

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
June 22, 2020
Report 19-266

President Jenc called the meeting of the Board of Education to order at 5:34 pm. Due to Governor Whitmer's current Executive Order 2020-75, the meeting was held virtually using Zoom video conferencing from the Washington Campus, 645 Alger Street, Owosso, MI 48867.

Present: Jenc, Keyes, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnicki, Quick, Webster

Absent: All members were present

Building Reports

Emerson Elementary Principal Jessica Anderson recognized Mr. Mark Clark, Fifth Grade Teacher at Emerson on his retirement. Mr. Clark submitted his intent to retire effective at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year after 20 years of service with the District.

Bryant Elementary Principal Shelly Collison honored Mrs. Carol Henley, Office Secretary at Bryant on her retirement. Mrs. Henley's retirement was effective on June 5, 2020, after 20 years of service with the District.

Superintendent Dr. Andrea Tuttle recognized Ms. Clara Pitt, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent on her retirement which is effective June 30, 2020 after 23 year of employment with the District.

Central Elementary Principal Bridgit Spielman honored Mrs. Janet Stevens, Student Facilitator at Central on her retirement. Mrs. Stevens retirement was effective on June 5, 2020 after 25 years of service at Owosso Public Schools.

President Jenc thanked the retirees for their service to Owosso Public Schools. He stated that they will all be missed.

Secretary Ochodnicki echoed President Jenc's remarks regarding the retirees.

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Dr. Andrea Tuttle reported that in response to recent events, a forum of Michigan State University Professors was established titled "Rising to Our Responsibility". The forum was intended for school leaders to address "racial violence and anti-blackness in Michigan schools". Superintendent Dr. Tuttle, along with other OPS administrators were honored to join this forum. After listening to the panel, she reflected and thought that as an educational leader, she must do more and must rise to the responsibility bestowed upon her to listen more, to understand more, and take appropriate action to make things better. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle shared the following: Owosso Public Schools is a proud International Baccalaureate district. The mission of IB schools is to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. Now more than ever, we must focus on this mission. The IB teaching philosophies strive to develop human beings who are problem solvers, risk takers, knowledgeable, caring, balanced, and reflective. Nelson Mandela said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." As educational leaders, Owosso Public Schools will insure that our students will continue to have meaningful discussions about current events in a safe and respectful environment. Owosso Public Schools are committed to learning, empowering change, and taking action against discrimination and systemic racism.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle announced the Crest Marine pontoon boat raffle ticket drawing was held live on the Owosso High School and District Facebook pages at 5 pm that day. Approximately 500 tickets were sold at \$50 each. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle thanked Mr. Nick Krueger, CTE Director for facilitating the drawing. The winner of the 2020 Crest pontoon boat is Nicki Nixon and the winning ticket was sold by

