GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS *Board of Education*

Work Session – May 11, 2020

MINUTES

President DuFort called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Superintendent Brian Metcalf indicated the presence of **Board Members**: Denise DuFort, Jarrod Smith, Jon Shiflett, Sara Clark Pierson, Patrick McKennon and Ben Cwayn. Kim Mulvenna joined the meeting at 6:10 pm **Central Office Administrators**: Brian Metcalf, Steve Gabriel, Bill Barnes, Sara Holding, Mark Deschaine and John Ellsworth. **Others in Attendance:** Ken Wright, Michelle Siwek, Tim Marsh, Ron McGuire, Brian Flowerday, Melissa Mazzola and Kim Manning

REPORTS

A. Legislative Report – Board Vice President Jarrod Smith advised this is a weird to report on these days. Biggest things to highlight is the upcoming Revenue Estimating Conference being held this Friday. Obviously no decisions are made as a result of this, but we can certainly get an idea of the State's thoughts of where revenues might be heading and any impact on the current fiscal year. Lots of things have been suspended that would normally impact education. SB858 that would eliminate the Governor's Executive Powers passed both the House and the Senate and was subsequently vetoed.

Denise advised MASB is holding a conference on the Monday following this so information will be presented on the Revenue Conference.

Sara Clark Pierson advised she sat in on a Citizens Research Council presentation surrounding the upcoming Revenue Conference. Lots depends on the outer envelope of the virus that we don't fully understand. The Appropriations Subcommittee on education has been talking about percentages of cuts. Some projections were not pleasant to see.

B. **Eaton RESA Report** – Board President Denise DuFort advised in March the RESA passed to begin working with the Michigan School Energy Cooperative to help address utility costs and billing. Most intriguing is this will allow for a multi-year lock-in on price for gas supply costs which can result in a substantial savings. Also, in March the RESA approved a Deputy Superintendent Position to replace the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services. Sean Williams has served in the Instructional Services position and serving in this new position he will be able to align and

integrate across more of the instructional programs and maximize the resources to increase collaboration in alignment with the RESA's Strategic Plan. In April, we discussed the 2020-2021 budgets. These Budgets were shared via eMail today and the RESA is looking for this board to approve their General Education and Career and Technical Education Budgets tonight. A couple of highlights to point out include monies will be coming out of the fund balance to cover the cost of the difference in revenue to expenditures. In the CTE budget they have eliminated the Fire Science Class due to low enrollment, but they anticipate an increase in overall student enrollment annually for the next couple of year.

Mrs. Mulvenna noted she believes the RESA is rather generous in their income projections, that she agrees with them tapping into their fund balance as the RESA maintains a healthy fund balance. But she wondered if there was a lot of discussion when developing the budgets.

Mrs. DuFort assured her there was a lot of discussion, but most of it was prior to the COVID-19 shut down. However, the budget is based on taxes brought in and she is confident that Tina Monroe is staying on top of the projections.

Ms. DuFort went on to advise the RESA developed and approved a policy for telework and put in place a plan for child care for essential workers. However, the child care portion is not needed at this time as this need is being met through the City of Grand Ledge. Additionally, the RESA worked to approve the Continuation of Learning Plans for its constituent districts. In closing, she recognized Natalie Wallas, a senior from Grand Ledge High School on being a United State President's Scholar semi-finalist. Notification of finalist status will be made later this month. Natalie is planning on going to Michigan Tech and majoring in mechanical engineering.

- C. **GLEF Report** Board President DuFort advised the board met via ZOOM April and the biggest discussion is if the 5K Race, which is scheduled for July 18th, will be able to be held. They did discuss holding a virtual race and Kim Spalsbury is looking in to other options. The Board did look at their financials and GLEF has adequate funds to sponsor the 2020-2021 Teacher Grants in the fall.
- D. **Superintendent's Report** Superintendent Metcalf noted bond work at Beagle and Holbrook started this week. Additionally, Pool Bids were received this past week and Clark Construction is scheduling post bid interviews. Discussions on the new Wacousta building has started. He went on to advise under the Continuation of Learning, going into the 4th week the district has distributed approximately 600 Chromebooks, 300 weekly work packets are being handed out. He advised the district still distributes approximately 7,000 meals each work, this is the result of providing 2 meals per day to 500 students. The pick-up location has been moved to Hayes Middle School starting this week to accommodate construction work. The location change was shared with families via text, email, calls and flyers handed out at last week's pick-up. He noted discussion have begun on how we bring in staff to clean out rooms which is easy to control while still keeping safe distancing in place. However, students is whole different story. We are talking 500 students at Willow

Ridge and approximately 1,700 students at the high school. So, do we stretch it out over 4-5 days. Or, do we wait until we return in the Fall. But we will come up with the best possible solution but it may not be until after the May 28th Executive Order is lifted, but of course, it could be extended again.

