

**BOARD NOTES**  
November 23, 2020

The regular meeting of the School Board was held Monday, November 23, 2020, at New Prairie Middle School in the LGI Room with Mr. Phil King, Mr. Dale Groves, Mr. Rich Shail and Mr. Jason DeMeyer present. Dr. Paul White, Superintendent, was also present.

Mr. Al Williamson, Board Vice-President, was absent.

Mr. Phil King, Board President, reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

There was a motion by Mr. Groves to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Shail and approved 4-0-1.

Mr. DeMeyer made the motion to suspend the regular meeting to hold the Public Hearing on Additional Appropriations for its Education Fund in the amount of \$259,000, Debt Service Fund in the amount of \$19,140, and Referendum Fund in the amount of \$10,750, seconded by Mr. Shail. There were no questions or comments from the community or the Board. Mr. Groves made the motion to end the public hearing and return to the regular meeting and was approved.

**CONSENT ITEMS**

The Board approved the Consent Items as follows:

- (A) Minutes –October 26, 2020
- (B) Financial Reports
- (C) Claims
- (D) Payroll
- (E) Personnel Report as follows:

**CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirement
  1. Samantha Eldridge – FMLA Leave as 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher at RPES beginning 4/10/2021 through the end of the 2020-2021 school year
- Employment
  1. Margaret Stepnewski – Olive Elementary Teacher, Temporary Homebound 1st Grade Teacher beginning 10/26/2020 through 12/18/2020
- Employment – Extra-Curricular
  1. Robyn Kubsch – ECA position as NPHS Business Department Chair beginning 2020-2021 school year
  2. Wendi Hemphill – ECA position as Principal Designee at Prairie View Elementary beginning 2020-2021 school year
  3. Lydia Carroll – ECA position as MS Exploratory Team Leader beginning 2020-21 school year
- Adjustments
  1. Laura Schreiber to receive a grant funded stipend of \$600 for coaching “Girls on the Run” for the 2020-2021 school year at Olive Twp. Elementary School
  2. Sara Gillen to receive a grant funded stipend of \$600 for coaching “Girls on the Run” for the 2020-2021 school year at Olive Twp. Elementary School

3. Kristen Kleist to receive a grant funded stipend of \$400 for coaching "Girls on the Run" for the 2020-2021 school year at Rolling Prairie Elementary School
4. Megan Horvath to receive a grant funded stipend of \$400 for coaching "Girls on the Run" for the 2020-2021 school year at Rolling Prairie Elementary School
5. Lisa Smiertelny to receive a grant funded stipend of \$400 for coaching "Girls on the Run" for the 2020-2021 school year at Rolling Prairie Elementary School
6. Sandra Ernst to receive a grant funded stipend of \$600 for coaching "Girls on the Run" for the 2020-2021 school year at Prairie View Elementary School
7. Lauren Dyer to receive a grant funded stipend of \$600 for coaching "Girls on the Run" for the 2020-2021 school year at Prairie View Elementary School
8. Julie Beakas FMLA Leave changed from 2/27/2021 through 5/29/2021 to 10/5/2020 through 12/28/2020

### **NON-CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirement
  1. Lanette Ness – Retirement as Library Aide at New Prairie Middle School effective 11/30/2020
  2. Barbara Davis – Medical Leave as Transportation Aide for NPUSC beginning 10/14/2020 through 1/8/2021
  3. Terry Bella - Medical Leave as Transportation Aide for NPUSC beginning 11/18/2020 through 2/18/2021
  4. Amy Bradburn – Resignation as Administrative Assistant to the Nutritional Services Director effective 12/4/2020
  5. Melissa Florian – FMLA Leave as Nutritional Services Worker at NPMS beginning 11/24/2020 through 2/12/2021
  6. Don Sudlow – FMLA Leave as Grounds Maintenance Worker at NPUSC beginning 11/17/2020 through 12/30/2020
- Employment
  1. Shanda Nguyen – Instructional Assistant at Prairie View Elementary school beginning 11/3/2020
  2. Tina Thompson – Temporary Instructional Assistant for the 2020-2021 school year at Rolling Prairie Elementary School start date pending criminal background check results
  3. Stacey Schultz - Temporary Instructional Assistant for the 2020-2021 school year at Rolling Prairie Elementary School start date pending criminal background check results
- Employment – Extra-Curricular
  1. Joel Hostetler – NPHS Girls Head Tennis Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
  2. Teresa Hostetler – NPHS Girls Assistant Tennis Coach for the 2020-2021 school year
- Adjustments
  1. Lisa Deutscher, Admin. Asst to the Superintendent, FMLA Leave cancelled for 10/30/2020 through 11/12/2020.
  2. Deborah Vascil, NPUSC Bus Driver Route change to Bus 75 Special Ed double route.

