

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 8, 2024
Report 23-171

Present: Adam Easlick, Nick Henne (left at 6:36 pm), Ty Krauss, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicky, Olga Quick
Absent: Marlene Webster

President Mowen called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Administration Building, 645 Alger St, Owosso MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

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.

The following participants addressed the Board:
None

Superintendent Brooks introduced and welcomed Tim Dame, CFO to the meeting.

AP Biology & Psychology Textbooks

Superintendent Brooks recommended to the Board updating two textbooks for the AP Biology and Psychology classes for approximately \$6,500 for the digital cost and some hard copies of each. Both books are 2014 editions and it is required to update them every ten years. Mr. Dorman the AP Biology teacher reviewed three different AP Biology textbooks and chose the updated version of the book that he's currently using. The total cost for these is approximately \$3500 per estimate provided by SAVVAS. Mrs. Gillett the AP Psychology teacher also chose the updated version of the textbook she's currently using with an approximate cost of \$3,000 per estimate provided by bedford, freeman & worth. Superintendent Brooks recommended these be paid for out of our new adoption budget, stating we only used a short fraction of our overall budget this year approximately \$26,000 of the \$90,000 budget.

2024 Door Replacement

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board about the 2024 Door Replacement and wanted to reference that this is coming from the safety and security grant, not the sinking fund, and has budgeted approximately \$300,000 for this work. This would replace all internal doors at the Washington and Lincoln Campuses, exterior doors at Bryant Elementary School in the Kindergarten and 1st-grade wings, and the Gym doors. We received two bids, one from Perrin Construction, and the other from R.C. Hedrick, both were very comparable. Spicer is recommending Perrin as our construction manager because we've had good luck, and no issues with them in the past, and they were also the lower bid of the two. Superintendent Brooks is hopeful a good chunk of this will be finished by the time school starts.

SME Grant

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board about the SME Grant. This is a national initiative, and 11 districts in Michigan were awarded funds totaling about \$ 6 million, with our district receiving around \$360,000. The grant is focused on enhancing CTE programs, particularly in engineering. The district has already acquired high-tech measurement and industry tools worth \$40,000. Additionally, they are planning to introduce Mechatronics, involving robotic arms for students to program and interact with in a hands-on manner, simulating real-world scenarios. The grant also offers community resources and support from SME to help enhance the district's CTE initiatives. A group is set to return to the district and the end of May as part of the grant-funded project. They plan to tour various facilities to gather information. Carrie Warning, CTE department head is certified to teach Mechatronics. This grant will also cover specific training for her over the summer, which will require out-of-state travel to Wisconsin and Minnesota. Superintendent Brooks talked about the need to reconfigure the engineering room, which includes a computer lab at the back with desktop computers which will be removed and replaced with laptops. The precise measurement tool is a comprehensive toolbox utilized in construction trades and woodworking to teach students the importance of accurate measurement skills. This high-tech toolbox enables precise measurements and emphasizes the principle of "measure twice, cut once" to ensure accuracy and efficiency in projects. Superintendent Brooks is enthusiastic about implementing the precise measurement tool into our program. Out of 11 districts in the state and the only one in Shiawassee County only a few have a similar tool.

CTE Barn Update

Superintendent Brooks provided updates to the Board on plans to construct a barn on the property where the existing chicken coop and orchard are located. Conceptual drawings are being developed by Spicer representatives to incorporate the barn into the design, and possibly a bus garage and maintenance facility further down the road. The property will be surveyed to determine the placement of structures, accounting for water and runoff so there are no issues down the road. Trustee Ochodnicky raised concerns about the deteriorating maintenance facility

neat Bryant, which may require attention in the future. Superintendent Brooks stated a very minimal amount will be taken out of the general fund for this, it is all grant and CTE money with the exception of the cost to do the survey and dig a well, which will be approximately \$5,000. CTE is still securing grants but a good chunk is figured out. Construction trade students will help build in phases to save on costs, they have approximately \$70,00 in hand and are estimating approximately \$250,000 for everything. CTE has extra funds that can only be used for CTE equipment, funds, and buildings. Cargill donated \$20,000 and they are committed again to donating next year.