ACTION ITEM

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

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

Roll Call Vote

Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes	President DuFort	Yes
Mr. Cwayna	Yes	Mr. Smith	Yes
Mr. McKennon	Yes	Mr. Shiflett	Yes
Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL OF THE PAYMENT OF SINKING FUND INVOICES

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Ms. Clark Pierson for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Sinking Fund Invoices in the amount of \$7,435.52, as presented.

This completes the work of the underground storage tanks at the Operations Building.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Cwayna	Yes	Mr. Smith	Yes
Mr. McKennon	Yes	Mr. Shiflett	Yes
Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes	Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes
President DuFort	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval OF THE PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 1 BOND INVOICES Motion by Mr. McKennon, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Proposal 1 Bond Invoices in the amount of \$200,839.75, as presented.

This includes payments to GMB, Clark Construction and Wade Trim.

Sara Clark Pierson requested abstention from both bond votes as Clark Construction, a family company, is involved in the oversight of the projects.

Roll Call Vote			
Mr. McKennon	Yes	Mr. Shiflett	Yes
Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes	Ms. Clark Pierson	Abstain
President DuFort	Yes	Mr. Cwayna	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously with member Sara Clark Pierson abstaining from the vote in accordance with MCL 380.4203.

D. APPROVAL OF THE PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 2 BOND INVOICES

Motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Cwayna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the payment of Proposal 2 Bond Invoices in the amount of \$22,224, as presented.

Roll Call Vote

Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes	Ms. Clark Pierson	Abstain
President DuFort	Yes	Mr. Cwayna	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes	Mr. McKennon	Yes
Mr. Shiflett	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously with member Sara Clark Pierson abstaining from the vote in accordance with MCL 380.4203.

E. APPROVAL OF EATON RESA'S 2020-2021 CTE BUDGET

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Eaton RESA's 2020-2021 Budget, as presented.

It was questioned if the RESA makes budget amendments to their budgets throughout the year similar to what Grand Ledge does and also questioned the district not approving the RESA's special education budget.

Ms. Clark Pierson advised the RESA does make amendments throughout the year. She also noted that Statute 380.684 does not require constituent districts to approve the special education budget.

Dr. Metcalf advised Eaton RESA Superintendent Cindy Anderson understands this budget may change drastically in light of the pandemic. He noted they are hearing from legislators there may not be a budget until September. So, budgets are being based on what we know at the time.

Roll Call Vote			
President DuFort	Yes	Mr. Cwayna	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes	Mr. McKennon	Yes
Mr. Shiflett	Yes	Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes
Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

F. APPROVAL OF EATON RESA'S 2020-2021 GENERAL ED BUDGET Motion by Mr. Shiflett seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Eaton RESA's 2020-2021 General Ed Budget, as presented.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Smith	Yes	Mr. McKennon	Yes
Mr. Shiflett	Yes	Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes
Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes	President DuFort	Yes
Mr. Cwayna	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

G. APPROVAL OF PROPERTY PURCHASE

Motion by Mr. McKennon seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Purchase of Property on West Herbison Road in the amount of \$120,000 using Sinking Funds and direct and authorize the Superintendent to finalize the purchase on behalf of the district, as presented.

Ms. Clark Pierson advised she must abstain from this vote but wants this to be very transparent as this is family property next to Wacousta Elementary School. She noted her family would be happy to continue farming this property with her 9 brothers and sisters noting it has been in her family her entire life. However, she noted the family understands the school needs additional land for the development of the new Wacousta school. So, what the family did was requested the school have an appraiser come in and we would accept the appraised value. This was not a hard-fought battle.

