

Tawas Area Schools  
Regular Board of Education Meeting  
November 13, 2023

President Klenow called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 13, 2023.

Mrs. Edmonds led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Ulman, Butzin, Jenkins, Edmonds, Lentz, Bruning, Klenow  
Absent: None  
Tardy: None

Administrators Present: Klinger, Danek, Livingston, Tiffany, Clouse

**POSITIVE HIGHLIGHTS**

Mr. Klinger turned it over to Mrs. Clouse to present the positive highlight. Mrs. Clouse spoke about some exciting things that are happening at Clara Bolen Elementary. She said that the PTO is working to increase positivity in the school setting. They are honoring a Student of the Month in each grade, nominated by staff, and treating the students to a McDonald's lunch with the principal. The PTO is also doing a monthly newsletter which contains upcoming events, meeting dates and pictures of current happenings. The PTO purchased 2 soccer nets and a gaga ball pit for the playground as well. Mrs. Stephanie Lichota and the students leading students interact group had "buddy benches" donated to the school by Up North Prevention and grant funds. These benches were designed by SLS students and encourage supportive interaction. The benches were purchased from local business Treasures Forever.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS**

Mrs. Klenow asked if there was anyone with public comment and explained that individuals would have 3 minutes to speak about agenda or non-agenda items. There was no public comment.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Bruning, support by Ulman to approve the consent agenda items which included the approval of the October 9, 2023 regular meeting minutes, the October 30, 2023 special meeting minutes, the October 30, 2023 closed session minutes and the payment of bills as follows: the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$1,030,451.10, the sinking fund expenses in the amount of \$15,800.00 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$76,632.95. It also included payment of presented bills for the general fund in the amount of \$41,336.64. Several letters of resignation/retirement were received. Middle school secretary Mrs. Denise Spaid submitted her letter of retirement, with her last day being November 16, 2023, after 26 years of service. A letter of resignation was also received from Mr. Zachary Blanchard, who resigned from his position as head football coach effective October 27, 2023 and his middle school teaching position effective November 1, 2023. Educational assistant, Emma Herstine, also submitted a letter of resignation, effective immediately. Kathleen Slack resigned from her position as an educational assistant as well, effective November 10, 2023. Nancy Bielby also submitted her letter of retirement, effective December 31, 2023, after 37 years of service. Motion carried unanimously.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Klinger said that Mrs. Clouse is recommending that Ms. Alexis Stanley be hired as a special ed. educational assistant. Ms. Stanley has a bachelor's degree in art in human services from Southern New Hampshire University and has several years of experience working as a behavioral therapist for Autism of America. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Butzin to hire Ms. Alexis Stanley as an educational assistant. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Clouse is also recommending that Mr. Joshua Jameson be hired as a special education educational assistant. Mr. Jameson has experience working with children through AuSable Valley Community Mental Health and has helped his family raise several foster children. He was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Lentz, support by Jenkins to hire Mr. Joshua Jameson as an educational assistant. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Clouse is recommending Mrs. Erin Nunn be hired to fill the elementary secretary position. Mrs. Nunn has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Central Michigan University and has been an office manager for 23 years. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Butzin to hire Mrs. Erin Nunn as a secretary. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger stated that Mr. Lichota is recommending that Mr. Jacob Whitford be hired as a custodian. Mr. Whitford has extensive experience in maintenance and was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Lentz, support by Jenkins to hire Mr. Jacob Whitford as a custodian. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mejeur is recommending that Mr. Andrew Salwey be hired as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys' basketball coach. Mr. Salwey is a Tawas alumni and has played numerous sports for the district. He was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Lentz to hire Mr. Andrew Salwey as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys' basketball coach. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mejeur is also recommending that Mrs. Melissa Kendall be hired as the varsity cheerleading coach. Mrs. Kendall has coached the Ravens cheerleaders and has served as the interim varsity coach. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to hire Mrs. Melissa Kendall as the varsity cheerleading coach. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek is recommending that Ms. Angela Bussinger be hired to fill the current middle school science vacancy. Ms. Bussinger is a graduate of Saginaw Valley State University and has a bachelor of science in chemistry and a baccalaureate in teaching. Ms. Bussinger is certified and qualified to fill this position and was chosen as the top candidate. Motion by Lentz, support by Ulman to hire Ms. Angela Bussinger as a middle school science teacher. Motion carried unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Committee Reports – Mr. Klinger said the policy committee presented new and revised board bylaws and policies at the meeting last month. The following policies were discussed at that meeting and it is the recommendation of the policy committee that we consider tonight as the second reading of these new and revised board bylaws and policies: **1540** Administrative Staff Reductions/Recalls (New); **2370.01** Online/Blended Learning Program (Revised); **7217** Weapons (Revised); **7540.03** Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety (Revised); **8305** Information Security (Technical Correction); **8531** Free and Reduced Price Meals (Revised); **0144.2** Board Member Ethics (Revised); **0167.3** Public Participation at Board Meetings (Revised).