OHS student Andrew Coe. Andrew sold the most tickets and as a result won \$750 as well. A huge thank you was extended to Crest Marine for their generous donation and continued support of public education. All proceeds from the pontoon boat raffle go directly to the Owosso High School Career and Technical Education program.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that the Owosso High School graduation ceremony was videotaped just prior to the start of the Board meeting. The ceremony included speeches from the Class of 2020 Valedictorian Avery Peplinski and Salutatorian Mason Collard. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle remarked that their speeches were absolutely outstanding. Owosso High School Principal Jeff Phillips and Executive Secretary Linda Dignan were recognized for organizing the ceremony. A compilation of the video that will include the OHS marching band, choir, and graduates will be released on Thursday, June 25th as a YouTube video. OHS seniors also participated in a parade that was organized by their parents. The parade was outstanding and culminated with the students watching the sunset at a local campground. The students gathered at the beginning of the school year watching the sun rise.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported that the Lincoln High School graduation will occur on June 23rd at 7:30 pm in the Washington Campus parking lot. A graduation parade will take place following the ceremony.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that the District's Day Care Center, Bentley Bright Beginnings reopened about two weeks ago and approximately 25 students are currently attending.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle announced that athletics have started back up following the current MHSAA guidelines and rules associated with practices. Athletic Director Dr. Dallas Lintner and his team were applauded for the video that was created honoring the Class of 2020 athletic award recipients.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle was pleased to inform the Board that great progress is being made with the bond. However, the construction time that was lost during the Covid 19 shut down will not permit sixth – eighth grade students to begin the 2020-21 school year at the secondary campus. The students will most likely complete the school year at the current middle school.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported that Sinking Fund projects have started and great progress is being made. Projects are taking place at all buildings. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle thanked the community for their continued support of the Sinking Fund.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle remarked that she was fortunate to serve on the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) work group to provide guidance to the Governor's Task Force on the Return to Learn obstacles and ideas on how to prepare for students return to school. MDE recently turned these ideas over to the Governor's Task Force. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle remarked that she is anxious to listen to the press conference regarding the Return to Learn that will be held on June 23rd at 11 am. The OPS administrative team was thanked for their efforts to prepare multiple scenarios for students return to school that include 1) traditional 2) virtual and 3) hybrid (combination of traditional and virtual). A Covid 19 plan on how to return to work has also been developed that follows guidelines and requirements.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that the annual budget presentation is on the meeting's agenda. She explained that this budget is much more challenging than normal due to a lack of information from the state. Over a decade ago Owosso Public Schools and many other districts in the state were facing a grim financial report as a result of cuts that were made at the state level. The District's financial status at that time included a potential six million dollars' deficit and facing a possible state takeover if drastic changes did not occur. Significant changes needed to occur to keep the District operational. During this time all cost saving measures were considered and many were acted upon, including but not limited to the selling of the North Street administration building, Roosevelt, repurposing the Washington Campus into Lincoln Alternative High School and Administration. The District also increased the number of students in classrooms, increased the cost of infant and childcare, and switched to every other day cleaning as a means of savings. The educational team also endured a pay cut. However, even with these cuts the OPS

School Board was able to manage some outstanding accomplishments that benefit our students and our community. While many schools collapsed programming for students during this same time, the Owosso Public Schools educational team under the leadership of the Board of Education tightened their belts and were able to not only refrain from eliminating programs for students, but conversely expanded programs for students. It was through the positive collaboration and concessions with a team of dedicated and passionate employees that Owosso fought through these times. In the past decade under the Board's leadership Owosso High School has earned the distinction of being ranked number one in the county for academics according to the U.S. News and World Report. Under this Board's leadership and with the help and support of the community, a bond for modern facilities was passed which is something that had not been done in the past 40 years. Under this Board's leadership many community relationships have been built, including the Cook Family Foundation, resulting in a substantial International Baccalaureate program and a 1.1-million-dollar donation to the bond project. Under this Board's leadership local businesses have engaged with Owosso High School, including Crest Marines donation of a new pontoon with proceeds going directly to CTE programs for the past four consecutive years. Under this Board's leadership and with the support of our community, three successful sinking funds have passed for facility improvements. Under this Board's leadership Owosso High Schools academic program has expanded based on local and global employability information offering the greatest number of career and technical education classes, formerly known as vocational education in the county with the addition of culinary arts, engineering, bio-medical science, agricultural-science, welding, and many others. Under this Board's leadership District owned properties have been consolidated and sold to ensure fiscal responsibility. Under this Board's leadership the Blue and Gold After School program was created. Under this Board's leadership the bus fleet was improved by adding new and more efficient buses. Under this Board's leadership Owosso was the first in the county to add school safety protocols, including secured entry systems, cameras, and liaison officers. Under this Board's leadership OPS has received several federal grants to allow for K-12 free breakfasts and lunches and Owosso continues to be the only district in the county that offers this opportunity for K-12 students. Under this Board's leadership the Owosso Cares Food Backpack program was established. Under this Board's leadership early college options were established to provide OHS students the opportunity to earn an associate's degree with five years of high school. Under this Board leadership dual enrollment opportunities at Owosso High School have increased. Under this Board's leadership S.T.E.A.M. opportunities have increased. Additional opportunities include one to one devices, science fitness classes, Veteran's Day assemblies, fine arts programs, enriched field trip experiences, and the LINC Food Pantry. Under this Board's leadership OPS has been able to maintain relationships with students and staff throughout the pandemic, built amazing connections, continued connections, and built new ones. Owosso Public Schools continued preschool through twelfth grade education throughout a worldwide pandemic and school closures. Under this Board's leadership over 100,000 breakfasts and lunches were distributed to families over the past few months. Under this Board's leadership the OPS team is preparing for the future of education no matter what it looks like. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle commented that there are some tremendous concerns about the future of public education due to the anticipation of large cuts in state funding. It remains her goal and the goal of the Board of Education to continue to progress, not regress and provide an even better education for future generations. However, with the possibility of looming cuts it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so. Because there are so many unknowns about the budget, Superintendent Dr. Tuttle's objectives are to not recommend the Board of Education do anything drastic that cannot be restored if the money were to become available. It is her recommendation that the Board maintains at least a 6% fund balance while trying to maintain programming that has been built over the years, try to limit the amount of cuts, and respect employees so they are aware of all possibilities. The OPS Board of Education has worked through difficult times in the past and will work together during these challenging times to continue to ensure that Owosso Public Schools and the Owosso community are well served. There are some exciting times in the future for our students with the completion of the bond and the state of the art facilities which now match our educational opportunities. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle thanked the community for their continued support of Owosso Public Schools. We are fortunate to live in a community that understands the importance of public education. Like Nelson Mandela said "Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world." During these difficult times we must work to ensure that one of the greatest gifts our nation provides our youth, public education remains a priority.

