

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
October 19, 2020
Report 20-48

President Rick Mowen called the Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 5:30 pm. The meeting was held at the Owosso Middle School, 219 N. Water St., Owosso, MI 48867.

Present: Krauss, Mowen, Paez, Ochodnicki, Quick, Webster
Absent: Keyes

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

Board of Education Student Representative, Tyler Hoag, congratulated the 2020 Homecoming King and Queen, Andrew Chapko and Lauryn Ayers. He announced that there will be an Owosso High School (OHS) virtual choir concert on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. Tyler reported that the Trojan Marching Band had a spectacular show at Willman Field and that it has been exciting to see how quickly the band was able to prepare for the performance in such an unusual year. Tyler noted that seniors have been busy, with high school sports in full swing and the recent SAT test. Seniors are also working on their FASFA and college applications. Student government is hoping to have a homecoming dance in the winter and has begun making plans for what they hope can be a more traditional homecoming.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle thanked Mrs. Pam Coe, stating the following, “It is my honor and pleasure to recognize Pam Coe this evening as she has decided to step away from leading the Owosso Sea Turtles Swim Club. Pam is an Owosso High School alumni and community member. She has given back to the Owosso community in various ways over the years. She served on the Owosso Board of Education from 2005 to 2009. Pam was a founding member of the Owosso Sea Turtles swim team and has led the team for 15 years. She continued dedicating countless hours to this program even after her children had exited the program and moved on. Her commitment was noticed, valued, and appreciated. Pam has received the Argus-Press Best of the Best Coach award numerous times in the past 15 years, and she has been very deserving. Pam built an exceptional Sea Turtles program and donated thousands of hours to this program, the Owosso Middle School, and the Owosso High School swim teams. She worked with students of all ages from beginners, to coaching the varsity swim team. It is with great pleasure and pride that we honor Pam Coe this evening. Her dedication has provided us with a foundation for having great swim teams at our high school. It is because of what she built that we have been so successful at those levels, and she sometimes didn’t get the recognition that she deserved. Please help me in congratulating Mrs. Pam Coe, thanking her for her service, and wishing her well in her next endeavors!”

Dr. Tuttle recognized the following OPS principals and supervisors:

Jeff Phillips, OHS Principal

Karen VanEpps, OHS Assistant Principal

Dallas Lintner, OHS Athletic Director and Assistant Principal

Richie Collins, OMS Principal

Cathy Dwyer, OMS Assistant Principal

Steve Irelan, Lincoln High School Principal

Bridgit Spielman, Central Elementary Principal

Shelly Collison, Bryant Elementary Principal
Jessica Aue, Emerson Elementary Principal
Julie Omer, Chief Financial Officer
Amanda Rowell, Bentley Bright Beginnings Principal
Steve Brooks, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Joe Watson, Technology Director
John Klapko, Food Service, Maintenance and Grounds Supervisor
Renee Secor-Jenks, Transportation Supervisor
Jessica Thompson, Director of Community Education

Dr. Tuttle shared, “Over the past six months, our Owosso principals and supervisors’ roles have been unexpectedly and dramatically changed by the COVID-19 crisis. The unprecedented nature of this situation meant a great deal of uncertainty and continuous planning and revising. There is not a book titled, “How to be an educational leader in the midst of a pandemic.” I often equate what leaders have been experiencing to a coach trying to lead a team but not knowing what game they are coaching or the rules of the game. It is difficult to coach a team with so many unknowns. Our leaders did not know the budget, the expectations from the legislature or the Michigan Department of Education, the expectations for social distancing, sanitizing, or how to handle extra curriculars like fine arts and athletics. They didn’t know the allowances for eating together, the bussing requirements, the attendance or clock hour stipulations, and the list goes on. So in an effort to prepare, our principals and supervisors were charged with formulating a game plan to be ready to coach every game imaginable and prepare the team to play. It wasn’t until a few weeks before school was set to begin that the rules of the game were identified and announced. It can be difficult to lead when things are going as planned, but it is tremendously difficult to lead when your team members are looking to you for guidance and you have had zero experience or training on how to lead during a global pandemic. Our leaders had to role model the IB learner profile traits—they had to be problem-solvers, thinkers, inquirers, communicators, risk takers, reflective, all while balancing the needs of many different audiences while under pressure. They needed to put on a courageous face and let people know that We Got This, even when our leaders were not totally convinced themselves. And our principals and supervisors are also humans who thorough it all were experiencing the same questions, worries, concerns on a personal level as everyone else. Our school leaders experienced deaths in their own families due to COVID. They were nervous for their own health and the health of their families, yet they courageously carried on putting together plans that were best for our students. Owosso is fortunate to have incredibly competent principals and supervisors leading the way. There is obviously not a perfect solution for how to lead during a pandemic, but our principals have used their leadership skills to put together the best possible plan for all involved. They have reflected on the plan and adjusted when necessary, and they will continue to do so during this difficult time and always. Despite these daunting circumstances, we have seen incredibly inspiring school leaders acting to ensure the safety and well-being for families and staff while minimizing the disruption faced by out-of-school children. Owosso has the best principals and supervisors leading the way and I am grateful for each one of them.”