They also recommended adding a consequence section for board member misconduct that outlines four components.

Motion by Bruning, support by Lentz to adopt the presented changes to board policy as presented by the policy committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that the ad hoc girl's golf club committee met prior to tonight's meeting, at 6:00 p.m., to discuss the future of the program. A recommendation will be proposed under new business to accept girl's golf as a MHSAA sport.

Legislative Report – Mr. Klinger said that the legislature will be shutting down earlier than expected and any legislation that was passed will start the 90-day clock immediately. Mr. Klinger also stated that legislation has brought about a change in evaluations and this will affect negotiations so he is monitoring this.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Klinger went on to present the continuity of service plan for the district which prioritizes full, in-person instruction, which provides the greatest benefits to our students. The plan is required to ensure a successful and safe return to school and our learning environments and outlines recommended prevention and mitigation strategies during low, medium and high transmission rates. This plan was created by the district and is required by law. It must be revisited every 6 months until September 2024. Motion by Lentz, support by Butzin to approve the continuity of service plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mrs. Clouse is recommending the purchase of playground equipment for Clara Bolen Elementary from GameTime for \$29,124.09. Of this total amount, \$12,027.54 would be paid through funds from a matching grant and the remaining \$17,096.55 would be paid out of the PTO budget. Several other quotes were included in the board packet, all of which were more expensive. Motion by Ulman, support by Butzin to purchase playground equipment from GameTime for \$29, 124.09 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger stated that Mr. Keith del Rio is requesting approval to attend the Explore E-Sports Conference and Championships at Oakland University with 5 students who are members of the E-Sports team. They will depart on December 8, 2023 and return on December 9, 2023. Mr. Klinger said that Mr. Del Rio was in attendance to give a short presentation. Mr. del Rio began by highlighting some of the achievements of the E-Sports team. Their record this season is 5 wins and 2 losses, with 1 forfeit due to internet issues. They are ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the league currently and are guaranteed a position in the playoffs. Mr. del Rio explained that this conference will allow the students to meet with numerous colleges and explore different career paths related to E-Sports. He and Mr. Adam Davis would be chaperoning the trip along with the 5 students on the team. Motion by Ulman, support by Jenkins to allow the E-Sports team to attend the Explore E-Sports Conference and Championships at Oakland University from December 8, 2023 until December 9, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said as mentioned during the committee update, the ad hoc girl's golf club committee met prior to the meeting and is recommending in the form of a motion that Tawas Area Schools recognize girl's golf as a varsity sport. Motion by Edmonds, support by Ulman. Motion carried unanimously.

## **INFORMATION & PROPOSALS**

Superintendent Report – Mr. Klinger said that the lighting and energy audit is currently going on this week and we should see the results of that very soon. He stated that he is very appreciative of the community for being supportive with the busing issue that took place recently. Mr. Klinger explained that Mr. Lichota currently has 2-3 prospective people to add to the list of substitute bus drivers to hopefully deter future issues with busing. Mr. Klinger also discussed the unaudited pupil accounting numbers, with Clara Bolen having 436 students, the middle school having 354 students and the high school having 350 students, for a total of 1,140 students in the district. These numbers are down very slightly from last year at this time but not much. Mr. Klinger said that NEOLA will be doing a special release as early as the end of next week regarding new legislation and he will be working with our regional representative. The policy committee will also need to schedule a meeting to discuss these changes. Mr. Klinger stated that we do have the option of doing only one reading of the changes if time is an issue but that we will look at that in the future. He mentioned 2 short weeks coming up with Safety Day this week and Thanksgiving Break next week and thanked the community for passing the sinking fund and being supportive of the district.

Student Representatives – Ms. Catherine Push said that she attended the rotary gala in Frankenmuth recently and learned a lot from other clubs that were present at the gala. She said she had a great time and got to connect with a lot of people. She said red ribbon week went really well. The student senate is looking to do something to give back to the community. They aren't sure yet what they will do but definitely want to do something. They are also started to plan Snowcoming. Ms. Push stated that NHS has a blood drive coming up on December 7.

Administration – Mrs. Clouse said that parent teacher conferences were last week and they saw 91% attendance, which is great. The school just finished up with some fundraising and has finalized some school spirit gear that will be available to the public. Mrs. Clouse talked about the Christmas Program coming back this year. The program will be on December 20 at 1:00 p.m.

Mrs. Tiffany said that there is a new art club starting up, led by Mr. Adam Davis. She also said that the 8<sup>th</sup> graders have finished up their training for the peer mentoring program. They are continuing to fundraise for the D.C. trip. Mrs. Tiffany also said that she had something very exciting to share. National Gypsum is donating \$30,000 to the robotics club which is up and running again.

Mr. Mejeur said that winter sports started today and that was all he had to report at this time.

