

**Owosso Public Schools
Board of Education Minutes
July 26, 2021
Report 21-09**

Present: Sara Keyes, Ty Krauss, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicki (virtual via cell phone), Olga Quick, Marlene Webster

Absent: Adam Easlick

President Rick Mowen called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Gymnasium, 645 Alger Street, Owosso MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

To begin the recognition of Owosso Public Schools (OPS) Retirees, Dr. Andrea Tuttle introduced Emerson Elementary Principal Jessica Aue who recognized retiree Beth Lyon. Principal Aue began “Good evening, I am very honored to present to you Beth Lyon, who tried to sneak out and retire without anybody noticing. She came to me right after school was out and said ‘I’m retiring’ because she didn’t want to be embarrassed and have all the hoopla – so I said you’re coming to a board meeting, so here she is! Beth started working for the district in 2000. She started originally at the middle school working in the cafeteria, taught preschool for a little while before subbing at Emerson and then she became one of our very valued and loyal paraprofessionals working with our special needs and at-risk students as a Title One Specialist. Beth has been so supportive and loyal, she said that she is really going to miss the kids and especially her coworkers, her people, and I must tell you your coworkers, including myself, we’re going to miss you just as much. She constantly slips little supportive messages, chocolate for me, usually, because I eat through lunch sometimes. She has been a good friend and we are very excited for you. Beth has two grandbabies on the way this year one in October and one in September, so she is very excited to spend more time with her grandchildren. We’re excited for you, congratulations Beth.” Dr. Tuttle presented Beth’s plaque and said Beth is welcome to say a few remarks and introduce her guest. For her closing remarks, Beth said “My husband is here with me this evening and I remember Sarah (Treasurer Keyes) attending at Emerson so there is a lot of memories. Olga (Trustee Quick) roped me into being a band coordinator volunteer for how many years? So, it was a hard decision, but it is time to go so I can spend more time with my grandbabies. Thank you for all these experiences.” Dr. Tuttle finished by saying “Absolutely. As I told you when I walked in this morning, any time I would go to Emerson I would see your lovely smile. Your smile and generosity will be missed. Good luck being grandparents!”

Dr. Tuttle then began the recognition of retiree Dennis Tomlinson. “We also have Mr. Dennis Tomlinson, his supervisor Renee Secor-Jenks could not be here tonight so I would like to read her remarks. ‘Mr. Dennis Tomlinson became a sub for us 5 years ago. He was a former

Transportation Director, driver, and mechanic in the Beecher school district. He is very knowledgeable about a lot of subjects. He and Mike Graham had worked previously together at Indian Trails and was able to assist him when needed. Dennis hadn't planned on coming back for the 2020-2021 school year but when 5 drivers decided they either weren't coming back or retired due to COVID, and I asked him to come back for one more year he did so without a second thought. I will miss his stories, his endless charts on COVID, his humor and the videos of himself playing the piano. He's on YouTube if you want to check him out. Dennis has a travel trailer and is considering purchasing a home in a trailer park in Florida and sharing it with his kids. He's retired a few times now from various jobs. I think after such a crazy school year that was, this time he'll stay retired and enjoy his travels. Thank you, Dennis, for showing up every day and helping whenever you were asked without hesitation.' Dr. Tuttle finished by saying "Unfortunately Dennis is not with us tonight, but I did want to share those remarks as he was gracious enough to come back and help us."

Board Correspondence

Dr. Tuttle began by commending OPS grounds maintenance and custodial teams. "Every year is a challenging year during the summer. It seems the last ten, eleven years that I've been Superintendent we've always had a big event going on in the summer, whether that's been moving out of Bentley or moving out of the middle school this year, the Bond... always something huge and with this summer being particularly short I just want to give huge kudos to them for what they've accomplished. We are now officially moved out of the middle school, there is a lot of stuff still in the building but not items that we want or need so there will be items for Obsolete Materials in the near future. And in speaking with Mr. Collins and Dr. Dwyer today they said as far as the facility is concerned, we could start tomorrow at the high school. So again, compliments to them. Secondly, I want to talk about our facilities in general. You know that our mantra is clean and pristine, we try not to be too fancy as we don't have the human resources to maintain fancy. In driving around the district, Mr. Klapko again and his team, the outside of the buildings looks fantastic. If you've not noticed the work, and I will talk about this a little bit further, they've dug up our elementary school playgrounds waiting for the mulch and the bumpers to come. They've cleaned up around the high school and if you've noticed the landscaping, we've obviously received assistance with that from professional landscapers. But again, it looks nice and adds the finishing touches that we need around our buildings."