2024-2025 Contract Renewals

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board about our upcoming three contract renewals:

- 1. Baker College Pathways-** This is the annual one we partner with Baker College Pathways Contract, there are no changes.
- 2. MI Works-** There are two contracts, one for union members and one for non-union members. This contract is for anyone who qualifies for on-the-job training. They receive specific resources from transportation, and clothing, to all kinds of different options for the new employee to prepare for them for their new job. They also pay for the first six weeks of onboarding and training for those that qualify.
- 3. Liaison Officers-** There will be a slight increase anticipated at 3.3% with this one as the city is negotiating their contracts. We have four liaison officers total, two retired officers, and two actives on the road.

Fiber to Ballfields

Superintendent Brooks was excited to announce to the Board that Owosso Public Schools is working with 2 former students who work for DayStarr Communications. They came out to measure and provide us with a quote to run fiber to the baseball fields, softball fields, and track and then run it as a post to the tennis and soccer fields for future use. While they are running it to the track, we also were going to have them run it out towards Middleton and go underneath the trail so when the barn is done we can put Wi-Fi and cameras out there, to keep an eye on livestock and provide security. They put in a bid for about \$8000 total to do all that, which is quite a bargain for that many linear feet. Sports Boosters will pay approximately \$6000, and CTE will cover the rest to run the fiber out to the barn. There is no cost coming out of general fund dollars, Spicer was informed and is very pleased. DayStarr Communications is basically doing it at cost. Spicer will help with the markings and give them a layout of all the lines. This will also allow for security cameras at both ballfields, and we be able to livestream our games which is a big thing for parents.

Job Fair 2024

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board about the upcoming Job Fair scheduled for June 11th from 4-6 p.m. The job fair will feature on-site interviews for all departments. In the past, we hired maintenance staff and teachers directly from the job fair. The draft will be refined before advertised. Promotion will include lawn signs, around town at VG's, Hungry Howie's, and some of the main crossroads in town. Jessica Thompson will advertise on social media and in local newspapers. Trustee Ochodnický mentioned that Jessica Thompson did a fantastic job on the flyer, and everyone agreed. Superintendent Brooks talked about how 2019 was the first job fair and he thought we would only get 5 people but we had people lined out the front door, all the way down the sidewalk, and into the parking lot he was estimating approximately 150 people showed up.

Personal Update

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board about several new hires. Two Special Ed, and one ELA teacher for Owosso High School. There is an offer letter out to the fourth-grade teacher at Bryant Elementary School. We narrowed the Owosso Middle School Band Director position down from 75-70 applicants to 20. We received some very high-quality candidates all the way from Michigan to Colorado. From those 20 applicants, we asked them to create a video and then narrowed it down to 11 applicants. We then brought all 11 applicants in for interviews which consisted of an eight-person team that went from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Superintendent Brooks and the Board thanked Treasurer Quick for participating in those. From those interviews, we narrowed it down to three and it was unanimous. We asked them to come in and teach a lesson to our 7th-grade band students. One is coming in on Friday, the other on Monday, and the third candidate unfortunately backed out due to moving and commute issues. Treasurer Quick talked about how huge it was for the band program that we have only had ten directors since the program started back in the early 1900s and talked about how hard it will be losing Mr. Tolrud as he's been an incredible individual for our community. Superintendent Brooks also talked about the Curriculum Director and Assistant Superintendent interviews being held. Four of the six candidates have been selected for interviews, with three internal and one external candidate. Two other external candidates had charter school experience but were not considered due to concerns about longevity. Interviews are scheduled for May 9th at 1 p.m. Superintendent Brooks also stated we have had several new hires and also had several retirees who have all been invited to the May Regular Meeting to receive their recognition.

Paychecks and Paystubs

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board that the business office has identified that certain tasks, such as printing pay stubs for employees and issuing physical paychecks to some individuals is consuming a tremendous amount of time. We have roughly 20 employees who still receive paper paychecks. To streamline this process, they have decided to require all employees to use direct deposit starting July 1st. For those without a bank account, we have partnered with

Huntington Bank to provide a debit card option for receiving payments, or the employee can open an account. Dr. Dwyer stated that employees can still receive a paper check it will just be delayed a few days.

Shiawassee RESD (SRES) General Fund Budget 24-25

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board that President Mowen attended the meeting on May 6th and thanked him for doing so on behalf of the Board. Treasurer Quick questioned President Mowen about any changes. President Mowen stated they have maintained a positive fund balance, unlike many other districts that have faced budget deficits in the past. Their CTE Program in Vernon has been very successful, exceeding expectations and attracting a high number of students. The district also offers online classes through the University of Michigan-Flint. While there has been a slight decrease of about 100 students from the previous year for the whole county, the overall enrollment numbers remain stable. Additionally, the district's home values and equity have been steadily increasing, which is a positive indicator for the community.