Dr. Metcalf confirmed the district knew we were going to need to obtain more property to complete the Wacousta project. He confirmed in his dealings with John Clark on this purchase that the family was not interested in giving up the farm land however, because it was for the school, they were open to the discussion. The district contracted with an appraiser and the value came back at \$6,700 per acre, which is the going rate for prime farm land. He noted he believe the Clark family sold the district the current property that Wacousta Elementary School sits on at this time. This additional piece of property will allow us to create the appropriate approaches we need for the new building. He noted it is his recommendation the boar approve this purchase and in closing thanked the Clark Family for their continued support of the district and their unselfish act that will allow the district to create the new Wacousta Elementary School.

Mrs. Mulvenna thanked the Clark Family.

President DuFort thanked both Ms. Clark Pierson and Dr. Metcalf for the clarification. Ms. Clark Pierson on the personal level and Dr. Metcalf on the district level.

It was noted there was not a broker used in the sale of this property, so there are no additional costs for commissions.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Shiflett	Yes	Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes
Ms. Clark Pierson	Abstain	President DuFort	Yes
Mr. Cwayna	Yes	Mr. Smith	Yes
Mr. McKennon	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously with member Sara Clark Pierson abstaining from the vote in accordance with MCL 380.4203.

H. APPROVAL OF BI-DIRECTIONAL AMPLIFIER (BDA) AGREEMENT

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Bi-Directional Amplifier Agreement, as presented.

Dr. Metcalf noted last Fall he was approached by Michael Armitage, Emergency Manager for Eaton County, wanting to improve communication between officers and 911 operators. Initially talked about a tower being placed on district property near the maintenance building located down by Beagle. However, the tower ended up being cost prohibitive. Instead, they would now like to install cables and antennas in four of our buildings that would improve communication transmissions. He noted the problem is when you get in the middle of these big brick buildings the transmissions can be problematic. This will not cost the district anything other than some additional electrical use. However, it is in the contract that we can request they remove the equipment if we find it to be cost prohibitive to the district, interfering with our technology system or any of our systems. There will be no cost to the district for installation. The hope is to have this completed before next fall

Roll Call Vote

Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes	President DuFort	Yes
Mr. Cwayna	Yes	Mr. Smith	Yes
Mr. McKennon	Yes	Mr. Shiflett	Yes
Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

I. APPROVAL OF FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Food Service Contract with Chartwells, as presented.

Dr. Metcalf noted Chartwells has been a fantastic partner in these trying times. There was no hesitation when we needed to come up with a plan to help feed 500 students throughout this pandemic. I just can't think of a better company to part with and Darrin Gyurich has been a great Food Service Director, he does an excellent job for us. In closing he noted he highly supports this contract.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Cwayna	Yes	Mr. Smith	Yes
Mr. McKennon	Yes	Mr. Shiflett	Yes
Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes	Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes
President DuFort	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

J. APPROVAL OF TECHNOLOGY PURCHASE

Motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Technology Purchase of 806 Chromebooks and 16 Chromebook Carts in the amount of \$175,460.40 using Proposal 1 Bond Funds, as presented.

Dr. Metcalf noted this supports the district's rotation of current technology as the current Chromebooks are outdated and we need to be able to continue to offer programming and be able to support State testing requirements.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. McKennon	Yes	Mr. Shiflett	Yes
Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes	Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes
President DuFort	Yes	Mr. Cwayna	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

K. APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT AWARD

Motion by Mr. McKennon, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Contract Award to CBD (Communications by Design) for Professional Services expected to be \$42,850 using Proposal 1 Bond Funds, as presented. Dr. Metcalf advised the company will approve with the purchase of a new phone system for the district and the Wide Area Network out to Delta Mills and the future Dave Morris Building.

Questions was raised on why we didn't work with GMB to bid this out.

Dr. Metcalf advised CBS is a company that is recommended by GMB and we have worked with them in the past maintaining a 6-7-year relationship with them.

It was also questioned about training.

Communication Director Mark Deschaine advised training provided by CBD will be for technology staff and the technology staff will train Grand Ledge staff.