Dr. Tuttle continued with a reminder on upcoming events. "Just so you're aware, as a reminder we have our New Teacher Orientation that you are always welcome to attend. Typically, if you're available, you come to introduce yourself and meet the new teachers. This year, we will also be formally introducing the teachers hired last year that did not get a formal welcome. So, you're absolutely invited to attend that breakfast. And of course, we have the Grand Opening for our entire staff that you're invited to which is inclusive of our professional development."

Dr. Tuttle continued with updates on the Bond project. "The Bond, I would like to say, is complete. There are still a few small issues, but Clark Construction has officially moved off our campus. They are still available for help. I think we are very fortunate to have the Bond when we

did even though we thought the prices were coming in high. If we were trying to do the same project today, we wouldn't receive nearly what we have received with the prices skyrocketing. With that comes issues for our air conditioning which will be coming out of the ESSER fund. I spoke with the Spicer group today; they plan to have the design phase of that completed in time for the proposal requests to get the bids back in. We hope, depending on the bids and what the Board approves, to have air conditioning in if not all our elementary buildings, then a portion of them."

Dr. Tuttle shared an update on the middle school purchase agreement. "Just an update from the Community Housing Network, the group purchasing our middle school, they have made some headway with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Interestingly, we had received a letter that we thought was pretty good news only to find out it was for a school district in Texas. Just to show the confusion that FEMA is dealing with and the lack of human resources that everybody has. But we now have a direct contact, and we are on the right track for working with FEMA."

Regarding the sinking fund, Dr. Tuttle began by saying human resources are low. "I did allude to this earlier but human resources are tough wherever you go now. It seems nobody has enough workers, we are waiting for materials, and that is a constant theme you hear with everything. We are not void of that. At Emerson, we have restrooms that need a lot of work before school starts. We also have stairways we are waiting for a permit on. Everything is coming in slower than anticipated. Because of the lack of human resources, we can't get approvals that we need. However, we think we're on good pace to have at least six of the ten bathrooms ready for the school year or before then. The newer wing of Emerson will be ready in September. Principal Aue is aware of that timeline and will work around it. The trees at the high school tennis courts have been removed. The wind screens that will be going in the fence have been delayed until September 30 as the contractors just can't get them. The cement has been poured, the new baseball outfield fence has been started, scoreboards we are still waiting for, the window tinting at the union is underway. As I said if you look at the playgrounds, they've all been dug out. All the mulch is removed, and we are waiting on the colored, rubberized material to go in. The bumpers will take longer so they are going to go ahead and fill in that material without the bumpers because we must get something started. The new flooring at the coliseum is being installed in August."

Dr. Tuttle continued her report by sharing information regarding tours of the new campus. "As you know we've put out some tours of the facilities. We sent individualized letters to those who worked on the Bond project and then we put it out on social media. We've received a great response to those tours. There is a variety of different administrators who are leading those tours: Mr. Brooks, Mrs. Collison, Mr. Collins...we've heard great responses. It takes about an hour to an hour and a half to get through that facility. We have added additional dates, thank you to Mrs. Thompson for organizing that as we are having people RVSP to keep the tours running effectively."

Interviews for the school nurse were conducted. Dr. Tuttle shared that the school is contracting through Memorial Hospital for this position. “Mr. Collins, Mrs. Aue, Mr. Brooks came up with a great candidate who has worked in ICU, in schools, and has been a teacher at Baker College. She has many years of experience and is ready for something different. Her name is Teresa O’Neil, she is from Owosso so we are excited that she will be our nurse. She will start in August, and we will be working on her schedule similarly to how we do the liaison officers. She is on an on-call basis, we never know where we will need a nurse, but she will have a schedule on campus to help with mental health issues and so forth.”

Dr. Tuttle finished her superintendent report by congratulating Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Julie Omer, for her recent election to serve as the President Elect for the Michigan School of Business Officials (MSBO). “That’s huge. Out of all the school districts in Michigan and she was elected to that position. She is very involved in MSBO, incredibly knowledgeable, you all know how fortunate we are to have Julie as part of our team. I know you’ve been a leader in our organization for many years Julie, but I just want to say congratulations to you. I think Owosso is very fortunate to have someone of your caliber not only in our district but also leading MSBO as well.”

Curriculum Director Steve Brooks began with an update on summer school. “Our summer school numbers remain strong, we have about 325 K-12 students attending on a weekly basis. We have about forty preschoolers that continue to come to our kindergarten camp, preparing themselves for their upcoming kindergarten experience that will be starting in a few weeks.” Mr. Brooks continued “Books at Bryant, we’re averaging about 160 kids in attendance, but have had as high as 210. That’s every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. It takes about an hour if you want to pop by Bryant School, it’s a great experience. Culvers has been outstanding to work with, they have been very generous with great ice cream and their giveaways.”

