

GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Virtual Meeting– August 24, 2020

MINUTES

President DuFort called the meeting to order at 6:02 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** Aaliyah Bauer, Amy Heriford, Angela Lutz, Ann Paquette-Lukens, Barb Margriff, Bobby Baxter, Brian Flowerday, Bri Dennis, Dan Cwayna, David Pawley, Dawne Velianoff, Dee Campbell, Denise Clarity, Denise Green, Mike Johnson, Elyse Fox, Hillary Kohn, Jacqueline Freeman, Jamie McKennon, Jason Higgins, Jenny Kish, Karen Batterham, Katie Grass, Kelly Smith, Kristen Nunham, Kristen Heine, Kyle Dymond, Laura Clark, Lindsey Chemacki, Lindsey Fender, Lisa Swem, Lucinda Shier, Margo Susnjar, Marlene Promer, Megan Spedoske, Megan Weber, Melissa Mazzola, Michelle Beckwith, Nicole Leitch, Nicole Shannon, Nola Cockroft, Rachel Vandeven, Rene Brown, Sarah Milks, Shelby Logel, Stephanie Curtis, Sydney Adams, Tamela Jones, Tamra Hunt-Williams, Thea Oatman, Theresa Abed, Tim Mullins, Traci Gentilozzi, Wendy Dill and Kim Manning

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mrs. Mulvenna, seconded by Ms. Clark Pierson for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the August 24, 2020 Agenda Items, as presented.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE ON CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mr. McKennon, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the August 24, 2020 Consent Agenda Items, as presented.

Included on the Consent Agenda were the Meeting Minutes of the August 3, 2020 Special Virtual Meeting and the August 10, 2020 Virtual Meeting.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

A. Capitol Connections Report

Mr. Smith advised legislation that would have suspended payment of property taxes was vetoed by the Governor. Additionally, a group of bills that addressed the current school environment and requirements passed. He is confident the administrative team is abundantly aware of the requirements included in the bill package. In closing he noted the district's state aid payment will be weight 75% from last year's enrollment and 25% on this year's enrollment. .

B. Eaton RESA Report

President DuFort noted the RESA board has met twice. They approve the Eaton RESA's COVID-19 Response Plan and received a presentation on the Capital Region Technical Early College (CRTEC) , noting Davenport, Lansing Community College, Ferris State and Baker College all provide programs through the CRTEC. She provided statistics for enrollment and credits earned specific to Grand Ledge Public Schools. In closing she commented this is a great program that is growing and provides high quality programs.

C. Grand Ledge Education Foundation Report

President DuFort had no report this month.

D. Governance Committee Report

Mr. McKennon advise during their last meeting the committee began discussion regarding the evaluation of not only the board itself, but the superintendent moving forward. It was discussed about moving the Superintendent's Annual Performance Review to May or June to better align with the end of the school year versus the end of the calendar year and re-evaluating the tool used to conduct that review.

Some discussion among the members noted the tool used for the evaluation and the time of the evaluated is a negotiated item included in the Superintendent's contract but it might be good to investigate options in preparation for seating a new Superintendent.

President DuFort advised she would add this as a discussion item on an upcoming board agenda.

E. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Ms. Clark Pierson advised the committee is working to schedule a meeting with Dr. Carter where they can draft a more detailed outline and work on getting the community involved. She noted the key to this committee is the community conversation and while she understands it may be frustrating at the moment, but they are working very hard to get things off the ground and create a sustainable option for the district to move forward.

F. Interim-Superintendent's Report

Dr. Chapin took a moment to review some of the comments from the August 3 Board Meeting and provided an update on what the administrative team has been working on, put in place or is still working on to assure the parents and community things are still on the radar and that the administrative team has not lost track of those concerns. He noted he, along with the other administrators understand the tension and anxiety out there and that details are important. In closing he advised the goal, of course, is to bring students back to in person learning, but only when we know we can do it in a manner that ensures the health and safety of our staff, students, parent and community. We are following, observing and asking questions of districts that have opted to provide in person learning and hoping for a positive return for them. This is ongoing work and we believe that people who don't shift their thinking during this time, aren't paying attention.