President Mowen echoed Dr. Tuttle’s remarks and thanked OPS principals and supervisors on behalf of the Board of Education.

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle said it is great to see everyone in person, albeit the social distancing and mask wearing.

Dr. Tuttle read a letter addressed to the Board of Education from Superintendent John Fattal of Corunna Public Schools. The letter thanked the Board of Education and OPS community for

their support to the Sims family, a grieving Cavalier family that recently experienced a traumatic car accident. OPS contributed to the GoFundMe account for the family, and the Trojan volleyball team wore “Corunna Strong” shirts. The letter noted, “Even though we are rivals in many areas, you have proven we are one community supportive of each other when needed.” Dr. Tuttle reiterated that OPS sends condolences and healing thoughts to the Sims family and Corunna community during this difficult time.

Dr. Tuttle provided an update on the OPS Bond Project, noting that the project is coming to fruition. Exciting aspects of the project are at or near completion, such as the Student Union, classroom updates, gym, Performing Arts Center, and cafeteria. The project is on schedule to be completed by April 1, 2021.

The OPS COVID-19 Extended Learning Plan was initially created to last until the end of September, when adjustments would be made as needed. Dr. Tuttle stated, “A team of individuals including the leadership of the Owosso Education Association and administration have worked together over the past couple of weeks to make adjustments that will be noted in the reaffirmation plan that appears later on the agenda.” Dr. Tuttle reported that, in a recently conducted survey, 79% of parents indicated that they were high satisfied or satisfied with the current online instruction, and it is the hope that with the adjustments being made, that percentage will increase even more with a goal of 100% satisfaction.

In athletics and extra curriculars, Dr. Tuttle happily reported that the OPS community has been able to stay relatively healthy even while partaking in the “normal” and arguably “most enjoyable” aspects of school, such as athletic events and the Trojan Marching Showcase. Dr. Tuttle noted her appreciation in seeing students participate in extracurricular activities while following health and safety guidelines. She also recognized and congratulated members of the 2020 Homecoming Court: Lauryn Ayers, Jillian Bagwell, Olivia Berry, Claudia Drake, Ruthie Dignan, Lauren Gaskin, Andrew Chapko, Adam Chmiko, Peyton Fields, Nick Garrison, Wyatt Leland, and Ben Welz.

Dr. Tuttle reported that although the district never wants to lose students, in comparison to other schools in the county the district has experienced a significantly lower percentage of student loss. The loss was less than 1%. Dr. Tuttle shared that she believes the relatively low loss in students, given the circumstances surrounding the pandemic, was thanks to the district’s learning plan that provided students and families with options for in-person or online learning. In addition, Dr. Tuttle praised OPS staff for working hard to ensure students are continually provided with excellent learning opportunities.

Dr. Tuttle shared, in regard to the sinking funds, the dumpster enclosure outside the high school was completed along with a salt bunker and sidewalks around the district. The roof at the high school is expected to be completed by November 24, 2020.

Curriculum Director Steve Brooks reported that a lot of time has been allocated to the district’s new teachers. Elementary principals and Mr. Brooks created an incredible handbook to help onboard new teachers. The handbook outlines OPS resources, curriculum, professional development, staff contacts, mentoring, classroom expectations, and more. Mr. Brooks shared that the administration team is continuing to look for online resources to assist teachers this year with online learning. He noted that several resources have been purchased already including “Mystery Science” and a social studies resource. These are online tools that provide teachers with videos and articles in align with International Baccalaureate’s (IB) best practices. Mr. Brooks said OPS students in grades kindergarten through eighth are taking the benchmark assessments, provided by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), in reading and math.

