

Union City Area School District
SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING
Middle School/High School Large Group Instruction Room
October 1, 2020

President George Trauner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The salute to the flag and a moment of silence were observed.

Roll Call by the Secretary

Stephen Gilbert, Brian Gregor, Douglas Hopson, Lori Lewis, Barbara Miller, Kimberle Thomas, and George Trauner were present. Blain Blakeslee and David Robinson were absent.

Others Present

Matthew Bennett, Amy Coleman, Tara Lineman, Adam Shroul, Melissa Tomcho, Stacey Mulson, Amy Webber, Steve Thompson, Ann Sill, Tim Petrilla, Mary Ann Mook and Nathan DeSimone were present. Krista Byler was present via Zoom.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Bennett reported the following:

- Health Data Update - We are still good, although there has been an uptick in confirmed cases in Erie County this week. However, the percent positive is still very low. As of September 30, we remain in the green category which is a very low risk level even though there was one case reported in the 16438 zip code for the month of September. He stated he will continue to stay vigilant to keep kids safe and will inform the Board with any changes. There were no questions.

- Vo-Tech Busing Issue – Mr. Bennett received a call from Mr. Tarasovich, ECTS Principal, who informed him that Monark would not be doing to extra run (for special needs students) free of charge as Mangels did. The cost is \$148.75/day. There are four different ECTS runs and Ft. LeBoeuf handles three of these at no charge with several of our students riding those buses. He is recommending that we finish out the school year as scheduled, and he will contact the other school districts to suggest a rotation schedule which would eliminate the need to calculate billing for each student. The cost to Monark will be about \$5,000 for the remainder for the current school year. He clarified that this program is not one of the regular ECTS courses. It is located at ECTS but is for different job-site programs for the special needs students (Transition Center). It was mentioned by one Board member that when Monark bought the business everything was promised to be transparent and basically “The New Mangels.” It was also stated that they asked for additional years to be added to the contract which the Board had agreed to since it was promised to operate as Mangels had. Mr. Bennett mentioned that Mangels had made many free runs as a courtesy to the District. He was asked to relay to Monark that the Board is not happy. The Board was in

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support of finishing out the current school year, pay the extra cost, and discuss a rotation scheduled with the other districts involved.

- Storage - The building the District owns on Union Street is in bad shape and we are no longer able to use it for storage due to its dilapidated condition. We are currently using the auxiliary gym for storage of extra furniture due to social distancing of classrooms, but we will need both gyms once winter sports practices begin. Three gyms would be better, but it's not possible to utilize the Elementary Gym until sanctions are lifted due to it being needed for lunch periods. If the auxiliary gym is needed for instruction during the school day, that can be accommodated. Two storage units are needed for the furniture currently stored in the Auxiliary Gym. The total cost is \$1,540 for six months, and they can be put next to the Administration Office. Referring to the Union Street property, Mr. Bennett stated that we either need to put considerable money into the repairs of the building or sell the property. There is sufficient room next to Administration to erect a metal storage building which would be much more convenient and efficient. He asked the Board their thoughts on selling the Union Street property. Following discussion about selling the property vs. putting it up for auction, Mr. Bennett stated that he would contact Attorney Joseph to write a motion for either option to place on next week's agenda. There were no questions on preparing for winter sports.

- Elementary Renovation Discussion – The Elementary School was last renovated about 20 years ago. The roof and heating/AC units are failing and need to be replaced. He distributed an Elementary Renovation Timeline document to the Board. [See Supplemental enclosed in the Minutes Book] His proposal is to do the renovation in segments rather than the traditional way with PlanCon which is currently under a moratorium. The renovation steps in the document were reviewed year by year. Under the pandemic, he stated that we have managed our money wisely so this is a viable option. To have Phase 1 done in 2021/2022, he would need to contact Mr. John Stehli promptly to write the specs for the roof, and have the ESCO companies do a tour and submit bids in January. Mr. Bennett asked for feedback from the Board. One comment was in support of having John Stehli submit roof specs but not on proceeding with anything else until we have concrete budget numbers for next year. Mr. Bennett agreed and stated that he is bringing it up now so the Board has the information so if the budget allows it can be brought to the Board for approval between December and February. Then this pay-as-we-go plan can be ready to begin at the end of spring. He explained that Mr. Stehli is the local roof expert and saved the District \$300,000 to \$400,000 on the Middle School/High School roof. He is asking only for the go-ahead to

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contact Mr. Stehli to get the costs for roof specs which the Board would then vote on. It was asked about our financial situation since the ECTS renovation costs must be paid. Mr. Bennett replied that the money for the District's portion for ECTS renovations has already been set aside and is immediately available. He confirmed that the presented plan eliminates the need for another loan. It was mentioned that our former Solicitor stated that piece meal work cannot be done which Mr. Bennett stated is true when using PlanCon. It is not the case with this plan which would also not entail an architect fee and no long-term commitment as the Board would only commit to one phase/contract at a time. If the budget for 2021/2022 will not permit any renovations, the roof specs can be put on hold and used later. It was added that Wattsburg School District is renovating in this manner and it is successful. Mr. Bennett was asked to contact Mr. Stehli for his cost for writing the roof specs.