G. Bond Update Report

Dr. Johnson provided the board with a detailed update and timeline on the construction work at Holbrook, Beagle and with the M-43 access road. He assured the projects were on target to ensure the district's reconfiguration for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

H. Human Resources & Operations Update

Dr. Gabriel provided an update on staff hiring and meeting with employee groups to work out details in reference to providing 100% online learning while ensuring we keep all our employees doing meaningful work. He noted Food Service Director Darrin Gyurich is preparing to provide food for qualified students using a drive-up service. He also thanked the board for their support of revisions to the custodial pay scale which put us in a more competitive market and it has worked; noting the district has receive 10 times the number of applicants it has in the past.

On the Operations side he noted staff are back in their buildings and teachers are coming in to prepare their online learning and reaching out to their students. Custodial and maintenance staff continue to prepare our buildings for when we do return to in person instruction ensuring we are able to meet all the requirements from the state and as many of the highly recommended suggestions as possible. One big thing that will assist the district is on the agenda for the board's consideration is the purchase of an air cleaning system that will be installed in each building to improve air quality.

I. Academic Services Update

Dr. Barnes updated the board on the Return to Learn Plan the board approved three weeks ago noting signing the Letter of Agreement with our teacher's union allowed the district to craft what a day of school will look like for our staff and provide parents with an overview of what they should anticipate for their student or students. He referenced consistency across the district and across grade levels was something the administration heard from our parents and the team worked really hard to ensure that consistency. Next steps is to get the student rosters in place and figuring out how materials will be distributed, conducted parent town hall meetings to provide more information, further communications with our parents and ensuring training for our staff. He understands this is a lot to take in for parents, but it is a lot to take in for staff as well and we are working to ensure success.

Mr. Shiflett commended Dr. Barnes and everyone who has been involved in preparing for the start of the year noting the administration if building an airplane while flying that airplane.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Secretary Shiflett read the rules for addressing the board.

Laura Clark expressed concerns with regard to students who receive special services noting parents need information sooner rather than later to help prepare the students to return to learning. She expressed she believes these students were largely forgotten in the spring and wanting to ensure the district does not forget about them this fall.

Nicole Shannon thanked everyone for their reports noting it was useful information. She expressed the community needs to know how it is going to be involved in the Diversity and equity conversation and asked if there was a timeline for the new superintendent search. She noted she looks forward to the parent town halls and thanked the staff and everybody for their hard work.

Margo Susnjar thanked Dr. Chapin and Dr. Barnes for their quick response to her concerns and Mr. Shiflett for recognizing the difficulties endured with the Spring online learning. She noted one the board gets the Equity and Diversity Committee off the ground it will be important to reach out to the community.

Thea Oatman encouraged the board to approve the student handbooks and the language added this year. She thanked everyone for their hard work noting not all parents are going to be satisfied, but encouraged everyone to keep working hard.

Jacqueline Freeman expressed the importance of banning hate symbols noting there is still work to be done as there is a lot that comes with dismantling what has been customary for so long. Banning hateful symbols is a step in the right direction.

OLD BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL OF THE 2020-2021 STUDENT HANDBOOKS

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

A detailed discussion among the members suggested providing a “What’s New this Year” section at the beginning of the handbook, or if they are being sent out electronically in the email accompanying them that provides an overview. There is an error on page 52 in the High School Handbook and page 23 of the Elementary.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of HVAC Purchase

Motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Mulvenna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the purchase of Dynamic Air Filtrations Systems using dollars received through the Federal School Aid Coronavirus Relief Funds in the amount of \$661,878, as presented.

Dr. Gabriel provided the board with detailed information regarding the filtration system noting these systems will improve our air quality by 90% and increase our efficiencies by eliminating the need to replace filters every month. The price is to purchase a system that connects to our current air handling system for each building across the district.

Chief Financial Officer Nancy Rasinske provided the board with information on the funding source noting these are one-time funds the district has received that must be expended by the end of December.

A detailed discussion among the members noted the district is making a large investment in hopes of getting back to face-to-face instruction during this pandemic, overall improvement to the air quality district-wide, the Dynamic Air Filtration System is a step above the MERV 13 system recommended by the State, the systems will be installed in new (Wacousta) building once it is built, our staff will be installing the units but some electrical work will need to be completed by outside contractors and the goal is to have the units installed in all buildings prior to the current December return to learn date.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON - AGENDA ITEMS

Margo Susnjar expressed concern the language regarding the confederate flag ban was not read into the record.

Secretary Shiflett read the specific language included under the dress code section of the handbook and Sara Clark Pierson read language specific to parking vehicles on school property.