The testing has been a large undertaking for staff and is required under the Return to Learn Plan. OPS has been conducting benchmark assessments for three years, so the process has gone smoothly this year. Mr. Brooks also shared that parent/teacher conferences begin this week. The administration team and teachers have implemented creative procedures to meet virtually with parents via platforms such as Zoom, phone calls, emails. Mr. Brooks reported that OPS perception surveys began and will be available for several weeks. The surveys are to be completed by students, parents, and staff. The results of these surveys are usually fairly predictable, but Mr. Brooks is eager to see the new data gathered from this year's surveys in response to the many changes occurring in the district and new online instruction.

Public Participation

President Mowen 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.

There were no comments from the public, and no one notified the district of their intent to speak during public participation prior to the start of the meeting.

For Action

- Moved by Webster, supported by Ochodnický to approve the September 28, 2020 Regular Board Meeting minutes, October 12, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes, October 12, 2020 Closed Session minutes, current bills, and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss to approve the audit report for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Mr. Keith Pfeifle of Maner Costerisan, P.C. informed the Board that their report indicates an unmodified opinion on the financial statements. Mr. Pfeifle remarked that the financial statements were properly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. There were no issues in regard to compliance with laws and regulations identified for the year ending June 30, 2020. There was one federal program compliance issue with food service issued during the pandemic. Maner Costerisan, P.C. felt there should have been additional controls in place during the pandemic. Essentially, there was a short period of time when the district did not have employees double check the meal counts as part of their operations at all food distribution locations. Maner Costerisan P.C. worked with the district and the Food Service Director to identify and resolve the issue. The total fund balance was \$4,655,109 for the year ending June 30, 2020 which is about 14.88% of 2019-2020 revenue. Mr. Pfeifle noted with a goal to maintain a fund balance between 10% to 15%, the 2019-2020 fund balance is healthy, especially given the uncertainties of the pandemic. Mr. Pfeifle also explained that there were changes to revenue sources in federal and state aid funding that were made in July and August of 2020. These changes resulted in additional revenue available to the district and therefore a higher than anticipated revenue. Mr. Pfeifle commented that uncertainty of state aid allocations remains a general concern from year to year. Maner Consterisan, P.C. also audited the spending of OPS bond funding to ensure compliance with the ballot language that voters approved, as well as to ensure compliance with state law. As of June 30, 2020, the district had \$12.3 million in fund balance remaining in bond funds. As the project draws closer to completion, a close out audit will be filed with the Michigan Department of Treasury. Mr. Pfeifle thanked

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle and Chief Financial Officer Julie Omer for being prepared for the audit. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Webster, supported by Paez to affirm the OPS COVID-19 Extended Learning Plan. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that, by law, the Board of Education must look at the plan each month and reaffirm it. By law, the district must inform the Board each month of any changes that have made to the plan. Dr. Tuttle informed the Board of the following changes to the COVID-19 Extended Learning Plan:
 - By virtue of a Letter of Agreement, Virtual Days were added to the calendar so teachers can have additional time to dedicate to online students.
 - Additional elementary staff were hired to assist with online learners.
 - Additional time was added to complete Parent Teacher Conferences.
 - Modifications to lunch options were made. Dr. Tuttle thanked the food services team for their work in providing hot lunch options.
 - Modifications to bus routes and pick up locations were made. Dr. Tuttle commended Transportation Supervisor Renee Secor-Jenks.
 - MHSAA changes impacted athletic contests.

Dr. Tuttle shared with the board a document outlining two-way interaction rates and in-person attendance at each OPS building. She thanked Steve Brooks and Carrie Yoho for gathering the data. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Webster, supported by Krauss to approve the course listings presented for the Middle School, High School, and Lincoln High School for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Webster to approve the hiring of Melinda Pierce as the 1st Grade Virtual Teacher, De’Nae Streeter as OHS Agriscience Teacher, Stephanie Allen as the 3rd Grade Virtual Teacher, Jacalyn Little as the Kindergarten Virtual Teacher, and Allyson Young as the 5th Grade Virtual Teacher. Dr. Tuttle shared that Melinda Pierce is a University of Michigan Flint graduate with experience teaching preschool, 3rd grade, and 4th grade. She is moving back to Michigan to be closer to her family. Jacalyn Little is a graduate of Central Michigan University and has taught for 20 years in grades kindergarten through sixth. She has been a Title 1 teacher at Central Elementary for four years. As a fun fact, Mrs. Little has been practicing karate for 30 years. Stephanie Allen graduated from Central Michigan University. This is her sixth-year teaching, and she is moving to OPS from a neighboring district. As an interesting fact, Stephanie worked in a rural Alaskan village for one-year teaching school. Allyson Young is a University of Michigan Flint graduate who is currently teaching in a virtual school. She has experience with special education teaching and coaching cheerleading. De’Nae Streeter has a lot of experience and is very well rounded. She has a math and science certification. She also has some exciting ideas for the agriculture science programs. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický supported by Krauss to approve the October 19, 2020 – June 30, 2021 Tentative Agreement between the Owosso Education Association and the Owosso Board of Education. Secretary Webster conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Paez, Webster, Mowen, Ochodnický, Krauss. Nays: none. Absent: Keyes. Trustee Olga Quick abstained from voting because she has family members that are employed by the district and affiliated with the Owosso Education Association. Motion carried.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnický to approve the October 19, 2020 – June 30, 2021 Tentative Agreement between the Owosso Education Support Personnel Association and the Owosso Board of Education. Secretary Webster conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Kraus, Ochodnický, Mowen, Webster, Quick, Paez. Nays: None. Absent: Keyes. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Webster, supported by Ochodnický to approve the October 19, 2020 – June 30, 2021 Tentative Agreement between the Administrators and the Owosso Board of

