

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
Regular Meeting
August 23, 2023
Report 23-25

Present: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnicky, Quick, Webster
Absent:

President Mowen called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Performing Arts Center Foyer, 765 E North St, Owosso MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

No building reports were given.

Board Correspondence

Dr. Tuttle shared with the Board her concern regarding the extreme heat forecasted for tomorrow, August 24, the first day of school. If the National Weather Service issues an extreme heat warning it is possible school will be canceled. Dr. Tuttle informed the Board the Community Pep Rally was held last night August 22 at Willman Field and the event was packed. Boosters brought 1,000 hot dogs for the event and they sold out. Students were in good spirits and the community seemed excited to get school back in session. Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that sinking fund projects continue to progress. The floors in Emerson, Central, and Washington Gyms have been completed, padding is set to be installed over the next month, and bleachers will arrive in October. Emerson's air conditioning units have been installed and test run. The fencing at Willman field and the bus garage has been completed. The high school's building controls will be completed in October. Dr. Tuttle shared the facilities look phenomenal and this year has been an opportunity to focus on the details. Dr. Tuttle shared with the Board that OPS rented the Performing Arts Center to Memorial Healthcare for their orientation days. She said it was a proud moment for the district to be able to share the PAC with the community and Memorial Healthcare employees were very impressed with the facility. Dr. Tuttle finished her report by sharing with the Board that this year's theme for Opening Day was 'Trojan Trivia'. All district staff met at the OHS cafeteria, divided into teams, and went through three rounds of trivia on Owosso Public Schools and its history. Treats from community shops like Murtles, Cakey Cakes, It's a Bakery Thing were provided to everyone, and Copper Top Country Store supplied gift baskets for the trivia winners.

Curriculum Director Mr. Steve Brooks shared it has been a busy summer. Books at Bryant had 1,586 participants over the ten sessions; Mr. Brooks thanked Culvers for their sponsorship and thanked the many first responders and athletic teams that attended sessions to provide some entertainment for the kids. He also thanked the support staff and Title I staff for their essential

help in organizing each session. Mr. Brooks continued with an update on summer school; he shared that OHS passed 168 half credits and Lincoln had 25 half credits. Mr. Brooks shared New Teacher Orientation took place on August 15. The teachers had a chance to get to know each other and Owosso's community and on August 16 the new staff delved into the curriculum and materials that they will be using over the course of the year. He said that the group of new teachers is full of energy and will bring new approaches to problem solving to the team. Instructional Leadership Council also met last week and set expectations for the year. Mr. Brooks informed the Board that today was a district-wide professional development (PD) day; staff could choose between 21 different PD sessions covering a wide array of topics including Social Media, Stress, Math, International Baccalaureate, Writing, Special Education, Discovery Education, Behavior Management, Digital SAT and PSAT, among others. The sessions were well received by staff and everyone had an opportunity to learn something new. Mr. Brooks finished his report by thanking the Board for their donation to the Annual Bryant Golf Outing; he said it is wonderful how the community can come together, have some fun, and raise scholarship money for our students.

Before the Board moved forward in the agenda, Dr. Tuttle shared with the Board that during the 'Trojan Trivia' portion of opening day, one of the trivia questions asked 'How many mills are Owosso residents currently paying for the bond and the sinking fund together?' The right answer is approximately 6.65 mills, and Dr. Tuttle stated that most of the communities surrounding Owosso have higher numbers. Laingsburg has 11.18 mills, Durand has 7.94 mills, Perry has 8.55mills, and New Lothrop has 10.5 mills. Dr. Tuttle believes this is important context for voters to have when they vote in November.