Mr. Brooks shared details about important upcoming events. “New Teacher Orientation is August 10 and 11. The Board is invited for breakfast on August 10 if you want to come and see our new hires and have a nice breakfast. We also have the Instructional Leadership Council meeting on August 12. Our back-to-school professional development is on August 16 and 17. A lot of time goes into those events to have them run smoothly so a lot of details are focused on that.” Mr. Brooks stated most school supplies, books, and materials, have been ordered so that the teachers can start the year prepared. He ended his report by sharing special congratulations to Marsha Ladd for being accepted into the Red Cedar Project. “There is quite an application process for the Red Cedar Project. It is a four-week summer class that teachers can apply for and our very own Marsha Ladd, a Bryant teacher, was accepted into that summer institute after applying for a couple of years. She will be taking classes in July and August and finishing up this summer. It’s quite an honor to be accepted into that so we’re very proud of Marsha and she is very excited.”

Dr. Tuttle ended the Board Correspondence by introducing Brooke Barber and congratulating her on accepting the position of Administrative Assistant.

Public Participation

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on education issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded 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.

No public participants addressed the Board.

For Action

- Moved by Webster, supported by Keyes to approve the June 28, 2021 regular meetings minutes, June 28, 2021 budget meeting minutes, current bills, and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss to declare the Powermatic Planer and woodshop workbenches obsolete materials. Dr. Tuttle elaborated "We have two items for obsolete materials, but they are inclusive of more: the un-operational Powermatic Planer, six woodshop workbenches and inclusive of twelve lockers. We will have to clear those out if the Board approves." Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Krauss, supported by Keyes to approve the five new hire positions. Dr. Tuttle elaborated on the new hire recommendations: "This is one of the most exciting things that we do is look for great people. I am going to reiterate, you will hear me say this over and over, that it is very difficult to find teachers particularly in the areas of special education, science, mathematics, and CTE. Today you have before you five teachers that we are recommending for hire. One is Jennifer Maier; Jennifer has been subbing in the district as a parapro and has been doing a very nice job. She will be split between Lincoln and the High School. She does need to go back and get some special education classes that we are working with her on, so she is not technically special education certified but is on her way to do that. We have two special education openings in the district and have not received any applicants for those. It is very hard, there is not enough special education teachers to fill out the positions in the state so districts are clamoring for them and paying whatever they can to get those special education teachers. You will see Jennifer coming in at step one, she does not have any teaching experience. Carrie Warning as you know will be replacing Mr. Nick Krueger, our CTE and engineering teacher. We had zero applicants for that and thanks to Mr. Holladay who called Mrs. Warning and asked if she would be interested. She is certified in engineering and was working in Genesee. She is very well versed in CTE and as you can see, we have offered her step nine to come work with us and you can see the salary associated with that. The union is aware of that. Katelyn Horgan is a brand-new English teacher, we have offered her step one, she did very well in her interview process with the high school team. Heidi Nohel and Irene

Bump are two elementary school teachers I had the pleasure of meeting. There were a couple more applicants for those positions, but Heidi comes in having twenty years of experience at step five and Irene having thirteen years of experience at step five. Those are my recommendations. If nobody else leaves the district that will fill all our staffing issues besides two special education positions; one at the high school and one at Emerson which will be in our Early Childhood Transition Resource room. This is a high-needs classroom with eight students this year, not only did the teacher leave but also the parapro so we do have some concerns for that classroom and trying to figure out if there is anyone certified to lead it. Those are my recommendations at this time.” Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board will be asked to authorize the Superintendent to join the litigation against Juul Labs. Dr. Tuttle elaborated “You would be authorizing me to join the litigation on behalf of OPS against the Juul Labs out of California. There are several districts in the nation and in this state that are joining this. In 2019 several California school districts sued the Juul Labs and other vaping manufacturers alleging that the defendants fraudulently and intentionally marketed their products to children. I can read all those facts to you, but the morale of the story is there is no cost to joining this litigation. If we receive funds from the litigation the attorneys would retain 25% of that compensation. There is a questionnaire that we have to fill out that would take approximately two hours. We have several districts in our county, I don’t know if all our districts are doing this. If nothing else, I think it sends a message that we are not in favor of our young people vaping and that we are joining this litigation. That is my recommendation.” President Mowen opened discussion up to the Board. Trustee Quick added “I would say that I certainly think it would be a positive move. I’m sure if we were to poll our administrators that are present today, the amount of time and energy spent on vaping issues at school would be significant. So, I would certainly support joining.”
- The Board will be asked to authorize the OPS Operation department to dispose of items located in the Middle School that are no longer considered of use to the staff or students of the district. Dr. Tuttle read the facts and statistics for this report stating “As a result of the 6-8th grade students moving to the secondary campus located at 765 E. North St. and vacating the property located at 219 N. Water Street, it is anticipated that there will be items that are no longer of functional value to the district. The process for identifying these items will be as follows: District personnel, under the supervision of the Operation and Administrative staff, will review the items that have not been moved to the 765 North Street campus for use within the district. I do want to put a little caveat on that, CHN wanted the old lockers and the old chalkboards that are still in that building. We are happy to allow them to retain those. Items that are deemed to be still of value to carry out the functions of the district will be moved to the location that is identified by district personnel. All other items, other than those that have been identified in the purchase agreement between the district and the Community Housing Network (CHN), will be