Curriculum Director Steve Brooks reported that typically in the summer the District gears up many reports and preparations for the upcoming school year. The District continues to plan its professional development for the 2020-21 school year which will include virtual training plans. The School Improvement Plan is due on July 1st and final preparations for submitting this to the state are taking place. Additionally, a program evaluation tool annual report on student achievement data that includes K-12 mathematics over the past 12 years will be submitted this week.

Curriculum Director Steve Brooks stated that the District's At-Risk program was audited last year and a one-year review of this data outlining student achievement processes, data meetings, early warning results, and the progress that has been made on attendance issues up until March 13, 2020 was submitted to the state. A final review of this data is scheduled for June 25th and Mr. Brooks is very confident of the processes and procedures that are in place.

Public Participation

President Jenc stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded that they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

Sara and Abbey Edwards commented that a couple weeks ago, they composed and sent an email to the Owosso Public Schools Administration and School Board on behalf of their family. They have been involved with the OPS District for over 20 years and are hoping to see changes made in light of the ongoing racism they continue to see across our country, state, and community.

An inclusive education that meets the needs of *all* students is a top priority for them, even if our children are not children of color. This issue may seem bigger than Owosso and daunting at times, but they believe the only way to move forward is to take the first few steps.

They recently had the opportunity to hear Darryl Brown from Deep Forgiveness give a powerful speech on racism in our country, with an overarching message for anyone who is feeling hopeless in times of crisis. They think a speaker like Darryl would be a perfect fit for our community, with the opportunity to speak at events like staff trainings, assemblies, or other educational settings. His information can be found on the website DeepForgiveness.com.