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 Henne, to approve the July 26, 2023 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes, August 9, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes, Current Bills and Financials. Secretary Krauss conducted a roll-call vote: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnick, Quick, Webster voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Easlick, supported by Quick to approve the tax levy (L-4029) for 2023 as presented and as discussed during the Budget hearing at the regularly scheduled board meeting on June 28th. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Webster, supported by Quick, to authorize the Owosso Public School's Operations department to dispose of a 1025 John Deere tractor and related attachments. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Easlick, supported by Krauss, to approve the hiring of the following certified staff: Brooke Lewis, Bryant Elementary Teacher at MA Step 5 (\$55,534), Valerie Meder, LHS English Teacher, at MA Step 8 (\$64,305), and Barbara Nees, OMS Science Teacher, at MA Step 10 (\$70,150). Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick, to approve the proposed increased bus driver wage schedule and option to become eligible for full-time benefits for bus drivers meeting certain requirements to be effective on August 24, 2023 and codified in the proposed OESPA Letter of Agreement as presented. Dr. Tuttle shared the difficulty in attracting and retaining bus drivers is a nation-wide epidemic forcing routes to be consolidated resulting in students having to be on the bus far longer taking away time that they can be engaged in more productive activities. The action being requested is aimed at putting Owosso at a competitive advantage to address this issue. Dr. Tuttle shared the facts of the report with the Board: The nationwide shortage of drivers has resulted in a very competitive market for individuals that have their Commercial Driver's License (CDL). In addition, requirements for getting a CDL are more difficult than in the past. The driver shortage has driven up wages making it difficult to create a wage schedule, that is adjusted once a year, to meet the demands of the market necessitating the proposed wage rate increase from what is currently included in the Master agreement. Individuals with CDL's can get positions in other industries that provide higher wages and full-time benefits that school districts can't offer. The daily default hours for bus drivers range from 4.5 – 5.75 hours which is less than most other support staff positions. With bus runs in the morning and afternoon and special runs in the evening it makes it difficult for drivers to have other positions outside of the district if they are interested in supplementing their school earnings. The wage schedule being proposed is more than competitive with others in the area allowing for a higher probability of attracting and retaining bus drivers. The change in proposed language to give bus drivers the possibility of being eligible for full-time benefits by combining positions to meet the 8-hour requirement and by working in the summer for operations, at the discretion of the district, provides at least the option to offer this to bus drivers willing to meet these requirements that need insurance while meeting the needs of the district. The incremental annualized cost of the proposal, inclusive of FICA and Retirement, is approximately \$120,000 (including assumptions of the number of positions that the district would allow to become eligible for full time benefits). Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board will be asked to authorize the Superintendent to contract with _____ in an amount(s) not to exceed _____ for the purchase and installation of security film on identified windows (inclusive of identified windows in specific doors) at Bentley, Bryant, Central, Emerson, OMS/OHS and Lincoln/Washington campus.

For Information

Dr. Tuttle announced the following personnel changes:

Accepted Positions

- Jamie Cline has accepted the Paraprofessional position at OMS.
- Emma Omer has accepted the Paraprofessional position at OMS.
- Richard VanderMolen has accepted the Grounds/Maintenance position.
- Madison Eldridge has accepted the Sub Food Service Worker position.

Resignations

- Crystal Huber, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher has resigned effective 8/8/23.

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No public participants addressed the Board.

Board Comments

Trustee Easlick was disappointed he could not attend the Community Pep Rally last night, but that he heard great things from community members about the event. He did have a chance to see the newly renovated gym at Central and said it looks great.

Trustee Ochodnicky shared that DownTown Hound sponsored a dinner for the football team, and she will be taking her grandson to meet the team. She also met the new therapy dog Danny who will be working at the high school, she said he is a beautiful dog. She ended her comments saying she is looking forward to the new year.

Secretary Krauss thanked Mr. Brooks and the summer staff for their hard work over the summer; the opportunities for engagement provided to students all summer is an accomplishment. Secretary Krauss commented it has been a joy to see parents, kids, and staff so excited to get back to school. He wished everyone a great year.

Trustee Henne complimented Mr. Brooks on his organization of the Professional Development day for staff, he said the number of different topics for staff to choose from is impressive. He also attended the Community Pep Rally last night and had a great time, he thanked everyone for their work in organizing the event. He also has two little girls who are excited to get back into the classroom.

Treasurer Quick thanked all those involved in summer school and helping students recover their credits. She said this is essential support for these kids and is very impressed with the summer staff and their hard work.

Vice President Webster has had a busy week with back to school events. She is looking forward to the start of the new year and thanked all those involved in summer school activities.

President Mowen shared that New Teacher Orientation was a great event and he enjoyed meeting the new staff. He is glad to see graduates returning to teach at their alma mater.

Upcoming Dates

- September 13, 2023: Committee of the Whole
- September 27, 2023: Regular Board of Education Meeting

Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky to move into closed session at 6:29pm for the purpose of conducting a student hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Webster, supported by Quick to move back into open session at 7:01pm for the purpose of adjournment. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Webster, to adjourn at 7:02pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Brooke Barber.

Respectfully submitted,



Ty Krauss, Secretary