identified for disposal, resale, or donation. Until such time that #3 has been fully accomplished, CHN has agreed that the district may continue to store such items that have been identified for resale or donation. Thank you CHN, because it is a lot to move and to move again. So that is how we're going to move forward. I know even today Mr. Collins said that they were going to go back today and get some more chairs out of the building...at some point we will need the building cleared out for CHN."

- The Board will be asked to approve the tax levy (L-4029) for 2021 to be presented at the August board meeting. Dr. Tuttle explained "This is something we do on a yearly basis as a For Action item, so this is to let you and the public know this will be on the next agenda. This must be approved by the Board and includes the operating millage and the sinking fund millage. We do not have the numbers in here where you can see the mils and so forth, but you will see that at the next Board meeting." CFO Omer elaborated "We have heard from PFM (Advisors that review the debt calculation for accuracy based on the current property tax values) and the debt mils will be as recorded in the report. You will have the actual L-4029 available at the next Board meeting."

For Information

Superintendent Tuttle reported the following personnel changes:

- **Resignations**
 - Jerrica Vanderkarr, Special Education Teacher at Owosso High School has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Nick Krueger, CTE Engineering Teacher at Owosso High School has submitted his letter of resignation.
 - Makala Brown, English Teacher at Owosso High School has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Rebecca Spencer, Special Education Teacher at Emerson Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation.

Public Participation

No public participants addressed the Board.

Board Reports

Vice President Ochodnicky stated how impressed she was on her tour of the new campus. She said it was exciting to see the updates since her last visit and everything looks great. She commended the maintenance crews for the hard work.

Trustee Krauss said he took a drive around the new campus, and it looks fantastic. He commented on how nice it is to see the campus looking busy as that means projects are getting done. Trustee Krauss expressed congratulations to all who worked on the new building. He also expressed congratulations to the retirees and thanked them for their years of service.

Treasurer Keyes commented that she is always around campus either to pick her child up or drop them off for practice, so she has had ample opportunity to see the new campus. She said it looks

gorgeous and she is looking forward to seeing not only students but staff enjoying the new building. Treasurer Keyes also extended a warm welcome to Brooke Barber and congratulated her on accepting the position of Administrative Assistant.

Secretary Webster added she is very proud of how our buildings look. She took a tour with two of her adult children who attended Owosso schools and they specifically commented how much of an improvement the bathrooms have had since they attended school here. Secretary Webster is excited to get back to a normal school year.

Trustee Quick expressed a warm welcome to Brooke Barber and is looking forward to working with her. She gave congratulations to Beth Lyon as they have a long history together. Trustee Quick expressed congratulations to Julie for her new position with MSBO. She commended Marsha Ladd for being accepted into the Red Cedar Project. Trustee Quick ended her comments by thanking all those who are working on the campus tours, she said she has not had a tour yet but commented that even the outside grounds look fantastic.

President Mowen congratulated the retirees stating they are truly irreplaceable and wishing them the best in their future endeavors. He also welcomed Brooke Barber and congratulated her on her new position. President Mowen ended his comments by saying how wonderful it is to see the campus and athletic fields filled with people and activity. He said you hear throughout the community people rant and rave about how beautiful the new campus is.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

August 9: Board of Education Meeting

September 13: Board of Education Committee of the Whole

Important Upcoming Dates

July 29: Elementary and Lincoln administrators Return

August 9: First Day of Fall Sports

August 10-11: New Teacher Orientation

August 11: Owosso High School Trojan Day

August 12: Lincoln High School Knight Day

August 16: Grand Opening for Staff / Professional Development

August 17: Professional Development

August 19: First Day of School

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss to adjourn at 6:32 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Brooke Barber.

Respectfully submitted,



Melinda Webster

Marlene Webster, Secretary