3. Kathy Jack, PVES Nutritional Services Crew Leader, promotional position change to PVES Nutritional Services Kitchen Manager beginning 11/30/2020.

## REPORTS

- Dr. White began his report by welcoming Jill Smith as the new future Board Member scheduled to begin in January.
- Dr. White followed up on the "Let's Talk Session" held with the Board and the community on Monday, November 16, 2020. After considerable input from the community and consideration of the discussions NPUSC has decided to allow K-12 ECAs when any NPUSC school is on E-Learning or LaPorte county is on Orange/Red in the state COVID metric under the following conditions:
  - No fans/spectators will be permitted at ECA contests when LaPorte Co posts Red and until the metric improves. Anytime a NPUSC school is on e-learning during Orange only parents/guardians will be allowed in ECA attendance
  - If 3% of the school student body has active COVID cases, ECAs will be postponed until that school's active COVID cases improves to at least 2% of the student population
  - ECAs will be postponed on a team by team basis anytime active multiple cases/close contacts exist within a team in coordination with the LaPorte Co Health Department
- Dr. White said, regarding the attendance plan, that we are very concerned and are monitoring it daily. The 50% plan has a lot of success and would like to continue the plan after Thanksgiving. We will look at the metric this week and decide after that. He added that we are aware of the schools calling eLearning after the Thanksgiving holiday. Dr. White finished by stating that he will be sending out a survey to staff Tuesday following this meeting. Also, the December Board meeting will be held at the High School in the Auditorium inviting public conversation.
- Dr. White invited teacher comment.
  - Mrs. Sue Kozumplik, NPMS 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Teacher, thanked the administration for letting her speak and for working to help keep teachers and students safe. Mrs. Kozumplik began by explaining that she has a few friends who are local nurses that she had spoken with whom all stated that schools are adding to the spread of the COVID 19 virus. She quoted the recommendations from the CDC website then questioned how it is ok for teachers and students to be face to face in the classroom contributing to the spread. She asked that the Board make the decision to help save lives by keeping schools closed.
  - Mrs. Kate Van Pelt, NPMS 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher, stated that she feels blessed to work for this corporation. She respectfully feels we need to come back from Thanksgiving Break virtually, not in person. She stated that through this pandemic she lost a parent, found out a close relative has cancer and so on. She felt she needed to share this as every teacher has a similar story of close family with high risk. Through this she has had to transition with changing schedules as has every teacher and student. She stated that unless everyone takes this pandemic seriously it will never end. She stated that many of her students let her know that they will be traveling for the holiday. As educators, isn't it our job to keep our students and staff safe. Surrounding school corporations have made their determination to continue teaching virtually knowing that families have

been traveling during the holiday, but not New Prairie. Going back to school after so many families have been traveling will not achieve our goal of returning to normal sooner rather than later. She begged and pleaded that the Board make the responsible decision not to return to school following the holidays. Let us be proactive instead of reactive. Let's keep our staff, students and community safe.