For Action

- Moved by Mowen, supported by Krauss to approve the May 11, 2020 regular meeting minutes, June 8, 2020 committee of the whole meeting minutes, June 8, 2020 closed session minutes, current bills, and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick to authorize the borrowing of \$4,900,000 inclusive of \$2,940,000 of "set-aside" notes and \$1,960,000 in "no set-asides" for operating purposes to eliminate cash flow challenges that result from timing issues related to State Aid payments for the 2020-21 school year. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that during the 2019-20 school year, the District borrowed \$4.2 million dollars inclusive of \$2.5 million of "set-aside" notes and \$1.7 million in "no-set asides". Secretary Ochodnický conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Jenc, Mowen, Ochodnický, Webster, Keyes, Krauss, Quick. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnický to adopt the resolutions that revise the appropriations for the General, School Service and Building and Site Funds for the 2019-20 fiscal year provided. The projected fund balance at June 30, 2020 is \$2,046,082. The School Service Fund that finances food service and is separate from the General Fund has \$1,898,532 available to appropriate, with expenditures estimated at \$1,897,989. The estimated ending fund balance is \$543. The Building and Site Fund, also separate from the General Fund, consists of funds from the District's Sinking Fund has \$5,840,621 available to appropriate, with expenditures estimated at \$1,514,583 and an estimated ending fund balance of \$4,326,038 as of June 30, 2020. Secretary Ochodnický conducted a roll call

vote. Ayes: Jenc, Mowen, Ochodnick, Webster, Keyes, Krauss, Quick. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick to adopt the resolution presented for the 2020-21 fiscal year budget package for the General Fund, School Service and Sinking Fund. Chief Financial Officer Julie Omer provided information on the 2020-21 budget and explained that at this point there are several unknowns. Mrs. Omer announced that the General Fund Budget for the 2020-21 school year shows an estimated \$33,013,125 million available to appropriate and \$31,144,458 million in expenditures. The estimated fund balance at June 30, 2021 is \$1,868,667, roughly 6% of overall expenditures. Mrs. Omer informed the Board that the presented budget includes an anticipated \$500 decrease in per pupil funding from the state at \$7,611 per student. The District is also budgeting for a decrease of 100 fewer students from the previous school year. Budgeted revenue for 2020-21 includes approximately \$663,500 in CARES ACT funding, which will be used to help offset expenditures. Mrs. Omer stated that the District is hoping for additional federal revenue of roughly \$660,000 to fill the revenue hole and additional adjustments in expenditures of about \$1.1 million. The financial goal for the General Fund would be to have a 6% fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. The School Service Fund that finances food service and is separate from the General Fund will provide revenues of about \$1.8 million for the 2020-21 school year, with expenditures estimated at \$1.8 million. The estimated ending fund balance is \$337. The Building and Site Fund, also separate from the General Fund, consists of funds from the District's Sinking Fund shows \$5,558,511 available to appropriate and expenditures of \$1.8 million with an estimated ending fund balance at June 30, 2021 of \$3.7 million. Secretary Ochodnick commented that never in her years on the Board of Education did she expect that they would be looking at this type of budget again and probably with even more uncertainty. She stated that we are here together, we have worked together through this before, through difficult times and we can do this again. Treasurer Webster applauded Mrs. Omer on her presentation and making it clear and digestible for the Board. Secretary Ochodnick conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Jenc, Mowen, Ochodnick, Webster, Keyes, Krauss, Quick. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Krauss to approve the 2020-21 regular Board meeting and committee of the whole dates and times as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 2210 – Curriculum Development – Approved Courses as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 2412 –Homebound Instruction Program as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 2414 – Reproductive Health and Family Planning as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 3362.01 – Threatening Behavior Toward Staff Members as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 4162 – Controlled Substance and Alcohol Policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Drivers and Other Employees Who Perform Safety Sensitive Functions as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 5200 – Attendance as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt New Policy 5335 – Care of Students with Chronic Health Conditions as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 6107 – Authorization to Accept and Distribute Electronic Records and to Use Electronic Signatures as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 8210 – School Calendar as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 8400 – School Safety Information as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 8462 – Student Abuse and Neglect as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnick to adopt Revised Policy 8600 – Transportation as a first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Quick, supported by Mowen to approve the hiring of certified staff member Abigail M. Kovel as an Owosso High School Guidance Counselor. Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board of Education will be asked to adopt the membership resolution of the Michigan High School Athletic Association for the year beginning August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. A requirement for membership is a yearly membership renewal by member schools' Boards of Education.