Roll Call Vote

Mrs. Mulvenna	Yes	Ms. Clark Pierson	Yes
President DuFort	Yes	Mr. Cwayna	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes	Mr. McKennon	Yes
Mr. Shiflett	Yes		

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEM

A. 2020 Commencement

Superintendent Metcalf advised Administration has spent considerable time looking at several options to honor our Class of 2020. Looked at parades, to car parades, to individual type awards or ceremonies, to digital ceremonies. The one thing that continues to come back is there is a real contention in the public in regard to how safe it is and what level of contact people are comfortable with. Talking with Board Members, Administrators, parents and looking at this. One thing we can agree to, one type of digital ceremony in the near future would honor students and provide students to have some closure, have a graduation. Not what we want. We prefer to be at the Breslin Center on June 5th, but that is not an option. This morning, I talked with Ken Wright and asked him to look at a digital graduation, look at other options that would not require staff, students and parents to come together in any close contact. Anyone in the public that has any ideas is welcome to send them to me, Principal Ken Wright, Dr. Barnes. We do not have anything established as of right now and we are open to hearing your suggestions.

Mrs. Mulvenna pointed out she is saddened as one of the highlights of being on the board is meeting the Top 25 Scholars each year. She noted this is not an option this year and wondered if there was a way to honor them on Facebook or in a digital form.

It was pointed out that the Top 25 is being honored on Facebook.

District Communication Director John Ellsworth noted he worked with High School Principal Ken Wright and High School Secretary Cindy Hoskins to get the Top 25 digitized and include their picture and May is the month we are recognizing them. We started the month with the Stadium Salute kick off and now we post one of the Top 25 each day on the High School Facebook page. It is not on the district Facebook page and these are the high school's students and this high school page has a larger following than the district page does. This is a more focused approach. This allows the building to have the moment with their students.

President DuFort asked if we could showcase a list of the students once everyone has been highlighted on the High School Facebook page to which Mr. Ellsworth will work on.

Mrs. Mulvenna expressed she understands this is disappointing to the students and parents but she believes it is important that we continue to showcase our seniors accomplishments.

Ms. Clark Pierson noted we don't know where this is going to go, but she does not believe the Governor will allow large gatherings of any number of people in the near future. Could it be limited to just parents? Possible, but that is still a large gathering. Plans are being looked at but everything is very tentative at this time.

Dr. Metcalf advised he has a good team with Principal Wright, Dr. Barnes, Dr. Gabriel and Mrs. Holding. They all have a good understanding of what this means to the students and family. He is confident they will come up with a good plan. Mr. Wright has been talking with some students, but maybe we need to expand that discussion. He understands this is very disappointing and noted he is heartbroken we can't do more and provide the pomp and circumstance these students are entitled to.

Further discussion among the members noted that the district used to hold graduation at the football field, but June is usually cold, rainy, windy. Then you have to move inside and the gyms just aren't large enough to hold that population of people while still ensuring safe distancing. It was noted the board has a duty to keep the students, staff, parents and community safe during this uncertainty. It was further questions if we are locked in on a date or if we could hold it later in the summer to which it was advised that if we hold it later, some students will not be able to participate as they will go off to military training, or start their classes at their respective college. It was noted the Class of 2020 is 415 graduates. Considering even just two parents per students, that is still a very large gathering of people and events as far out as September are already being cancelled. But, at some point, we have to accept what can be. Of course, a more traditional ceremony is wanted, but at this point it is not feasible. We have to look at all the options and be prepared for what May 28th brings from the Governor.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Parent Michelle Siwek addressed the board regarding the Class of 2020 graduation ceremony asking them to get more feedback from student groups. She believes this should not be a parent decision but a student decision on how to proceed. She understands the administration is the ultimate decision maker and you have to look out for everyone's best interest, but she urged them to not make the students feel like no one cares about what they have to say

Superintendent Metcalf advised Principal Ken Wright has had conversation with some students and student council. He noted a lot of people are feeling the strain or the executive orders and what people deem to be safe and what is deemed unsafe. He assured that prior to the final decision, student council will be consulted.