Mr. Smith noted the language was read at a previous meeting and was developed in discussion with district legal counsel. He noted we want our students to be able to express themselves but not in an intimidating fashion. He recognized that no language is going to be perfect, but the board and administration understands what we are asking and we will rely on teachers, staff and administrators to enforce this. This is not meant for loop holes or playing games.

Theresa Abed shared testing causes stress on students and she is concerned with required testing and asking how the district is going to relay to parents the testing results will not be attributable to accountability.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD

Dr. Barnes addressed Ms. Abed noted the required testing list has not been shared with the district yet but we have it built in to our current schedule. So, we will wait for the list and then develop a plan that is equitable and fair for everyone.

Dr. Chapin addressed Ms. Clark noting he understands the frustration and assured the district is working to ensure we bring all of our students back and have been consulting with our legal counsel on how to appropriately and affectively bring our special education students back ensuring we are meeting the requirements of their individual learning plan (IEP) or 504 or just extra services. He stressed this is a priority and he anticipates individual phone calls to families will take place late this week and early into next week. He assured the handbook language was approved and supported by our legal counsel when we changed the word divisive to intimidating following Mr. McKennon's concern and noting this is very much a part of the district's work moving forward.

Mrs. Mulvenna asked if the 3rd grade reading requirement would be waived and thanked the board for their support in bringing Dorinda Carter Andrews on noting she is sorry she had to miss the last meeting.

Dr. Barnes noted the retention requirement was waived last year with instruction to follow-through with those students to ensure they are getting reading support. He assured that is exactly what the district does. He referenced the recent success of our Comet Camp which is to provide reading support to struggling students. Again, he assured the district will continue to support our students to help ensure their success.

Ms. Clark Pierson reflected on the minutes of the last couple meetings noting on the number of people addressing the board and recognized and thanked Kim Manning for her work to ensure the appropriate recording of the meeting and comments and ensuring the minutes get out on time. Just recording of the people in attendance is a big task. With regard to Mrs. Shannon asking about a timeline for the new superintendent she advised we don't have a timeline as the district is still in the middle of the due process requirement with our current superintendent who is on administrative leave and due process requires sensitivity to the person's rights.

Mr. Smith also remarked the due process timeline has been slowed significantly due to the pandemic.

Mr. McKennon noted approving the student handbooks is a good step in making all students feel safer noting he hope no student ever has to share stories like the board has heard recently.

President DuFort noted she recently attended the MASB Summer Institute and shared information from the segment on "Back to School in the Era of COVID" noting this talked about exactly the same things we are addressing, including legal ramifications and what impact it will have on funding of public education. She noted she is proud of Grand Ledge and the proactive approach we have taken to assure the health and safety of our students, staff, parents and community. She further noted Education Trust Midwest has shared "A Marshall Plan: Reimagining Michigan Public Education" that may be of interest to other members of the board. In closing she thanked everyone for the work that has been done. She knows there are still a lot of questions but knows everyone is working together and working hard to make high quality decisions for our students.

Mr. Smith noted everyone has some level of anxiety, it's not just the parents. He noted he has witnessed first-hand that teachers are busy matching their curriculum to instruction. It hasn't been much of a summer break. It is a constant learning.

CLOSED SESSION – Pending Litigation & Attorney Client Privilege

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Mrs. Clark Pierson for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to move into Closed Session to consult with district legal counsel related to specific pending litigation and confidential and privileged attorney client communication, as Per Sections 8(e) and 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, PA 267 of 1976.

Roll Call Vote

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

The motion carried unanimously at 7:58 p.m.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

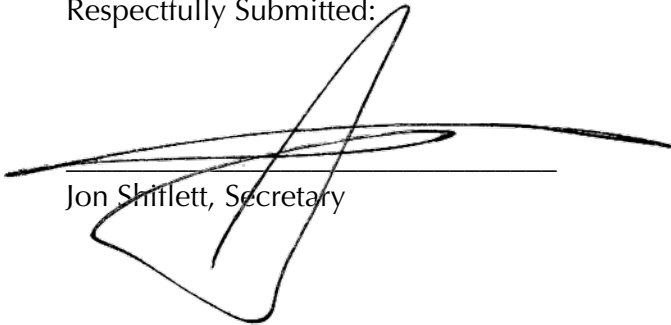
The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 9:22 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:



Jon Shiflett, Secretary



Denise DuFort, President