

EASTLAND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #308

Board of Education Meeting

February 17, 2021

6:31 p.m.

Steven Snider, Presiding

MEMBERS PRESENT: Diann Cassens, Brian Heldt, Anthony Preston, Steven Snider, Jennifer Sturtevant, Chad Waller

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Alex Kashner, Angela Mahoney

OTHERS PRESENT: Michele Hartman, John Grotto, Keri Heeren

Member Karl Henze entered at 6:32pm

ADOPTION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION AGENDA:

A motion was made by **Heldt** and seconded by **Preston** to approve the agenda as adjusted, adding a discussion regarding the use of remote learning versus traditional snow days.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye.

Motion carried.

CONSENSUS ITEMS:

A motion was made by **Heldt** and seconded by **Sturtevant** to approve the consensus items as adjusted, correcting the Accounts Payable amount:

- Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held on January 20, 2021, and destruction of the audiotape minutes of the May 15, 2019 and June 19, 2019 Executive sessions, per statute;
- Payment of Accounts Payable for the month of February, 2021 in the amount of \$335,024.09 + \$3,000.00 for correction of invoice amount due on the purchase of computers.
- Treasurer's Report.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye.

Motion carried.

BOARD INPUT:

- Economic Interest Statements

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Visitors John Grotto and Keri Heeren were welcomed. When asked if they would like to address the Board, Mr. Grotto mentioned he had spoken at previous meetings and was there due to his interest in hearing the discussion and outcome of the proposed abatement of taxes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Superintendent Kashner shared board correspondence and the 1/2 day teacher professional development schedule for February 19th. Information on the Northwest IASB Division Spring meeting was shared. The meeting will be virtual this year and the presentation will be on district finances. Information on how to sign up was provided. Member Preston let the BOE know that the IHSA is hosting a virtual town hall forum and encouraged those that were interested to sign up. The PreK Board report was also provided.

OLD BUSINESS:

➤ **DISCUSSION REGARDING ABATEMENT OF TAXES**

Superintendent Kashner shared that the finance committee came to the recommendation to abate \$300,000.00 in Bond tax levy after reviewing the financial data and the CARES act funds the district is slated to receive. The district is expected to receive \$394,000 in funds through the CARES act that they were not planning for, and thus, felt it was appropriate to reduce the levy. Member Sturtevant expressed concern on the state paying on time, and how this is a one time payment and we need to be cautious. Member Heldt and other members of the BOE echoed that concern, and commented that without the CARES money that abating would not be an option, but feel comfortable this time. Superintendent Kashner shared that it is important to note that the district has the 2nd lowest tax rate in the area, and estimates the tax rate will be reduced by ten cents for the second consecutive year. Additionally, he shared that the tax rate will potentially be reduced this year through the abatement, but could rise back to the original planned rate next year.

➤ **APPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION TO ABATE TAXES**

A motion was made by **Heldt** and seconded by **Waller** to approve the resolution to abate \$300,000.00 of bond and interest funds for the 2020 levy, as presented.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye. **Motion carried.**

➤ **APPROVAL OF MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL NATURAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN**

A motion was made by **Henze** and seconded by **Preston** to approve the Multi-Jurisdiction natural hazards mitigation plan, as presented.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye. **Motion carried.**

➤ **APPROVAL TO AMEND THE 2021-22 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

A motion was made by **Waller** and seconded by **Heldt** to approve amending the 2021-22 school calendar, moving spring break back one week to match WACC, as presented.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye. **Motion carried.**

➤ **DISCUSSION OF E-LEARNING/REMOTE DAY VERSUS SNOW DAY**

Superintendent Kashner provided survey data from staff and area districts stating that remote learning days were largely successful due to the fact that staff had time to prepare lessons, send devices home with all students, and parents were notified the night before to allow for planning purposes. Member Sturtevant commented that she feels strongly that the use of a remote day is better than an instructional day in May and that she feels we need to put in resources to ensure this is possible. Member Waller complimented the teachers for their work and that the use of remote learning days should be utilized whenever possible. Superintendent Kashner shared that remote learning days do put more responsibility on parents for younger aged children and some will have a hard time participating in live instruction at that age group. 1st Grade teacher, Mrs. Heeren, was asked her opinion on how remote learning went. She stated that teachers were prepared, and that knowing the expectations and having time to prepare made it a much smoother process than last Spring. All of her students were able to participate and that a remote day for her class was productive. Member Preston shared thoughts on remote learning being successful. The Board asked Superintendent Kashner to use remote learning days in place of traditional snow days as much as possible. Superintendent Kashner shared that he will need to purchase additional supplies to ensure the safe transport of devices for K-3, and will start working on that process.

