs to fill vacancies. However, Lindsey will be serving the district in two, long-term, subbing positions, both at Beagle throughout the school year. He noted this is a new practice to Grand Ledge Public Schools but is not a new practice to the business.

The board was in support of implementing district-wide substitutes.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF THE PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 1 BOND INVOICES

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Mr. Cwayna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Proposal 1 bond Invoices in the amount of \$3,249,083.20, as presented.

President DuFort provided an overview of the invoices included.

Dr. Gabriel advised all projects are still on track and Dr. Johnson will provide a detailed overview of the construction projects at the next meeting. He further answered questions with regard to the M-43 entrance and the MDOT proposed round-about noting there is a lot of information that shows roundabouts are the safest alternative for our situation. He further explained the district will have to follow the guidance from MDOT.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously with member Sara Clark Pierson abstaining from the vote.

D. APPROVAL OF 2020-2021 STUDENT HANDBOOK UPDATES

Motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. McKennon for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the 2020-2021 Student Handbook Updates, as presented.

President DuFort provided an overview of the updates noting some minor typographical errors being fixed and to update language under the Remote Learning Plan for the 2020-2021 School year as required.

Mrs. Mulvenna thanked everyone for their hard work on updating the handbooks.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON - AGENDA ITEMS

President DuFort advised there was a postponement of Dr. Metcalf’s Hearing that was supposed to take place earlier today due to procedural issues raised by Dr. Metcalf’s legal counsel at a pre-hearing conference call held last week. The Hearing that was scheduled for September 14, 2020 has been postponed one week and is rescheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 21, 2020. The board will discuss this procedural issue with district legal counsel in closed session and following that session will adopt a motion to define the hearing officers scope of authority to rule on procedural issues during the Due Process Hearing.

Community Member and parent Dawne Velianoff thanked the board for all their hard work, questioned the statistics provided by Dr. Chapin and if those students are just enrolled, she also referenced that she read on Facebook and asked for clarification on if teachers were given the option of working from home or in their classrooms and bringing their students with them to school.

Community Member and parent Kristy Merignac expressed her concerns with the timing of the Due Process Hearing.

Community Member and parent Margo Susnjar expressed her concerns with the timing of the Due Process Hearing and asked if people who participate via Zoom will they be allowed to make public comment.

Community Member and parent Ranjit Singh expressed his concerns with the online learning format.

Community Member and parent Lisa Singh expressed the need for everyone to show kindness during these trying time.

Community Member and former staff member Denise Green expressed concerns with the timing of the Due Process Hearing and addressed the parent about teachers bringing their students to school advising it is mainly because resources for the teachers to conduct their class are in their classroom, not because they are trying to have their own children in their classroom.

Community Member and parent Erica Ledesma expressed her concerns about the timing of the Due Process Hearing and asking what it is going to look like on Monday. She thanked everyone involved in setting up the virtual learning noting they are working parents outside the home

and were comfortable going to work the second day of school. She supported the parent expressing she does hope the kindness comes through to our students, our parents and the entire community noting we can all get through this together with kindness, patience and grace.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD

Dr. Chapin addressed Ms. Velianoff noting students at Delta Mills are enrolled and attending the preschool program while at Holbrook there are different programs included with the preschool program noting we are tracking to see how well our staff and students are doing under the health department protocols. He further noted the district has afforded teachers and paraprofessionals to work in their classroom noting we want to be an organization that is family friendly and have allowed staff to bring their children to school as long as they are not disrupting the learning process. He advised he does not have data as to how many staff are bringing their children with them, how many are working in their classrooms or how many are choosing to work from home. He recognized the Singh family advising the district supports kindness and appreciates their feedback.

Dr. Barnes noted teachers are still working to find the best way to get in touch with parents. The process will continue to develop and grow but he is confident teachers are working hard to get communications out to students and parents.

Mrs. Mulvenna addressed the frustration with the timing of Monday's Due Process Hearing and Ms. Clark Pierson advised this is a Special Meeting for the Board of Education and as such there will be a segment for Public Comment. She further advised this is the date and time counsel has agreed to.

President DuFort confirm legal counsel is determining the time and place noting additional concerns because of the pandemic. She advised the hearing will also be broadcast in the Zoom format.

Mr. Smith noted this is a Due Process Hearing and we have no idea how long the process will take. While public comment will be allowed, it will be after legal counsel has presented the evidence and witnesses and the board has had time to deliberate and render a decision. This is so the board will not be swayed by the public comment, but will base its' decision on the facts presented.

Mr. McKennon thanked everyone for navigating this first week of school noting grace should be a common language. He thanked the staff and administration for working through individual challenges and just figuring it out.

Mrs. Mulvenna noted she had heard a lot of anxiety but believes the transition has gone very smooth. She thanked Dr. Chapin, Dr. Barnes and Dr. Gabriel along with all the teachers and everyone who was involved.

President DuFort echoed Mrs. Mulvenna's thanks and again reassured the community the board is doing their best under some very challenging circumstances.

CLOSED SESSION – 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 to consult with district legal counsel regarding confidential and privileged attorney client communication, as Per Sections 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, PA 267 of 1976.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously at 7:32 p.m.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 8:38 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Clark Pierson for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve and authorize its Hearing Officer, Attorney George Brookover, to rule on procedural and evidentiary issues that arise in the contractual hearing on termination charges against Superintendent Brian Metcalf. The board will rule on the termination issue itself.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:


Jon Shiflett, Secretary


Denise DuFort, President