For Information

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported that Clara Pitt, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent has submitted her letter of retirement effective June 30, 2020 after 23 years of service with the District. Carol Henley, Office Secretary at Bryant Elementary has submitted her letter of retirement effective June 5, 2020, after 20 years of service with the District. Janet Stevens, Student Facilitator at Central Elementary has submitted her letter of retirement effective June 5, 2020, after 25 years of service with the District. Mark Clark, 5th Grade Teacher at Emerson Elementary has submitted his letter of retirement effective at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year after 20 years of service with the District.

Public Participation

There were no comments from the meeting's audience.

Board Member Comments/Updates

Trustee Ty Krauss thanked the retirees for their service and all that they have contributed to the District is very appreciated. Crest Marine was thanked for their donation of the pontoon and Mr. Krauss congratulated the winner of the boat. He also applauded the ticket sellers for their hard work. Mr. Krauss commented that the organizers of the OHS graduation ceremony did a nice job and he appreciates their efforts to recognize the seniors. Mr. Krauss praised Chief Financial Officer Julie Omer on her hard work at keeping the financials straight and helping the Board understand the budget process.

Trustee Sara Keyes echoed Mr. Krauss's comments. She remarked that she is really going to miss Mr. Mark Clark who was her daughter's teacher and helped her to develop a love of reading. She stated that it will be difficult to replace the retirees and their combined 85 years of service to the District. Mrs. Keyes referenced Mrs. Ochodnicky's remarks about the budget and reiterated that if we all stick together we can overcome these uncertain times. She stated that she appreciates everyone's efforts with graduations which will be remembered for many years to come.

Vice President Rick Mowen remarked that this year's commencement was quite unique. The manner that the school year ended was not anticipated by anyone, but after listening to the Valedictorian and Salutatorian speeches at the ceremony, he is convinced that OPS has prepared them for whatever they will face in their futures. Mr. Mowen commended Abbey and Sara Edwards on their remarks during public participation. He also thanked Superintendent Dr. Tuttle for publicly stating what many of us hold silent in our hearts. Mr. Mowen stated that the retirees are irreplaceable and he wished them the very best in their retirement.

Secretary Shelly Ochodnicky echoed the previous comments and stated that she wears her feelings on her shirt sleeve especially when it comes to the budget, students, and staff. She remarked that it is very unfortunate for the District to be in this financial situation again; however, she would not pick a different team to resolve this together. She believes that the District will overcome this with the current Board and Superintendent that has been through this before. She stated that she is grateful for the leadership and staff of OPS for being creative and reaching out and caring for our students. She looks forward to the fall and hopes students will be able return to a normal classroom setting.

Trustee Olga Quick congratulated the retirees and stated that they will be missed. She thanked Administrative Assistant Clara Pitt for the guidance and support she provided as the newest member of the Board. Mrs. Quick commented that in spite of what we they have faced these past few months, the messages shared by the students at graduation were incredible. OPS is an amazing school district and we

are all blessed. She remarked that she is certain that if everyone continues to work together as we have in the past, we will get through these difficult times.

Treasurer Marlene Webster expressed how sad she was for missing OHS graduation due to an ongoing family emergency. However, she is looking forward to seeing the YouTube video of the ceremony that will be released on June 25th. Mrs. Webster stated that she was able to witness the OHS graduation parade and it was fun to see the fabulous job students did decorating their cars. She remarked that she looks forward to the Lincoln High School graduation ceremony. Mrs. Webster stated that the staff of OPS have been absolutely phenomenal in how they have adapted to learning a whole new way of teaching. She commented that she has always loved our staff and has even more admiration for them now for going above and beyond just teaching. Their hearts are truly invested in the students of Owosso Public Schools.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates.

July 27, 2020: Regular Board Meeting, 5:30 pm

Adjournment

Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnicky to move into closed session at 6:52 pm to discuss the contract negotiations. Secretary Ochodnicky conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Quick, Ochodnicky, Keyes, Jenc, Mowen, Krauss, Webster. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Ochodnicky, supported by Quick to return to open session at 7:47 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnicky to adjourn at 7:48 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Clara Pitt

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Ochodnicky, Secretary