- Dr. White mentioned that these teachers just accentuated why these decisions are so difficult. Our thinking has been, for the most part, that most of the COVID issues we dealt with have been outside of our walls. He asked what the teachers are suggesting regarding the time of Virtual Learning. Mrs. Kozumplik stated that we stay virtual through January because of the holidays and families traveling and gathering outside of school. Dr. White said that LaPorte County schools are all over the place with what they are doing with their schools. Dr White said that he is sending out a survey to staff tonight and in the next couple days he will send out a message regarding the survey results. He will check with the health department and get more information from them.
- Mrs. Hite added that regarding the families traveling for the holiday, if we go back to 50% on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the students could have come in contact with the virus then return asymptomatic and spread it. We will not see if there has been any infection with students that week. They need a minimum of 2 weeks at home.
- Dr. White stated that the Board has discussed that as well. We need public input from parents and the community which is planned for the December Board meeting which needs to be weighed along with the staff input. Dr. White stated that he will also consult with the Health Department for their input on that issue as well.
- Mrs. Van Pelt added that it is hard for teachers to plan for 2 different plans while waiting to hear how we will go to school on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Please decide sooner than later.
- Dr. White responded that a decision will be made before Thanksgiving so everyone knows what will happen the week after Thanksgiving.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- (A) The Board accepted Donations
- Prairie View Elementary received the following donations:
    - 35 face masks from Shelley Bradshaw with the materials purchased from Rolling Prairie United Methodist Church Woman's Group
    - Masks from Karen Williamson
    - 10 masks from Meals on Wheels
    - Halloween treat bags from New Carlisle United Methodist church
    - Halloween treat bags from Jessica Sinka, NPHS Teacher
  - NPHS Golf Program received a donation of 2 sets of Men's Golf Clubs, 1 set of Women's Golf Clubs and several dozen golf balls from Chuck Wright
  - NPHS FFA received a donation of \$2,517.42 from Five Star Sheets and Red Hen Turf Farm

- (B) The Board approved the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for Al Williamson.
- (C) The Board accepted and approved the Second Reading of Board Policies Vol.32 No. 2: 0151, 0152, 0154, 0155, 0167.2, 0171.4, 2266, 3120.11, 5111, 5460, 6105, 6250, 7540.02, 8330, 8450, 8450.01
- (D) The Board adopted the Resolution for Additional Appropriations
- (E) The Board approved the NPHS 2021-2022 Curriculum Guide

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- (A) The Board had no questions or comments on their first reading of Board Policies 4210 & 4310.
- (B) Possible NPUSC Land Sale
  - Dr. White stated that the New Carlisle Parks Department would like to purchase the parcel of land behind Memorial Park by Bray Street. Currently it has a baseball diamond and a skate park.
  - Mr. Shail shared that he attended the Parks Department meeting where he learned that they want to acquire the 1.5 acres owned by the School Corporation. The Parks Department wants to make some major changes. They are currently grant writing for obtaining funds. The Parks Department wants to use the property for a Splash Pad. They will move the skate park currently on the property to Bourissa Hills. NPUSC will lose 2 ball diamonds in the process. The Little League president was present at the meeting having no objection. He was for the Parks Department changes and knows he will have to figure out something else for ball diamonds. Mr. Shail said our options are to get an appraisal and sell the land to the Parks Department or sign the land over to them.
  - Mr. Groves said he doesn't know how he feels about this and needs some time to think about it.
  - Dr. White added that there are many reasons for selling the property, however, we also need to think of the impact on Little League.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Mr. Groves wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving. He thanked the teachers for their comments. He stated that we are in a very difficult time with difficult decisions to be made. Safety and security for students and staff is first. We try to make everyone happy but is impossible to do.
- Mr. DeMeyer agreed with Mr. Groves. He thanked everyone for their input tonight stating further that we will get through this difficult time.
- Mr. Shail stated that we had a spectacular fall season this year. He thanked Mr. Bachmann for all he does with athletics, from promoting it, overseeing it and keeping it running smoothly through this pandemic. Winter sports has started and we hope it can keep going. We may have to make some tough decisions which will be for the good for everyone.
- Mr. King wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving. The Board appreciates all the staff members who were present tonight and their comments. The next Board meeting will be December 14<sup>th</sup> at New Prairie High School Auditorium at 6:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Groves made the motion to adjourn the meeting.