Education. Secretary Webster conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Paez, Quick, Webster, Mowen, Ochodnicki, Krauss. Nays: none. Absent: Keyes. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Ochodnicki, supported by Krauss to approve salary adjustments for non-union personnel to reflect parity with other bargaining groups. Ayes: Krauss, Ochodnicki, Mowen, Webster, Quick, Paez. Nays: none. Absent: Keyes. Motion carried unanimously.

For Information

- Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported the following personnel changes:
 - **Accepted Positions**
 - Crystal John has accepted the 2.25-hour Food Service Worker position at Bryant Elementary.
 - Kimberly Wahl has accepted the 1.75-hour Food Service Worker position at Central Elementary.
 - Mayse Edwards has accepted the 2.75-hour Food Service Worker position at Emerson Elementary.
 - Leeann Adkins has accepted the 3-hour Food Service Worker position at Owosso Middle Schools
 - Kendra DeVoe has accepted the 5-hour Food Service Worker position at Owosso Middle School.
 - **Resignations**
 - Valerie James, Special Education Teacher at Owosso Middle School submitted her letter of resignation effective October 9, 2020.
 - **Retirements**
 - Alan Huyck, Maintenance/Grounds has submitted his letter of retirement effective November 13, 2020.
- Dr. Tuttle commented that OPS continues to maintain and improve the OPS bus fleet, an expensive but necessary measure. There are some aging buses, and different options such as leasing buses and purchasing buses are being explored.

Public Participation

There were no comments from the public.

Board Member Comments/Updates

- Trustee Krauss thanked the teachers, administrators, and staff for their efforts through the pandemic and OPS Bond Project. He also thanked Dr. Tuttle for taking the Board of Education members on a tour of the new secondary campus. Mr. Krauss also congratulated Pam Coe.
- Vice President Ochodnicki thanked OPS principals and noted that all OPS staff has gone above and beyond, doing their best with the COVID-19 response. She also noted her gratitude for the budget this year and is pleased have been able to give back to staff a bit in this year's contracts. She hopes it brings some relief.
- Trustee Paez thanked the building principals and staff for leading during a global pandemic. She also stated that she enjoyed the tour of the new secondary campus and seeing how the Bond Project is coming together.
- Trustee Quick echoed Krauss' and Paez' appreciation of the tour. She also thanked OPS principals, supervisors, and teachers for the work they do. She noted her appreciation in the changes to the COVID-19 Extended Learning Plan.
- Secretary Webster commented that it is wonderful to see everyone in person again. She stated that OPS teachers, families, students, administrators, and Board members have been adaptable this year. Mrs. Webster said, "There is no such thing as a perfect plan,

but we continue to rethink it and have good dialogue. . . It has not been easy . . . but we have educated students, and I am proud of that.”

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

November 9: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 pm

November 23: Regular Board Meeting, 5:30 pm

Important Upcoming Dates

October 21: OHS Choir Concert, virtual, 7 pm

October 22: Half Day at Home for Elementary Students Only (at Home Learning Day)

October 22: Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences

October 23: End of Marking Period

October 27: Virtual Learning Day for Secondary Students Only

October 27: OMS and OHS Parent/Teacher Conferences

October 30: Half Day for All Students, Elementary In Person, Secondary Virtual Learning

November 3: No School; Election Day

November 3: Professional Development for Teachers

November 13: Virtual Learning Day for Secondary Students Only

Adjournment

Moved by Ochodnicky, supported by Paez to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Minutes recorded by Alexa Stechschulte

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Webster
Marlene Webster, Secretary