2024-2025 Board Meeting Dates

Superintendent Brooks wanted to discuss with the Board committee meeting dates for the rest of the summer. He recommended adding a committee meeting date for June and August as there are several things to take care of, one being our budget and secondly an upcoming requirement that all Board members have to be trained by the MASB for Superintendent Evaluations. Superintendent Brooks proposed a date of August 14th to have the Board workshop in hopes that all Board members could be trained together. Superintendent Brooks stated it was roughly a 3-hour training session and anyone who would be evaluating has to have the training done. We are just waiting to hear back from the MASB about available dates and times. Trustee Ochodnicki questioned if there were other options than the MASB. Superintendent Brooks said yes there are other companies and the prices range as to what that costs. Treasurer Quick referenced an email that the Board received from Jay Bennett from the MASB reflecting the legislative changes made regarding Superintendent evaluations and brought up discussing with MASB midyear evaluations. Superintendent Brooks stated most districts do one in December and didn't know how that would look with him being hired in August. Thought of possibly doing a formal evaluation in December, then starting the midyear six months from then, which would be June, and then do again in December. Superintendent Brooks asked for recommendations for a date in June for a committee meeting as we have our budget coming up and new CFO Tim Dame getting started. Trustee Ochodnicki stated it was important because we are in negotiations and things have changed this year. Superintendent Brooks proposed the date of June 10th and time of 5:30 p.m. to keep it consistent. The Board agreed to June 10th with the exception of Vice President Webster as she was not in attendance. Superintendent Brooks presented to the Board the upcoming Board meeting dates. He stated he followed the same exact pattern as last year so he did not schedule a committee of the whole in December, June, July, or August. Trustee Ochodnicki likes the idea of having committee meetings every month except December and July and would like to have them back and then take them out if we don't have anything.

Superintendent Brooks recommended adding committee meetings for June 11, 2025, and August 13, 2025, and also reminded the Board about June 10, 2024, and August 14, 2024, for the Board workshop and training.

Other

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board that this week is Staff Appreciation Week and the district provided all of our employees Monday a link to an online store for them to shop for Owosso items of their choice totaling up to \$10. Wednesday Mancino's delivered assorted sandwiches, pizzas, salads, and beverages to every building in the district. Friday tasty afternoon snacks will be delivered to the main office of each school. Superintendent Brooks informed the Board about bringing the handbook revisions to the next regular Board Meeting. He has asked all principals to provide any changes that have been made from the current handbook and also a copy of the original handbook for the Board to be able to look over well in advance. Treasurer Quick highly recommended addressing the attendance policy stating that truancy is one of the biggest issues nationwide. Superintendent Brooks talked about a county committee that was put together to take a look at the attendance policies. Trustee Ochodnicky expressed concern that there doesn't seem to be any repercussions on the parents. Treasurer Quick referenced in the past using the courts for truancy meetings and that they are bringing that policy back for elementary-aged students. Trustee Henne was curious as to what those ramifications were from the court. Treasurer Olga responded that one of the things she does is send an officer to go get the student. She also talked about the Youth Center and the schedule there. She stated the parents can also be charged with Truancy in District Court but this hasn't happened as much since Covid. Superintendent Brooks informed the Board there is a six-step process for attendance, starting off with letters, meetings, and follow-ups. He also thanked the courts for working with the schools because this is such a big issue. Superintendent Brooks also informed the Board that Kate our student representative will attend the May 22nd meeting and will be passing the torch on to the new student representative Paige Davis.

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.

The following participants addressed the Board:
None

Meeting Updates:

May 22: Board of Education, Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

June 26: Board of Education, Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

Important Upcoming Dates:

May 9: Bryant and Central 5th Grade Band Concert, 7:00 PM, PAC

May 11: OHS Prom, 7:00 PM (Stonehouse, Bancroft)

May 13: OHS Athletic Awards, 7:30 PM, PAC

May 14: OHS Honors Convocation, 7:00 PM, PAC

May 16: OHS Graduation, 7:00 PM, Willman Field, May 17th rain date

May 21: OMS Choir Concert, 7:00 PM PAC

Moved by Ochodnicky supported by Easlick to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. Motion was carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Goetzinger

Respectfully submitted,


Ty Krauss, Secretary