- Athletic Updates

- Kudos to the golf team with their first-ever league championship. The team is going to districts this Friday and three individuals (Cole DeSimone, Josh James and Tyler Parkhurst) also advanced to districts. He will keep the Board posted and invite team to a meeting (likely virtually) after the end of the season to be recognized.
- “Hudl” has been installed which will allow for better viewing by the fans at home.
- Attendance at Games – A global call went out this afternoon regarding the 3rd circuit court in which the stay limiting the 25/250 gathering guidelines by the Governor was upheld. This was anticipated but Representative Merski is confident that Governor Wolf will be issuing new guidance within 24-48 hours. Mr. Bennett is confident that following our current plan will keep all safe and asks that everyone be patient. He added that he understands everyone's frustration and anger, but we must follow the law. He responded to questions from the Board. He was asked why the Board can't vote on it and why that would make the Superintendent liable if the Board approved something different. Mr. Bennett replied that it's the Governor's guidelines and he's sworn to uphold the guidelines of the state. Doing so would leave the Board open to liability and severe fines by the PSP. It was argued that it's not the law, but guidelines. Mr. Bennett stated that this is why it went to the 3rd circuit court which he has no control over. He doesn't necessarily disagree, but emotions are running high and people lose focus over what can and cannot be done. He has to go with legal advice. He stated that we wear the masks for the kids, not because we agree. It was asked about students having symptoms related

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to allergies and if they'd be sent home. Mr. Bennett referred to the chart on the website regarding various symptoms and what steps must be taken. It's a faster track back to class with multiple symptoms if they are tested that that must be ordered by a physician, not the District. The community members are being very cooperative and the nurses are doing a great job of communicating the steps.

Administrative Reports [See Supplementals enclosed in the Minutes Book]

Mrs. Lineman was commended on the local audit results.

Mrs. Tomcho showed the Board the Walsworth Gallery of Excellence award presented to the 2019-2020 yearbook staff and advisor, Ms. Jenkins, as explained in her report. This was the first time the District has ever been a recipient of this award. She distributed a fundraiser handout to Boscov's [See Supplemental enclosed in the Minutes Book], and read the names of the various 2020/2021 officers as per her report. Finally, she announced that Brooke Reagle was crowned Queen and Logan Kesselring was crowned King at last evening's Homecoming festivities.

Mr. Thompson was asked if it was the new carpet that was lifting. He replied that it was, and it had been installed too close to the wall. The repairs have been made.

Representative Reports

Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors

Mr. Trauner reported again that Dr. Maynard will be retiring on October 9 and Brad Whitman will be taking over as Executive Director. He offered kudos to the IU staff who, working in many school district, have multiple health and safety plans to follow.

Erie County Technical School Joint Operating Committee

Mr. Gilbert reported the following:

1. Their meeting was last Thursday. This was the first meeting with the architect regarding the renovation. They discussed an indoor vs. rooftop HVAC unit and decided to go with the indoor option.
2. There was finally discussion with PennDOT regarding the roundabout. It will encompass about two acres valued at \$44,000. PennDOT wanted to purchase the property but that would entail thousands of dollars in closing costs, etc., to ECTS, so they're going to offer giving the land to PennDOT with them being responsible to install a barrier wall as a safety feature.
3. Some new courses are being considered – EMT course, Drone Servicing and Technology, and Homeland/Cyber Security. New courses are needed to attract students and create excitement.
4. The second invoice has been mailed out to the districts for the drawings.
5. Dr. Walker reported that the hybrid school is working well. They still hope to have students return to school in person full time beginning with the second quarter.

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6. The new HR Director has a plan to send out letters of recruitment. As of September 15, ECTS had 703 students which is three more than 2019-2020. At registration there was over 800 students registered, so over 100 students have been lost since then, with 52 reporting it's because of the pandemic. Union City has 67 students taking classes this year.

Other Business

The Board reviewed the October 8 draft agenda. There were no questions.

It was asked if a walk around was done following the renovation. Mr. Bennett replied that Mr. O'Brien completed a walk around with every inch reviewed and the punch list completed. Mr. Thompson will also be walking around with the changing temperatures to make sure everything is in good working order.

Executive Session

Mr. Trauner reminded the Board that an Executive Session for the purpose of Personnel discussion would follow adjournment.

Adjournment

Mr. Hopson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Miller.

Roll Call Vote:

Stephen Gilbert, Brian Gregor, Douglas Hopson, Lori Lewis, Barbara Miller, Kimberle Thomas, and George Trauner voted yes. Blain Blakeslee and David Robinson were absent.

Mr. Trauner declared the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Sill
School Board Secretary