Mr. Livingston said there are 3 new students in the High School. The Veteran's Day assembly went very well. A local VFW Post asked the school to participate in an essay writing competition and they announced the winners of the competition at the assembly. The students had to write their essays and record themselves reading the essay. Mr. Livingston also mentioned that Ms. Jenae Baker was honored at the assembly by the VFW Post as Teacher of the Year. In addition, he said that Mrs. Tiffany and himself were recognized at the assembly with a National Citizenship award. Mr. Livingston said that the band bazaar was last weekend. He wrapped up by talking about the "Caught Being Awesome" award. The school has partnered with the local movie theater to gift kids a \$10 gift card when they are observed doing something awesome.

Mrs. Danek said that the High School Robotics coach will be Mr. Thomas Bruning and they are excited to have that program back up and running. She said Friday is the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester. The November 1 PD Day focused on co-teaching and how to effectively manage it. They also sent some staff to another ISD for some training on co-teaching since it is becoming so important. Mrs. Danek thanked the staff who have stepped up to help support the vacancies and thanked Mrs. Spaid for her service, as it is her final week.

From the Board – Mrs. Jenkins attended the annual leadership conference in Lansing. She said there were 2 amazing keynote speakers and she was very grateful to have the opportunity to attend the conference. She said she learned a lot and took numerous CBA classes, met an E-Sports representative and got to talk about the district’s program and really got to plug our student representatives who attend the board meetings. Mrs. Klenow took CBA 341: Data Foundations and said the class was full of great information and she is on the path to becoming a data guru. Mrs. Klenow and Mrs. Bruning took CBA 107: Labor Relations and Mrs. Bruning said that most of what they discussed in this class has already been implemented, which was nice to know.

Mrs. Lentz welcomed new hires and thanked Mrs. Spaid for her service and congratulated her on retirement. She said she is impressed with our district and believes we are on a great path. She thanked the administration, teachers and students for all that they do. Mrs. Jenkins congratulated Mr. Vainer on the girl’s golf program and welcomed the new hires. Mr. Butzin thanked everyone. Mrs. Ulman congratulated Mrs. Spaid and Mrs. Bielby on their retirement and thanked them for their service. She said she is excited about the E-Sports program. She welcomed the new hires and thanked the community for supporting the sinking fund. Mrs. Ulman said she is constantly impressed by the performance of our district and said we have great leaders in place. Mrs. Klenow thanked the community for their support during the busing issue. She also mentioned that on Wednesday Project Graduation will be selling chili and baked goods at the Buck Pole. She went on to thank the administration for the positive recognition of students and is excited about E-Sports. Mrs. Bruning said she is excited to hear about E-Sports and how the conference and championship go. She said she is also excited about the Christmas program coming back to Clara Bolen. She welcomed the new hires. Mrs. Edmonds congratulated those who are retiring. She gave a shout out to Catie Push for helping make girl’s golf popular and being a leader. She said she wishes the program luck. Mrs. Edmonds said there are great things coming out of the middle school and thanked Mr. Livingston and Mrs. Tiffany for being willing to do “extra” things for the community.

### **ADVANCE PLANNING**

Mr. Klinger said that the board needs to schedule a closed session to discuss the superintendent’s evaluation. The board decided on November 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Klinger also talked about re-scheduling CBA 278: Dealing with Difficult People with presenter Deb Macon. The board scheduled the workshop for Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Motion by Edmonds, support by Ulman to have a 10-minute recess at 8:05 p.m. before the closed session for the student discipline hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

At 8:15 p.m., there was a motion by Edmonds, support by Butzin to go into a closed session. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Edmonds, support by Bruning to return to open session at 8:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Klenow asked if there was a motion on the student.

Motion by Lentz, support by Butzin to expel student 2023-2024-#2 for 180 days. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Bruning, support by Edmonds to take a 5-minute recess at 8:42 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

At 8:47 p.m., the board convened to discuss future projects. Mr. Klinger said that he wanted to talk about the next steps and prioritize what is next on the list. First on the list is the replacement of interior and exterior doors and frames. This project was approved by the board last year but is still a work in progress. He is working with Mr. Lichota to get updated costs and getting the bid put together. Next on the list is to finish up the carpet removal in Clara Bolen. The approximate cost of this project is \$6,000/room. Mr. Klinger said he would like to focus on 3 new projects next, new electrical panels which will cost about \$15,000, increasing storage with the construction of a pole barn which he estimated would cost approximately \$100,000, and repairing/replacing the glass block windows in the new gym which would cost about \$86,000.00.

Mrs. Klenow asked about the size of the pole barn and advised him to double it. She said we always need more storage and this would prevent him from having to come back again in a year and ask for another storage unit. The board agreed with this.

Several members of the board questioned the block windows being replaced since they had just been repaired less than a year ago. Mr. Klinger explained that they did not even make it a year and they need to get them replaced before more damage is done. He stated that there have been discussions about splitting the cost of this project 3 ways but nothing has been finalized.

Mrs. Ulman asked if there would be any money left after these projects are completed and if so, if we could earmark some of these funds to make handicap accessible bleachers for the football stadium. Mr. Klinger said he would definitely keep that on his list as a priority.

Motion by Lentz, support by Butzin to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.