NEW BUSINESS:

➤ **BI-COUNTY UPDATE**

A bi-county update on life skills programming cost was shared with costs per student expected to rise.

➤ **APPROVAL TO PAY ASSESSMENT FOR WACC HVAC REPAIRS**

A motion was made by **Preston** and seconded by **Henze** to approve a health life safety amendment of \$30,000.00 for Whiteside Area Career Center HVAC unit, as presented.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye.
Motion carried.

➤ **1st READING OF THE 2022-23 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The proposed 2022-23 school calendar was shared with the Board. The proposal included feedback from the calendar committee and from staff surveys.

➤ **1st READING OF BOARD POLICY UPDATES FROM PRESS**

Board policy updates, which are recommended by PRESS, were shared with the Board for review. The Policy Committee will be meeting to review these changes/updates for policies 2:20, 3:40, 4:10, 4:55, 4:80, 4:90, 4:120, 4:150, 4:175, 5:30, 5:185, 5:190, 5:270, 6:15, 6:20, 6:40, 6:235, 6:280, 6:300, 6:310, 6:315, 6:320, 6:340, 7:100, 7:140, 7:300, 7:325, and 7:340.

➤ **APPROVAL OF 457B TRS SAVINGS PLAN**

A motion was made by **Henze** and seconded by **Heldt** to approve the TRS 457B Supplemental Savings Plan, as presented.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye.
Motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Kashner shared that we have 19 K-5 and 19 6-12 students still fully remote and all but one are on pace to meet requirements. The district currently has eight students in quarantine, which is the lowest of the school year. Superintendent Kashner shared that the plans for HVAC at EES are still on schedule at this time. If we hear the materials are delayed, then it is possible that we will wait on this project.

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by **Heldt** and seconded by **Waller** to enter into closed session at 7:20 p.m. to consider information regarding:

- The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye. **Motion carried.**

A motion was made by **Heldt** and seconded by **Waller** to exit closed session at 7:35 p.m. Voice vote showed all ayes. **Motion carried.**

A motion was made by **Heldt** and seconded by **Waller** to approve closed session minutes. Voice vote showed all ayes. **Motion carried.**

> APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL:

A motion was made by **Preston** and seconded by **Sturtevant** to approve the following personnel, as presented:

- Approved the resolution of non-renewal second year, full-time, non-tenured certified staff, per named in closed session, effective the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye. **Motion carried.**

A motion was made by **Henze** and seconded by **Waller** to approve the following personnel, as presented:

- The hire of **Carly Kupersmith** as full-time, Speech Language Pathologist for the 2021-22 school year.
- The re-employment of ninth year, part-time, non-tenured certified staff, **Kim Haverland**, for the 2021-22 school year.
- The re-employment of first year, full-time, non-tenured certified staff, **Keta Foltz**, **Patrick Foltz**, **Logan Gibbs**, **Ally Owen**, **Brenden Schultz**, and **Jessica Stricker**, for the 2021-22 school year.

- The re-employment of second year, full-time, non-tenured certified staff, **Hannah Ludwig**, **Cara Huber**, **Sara Swart**, and **Wade Zuberbuhler**, for the 2021-22 school year.
- The re-employment of third year, full-time, non-tenured certified staff, **Heather Blackmore**, **Kimberly Blair**, **Tonia Blair**, **Christopher Dertz**, **Whitney Hansen**, **Morgan Johnson**, **Anna Ludwig**, and **Jared McNutt**, for the 2021-22 school year.
- Approved the re-employment of fourth year, full-time, non-tenured certified staff, **Kathy Dahlman**, **Rachael Nielsen** and **Kelsey Thurman** for the 2021-22 school year. This renewal will result in the Board granting status of “continued contractual service,” otherwise known as “tenure.”
- Approved a resolution authorizing the renewal of **all other tenured certified teachers (not previously listed)** for the 2021-22 school year.
- To post the following vacancies:
 - One (1) Physical Education Teacher for 2021-22 at EES
 - One (1) Physical Education Teacher for 2021-22 at EJSHS
 - One (1) High School History Teacher for 2021-22 at EJSHS
 - One (1) K-8 Music Teacher for 2021-22
 - EES Secretary/Clerical Aide
 - Instructional Aide
 - Lego Robotics Sponsor
 - Play Director
 - Substitute Bus Drivers
 - Substitute Kitchen Aides

Roll call vote showed Cassens, Heldt, Henze, Preston, Snider, Sturtevant, and Waller voting aye.
Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by **Sturtevant** and seconded by **Snider** to adjourn at 7:41 p.m.

Voice vote showed all ayes. **Motion carried.**

These minutes are not official until approved by the Board of Education.

Steven Snider, President

Diann Cassens, Secretary