Community member Tim Marsh expressed his thanks to all the teachers during this difficult time. He pointed out under the Open Meetings Act, boards need to post minutes within 8-days of said meeting. He noted the board caught up on their meeting minutes tonight, but wanted to see about getting drafts posted within the 8-day timeline in accordance with the OMA. He went on to point out the bond information on the district webpage is very outdated and stressed he feels it is important to generate enthusiasm about the bond. He watches the Independent and the district webpage and has not seen anything as of recent. He went on to advise he would love the opportunity to provide his two cents with regard to the track and pool plans. Lastly, he noted he does not like to see Ms. Clark Pierson abstaining from the vote, specifically on things bond related as he would prefer to see a 7-0 vote.

Superintendent Metcalf thanked Mr. Marsh and noted he would check on those three items.

Parent Ron Maguire addressed the board to express his concern with regard to the 2020 Commencement ceremony. He noted kids don't want a digital graduation. They have already sacrificed Spring sports, prom, senior award – even those Principal Wright did a fantastic job with the Senior Awards on YouTube. But, DeWitt is going to hold a graduation in July. He expressed he feels the district has to work on this more, maybe something with just the kids.

Parents Brian & Katherine Flowerday echoed Mr. Maguire. Expressing if there is some way it can be conducted outside. They understand it must be a compliant event, but then it is up to the people to use their own common sense and self-discipline

COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD

Mrs. Mulvenna thanked all of our teachers noting they have done an incredible job from the very start of the pandemic. She noted she understand where parents are coming from but she has concerns about a physical graduation at this time when we can't be assured people will be compliant. In closing she noted we will have to see what the next Executive Order will be, but noted this is really out of our hands.

Mr. McKennon agreed with Mrs. Mulvenna about the teachers and staff and the amount of flexibility they have demonstrated. As for graduation, he thanked everyone for their perspective because no member of the board or administration is the parent of a senior right now. However, he noted the problem is trying to hit a moving target. We don't know where we are going to be in the middle of June or July. If we wait, are we doing the senior class a disservice.

Ms. Clark Pierson noted she has graduated three children through Grand Ledge Public Schools and has attended numerous graduation ceremonies. It's a big deal and it's a wonderful time to celebrate, but we can't support a school sponsored spreader event. Things will happen, people will gather, they will hug and kiss each other. She expressed she has great confident that

Superintendent Metcalf and his team will come up with something, kids will be involved in the decision, and in the end we will have a community-responsible event. She addressed Mr. Marsh's comments about her abstaining from votes noting this is not reflected as a no vote from her, it is simply her being responsible to the district as Clark Construction is a family company and they recommend who the district hires as contractors and then recommends paying those contractors. An abstention is simply abstaining from a vote. It is 6-0 vote instead of a 7-0 vote and it is never a 6-1 vote when I abstain.

Mr. Cwayna thanked the parents for speaking and expressed he would like to see the district do as close to a formalized graduation as possible. While he understands our responsibility to ensure a compliant, lawful event he supports moving it back to end of June or even July noting the district is never going to be able to stop every hug or kiss, but we can set the expectation and we should endeavor to do that.

Mr. Smith noted he shares a house with a teacher and students and it is impressive to see the collaboration. The district came together with a plan that keeps things moving. He supported Ms. Clark Pierson with regard to her abstaining from a vote that includes input from a family company noting he is more comfortable with her abstaining than he would be if she voted. He noted the board maintains a lot of respect with the bond and those funds and he believe it is the appropriate step to abstain to keep the integrity of the bonds. As for the graduation process, if people are listening, they can tell we want to maintain compliance and keep our students, staff and community safe. As much as we can imagine what seniors are going through, none of us wished this for them. In closing he noted he is not sure of the answer but safety has to remain the top priority.

Mr. Shiflett only echoed everything already said by members.

President DuFort noted May is Teacher Appreciation Month and there just aren't enough words to thank the teachers for what they go through on a normal day, let along under this pandemic. Graduation is another piece of the same puzzle. We want to do what we can to honor the kids work and certainly give them the opportunity to celebrate their accomplishment, but the safety of the public is very challenging. She thanked those who participated in this virtual meeting noting she likes the idea of more student input and believes that Dr. Metcalf and Mr. Wright will work to have student involvement to some degree. She expressed this is impacting everyone but not as much as the Class of 2020. In closing, she congratulated Tonya Rice on her promotion to Assistant Principal at Grand Ledge High School.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jon Shiflett, Secretary

Attest:

Denise DuFort, President