

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
December 11, 2023

The regular meeting of the Tawas Area Board of Education was called to order by President Klenow at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023 in the boardroom at the administration office.

Mrs. Lentz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Bruning, Lentz, Ulman, Jenkins and Klenow
Absent: Edmonds
Tardy: Butzin

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

Mr. Butzin arrived at 7:04 p.m.

POSITIVE HIGHLIGHT

Mrs. Danek gave a brief background summary about the rotary satellite club that was formed about 2 years ago under Oscoda's team and then introduced 2 members of the rotary club, Ms. Catie Push and Ms. Kylee Stroemer, who attended the rotary gala in Frankenmuth, and were there to speak about the event. Ms. Push and Ms. Stroemer had a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted the big dinner that they had from Zehnder's as well as the awards that were given at the gala and the presentation which showed some of the events that were hosted by different clubs. Ms. Stroemer went on to talk about some of the events that the rotary club had been a part of locally, like the buddy benches at Clara Bolen, the kickoff event to start the year and red ribbon week which had numerous giveaways. Ms. Push talked about future plans for the club and mentioned an event called "purple pinkie," which is an event that takes place to support the polio vaccination across the world. Ms. Stroemer then spoke about the goals of the club which include offering kids a judgment free zone, getting kids out in the community and advocating for a substance free school/community. Ms. Push wrapped things up by talking about how the club allows students to make connections with peers and mentors.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Mrs. Klenow asked if there were any public comments on agenda or non-agenda items. There were no comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Bruning, support by Lentz to approve the consent agenda items which included the approval of the November 13, 2023 regular and closed session minutes and the November 27, 2023 special meeting and closed session minutes. It also included the payment of bills as follows: the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$1,256,747.29, the sinking fund expenses in the amount of \$19,115.00 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$32,291.09. It also included payment of presented monthly bills from the general fund in the amount of \$39,450.67. Two letters of resignation were accepted; the first from JV softball coach, Symantha Hollandsworth, effective immediately, and the second from educational assistant Joshua Jameson, also effective immediately. A letter of intent to resign from her elementary teaching position in April 2024 was accepted from Ms. Brittney Davidson, who is expecting a child and plans to work until she delivers or until her due date of December 15, 2023, whichever comes first, and will then work with administration to determine her official resignation date in April. A letter of retirement was accepted from special education secretary, Tammy Childs, who will retire effective February 1, 2024, with her last day of work being January 12, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Klinger said Mrs. Clouse is recommending Ms. Kristy Prentiss be hired as a special education educational assistant. Ms. Prentiss has a bachelor's degree in family life education and a master's degree in organizational management from Spring Arbor University. She also has years of experience working with children in her church and in a kindergarten classroom. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to hire Kristy Prentiss as an educational assistant. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mrs. Danek is recommending that Mrs. Tammy Ahearne be hired to fill the current ELA teaching vacancy. Mrs. Ahearne has a master's degree in educational leadership and has certificate endorsements in English and science, grades 6-12. Mrs. Ahearne was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Butzin to hire Tammy Ahearne as a middle school teacher. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mrs. Clouse is recommending that Ms. Tamara Hundley be hired as a first grade teacher. Ms. Hundley holds a bachelor of arts degree from Baker's College with a minor in English and also has a master's degree in early childhood from the University of Michigan in Flint. She has several years of experience in teaching preschool and most recently was a 5th grade teacher in Phoenix, Arizona. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Butzin, support by Bruning to hire Tamara Hundley as an elementary teacher. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mrs. Danek is recommending that Mr. Thomas Bruning be hired as the high school robotics coach. Mr. Bruning is a Tawas alumni and participated in the robotics program while he attended Tawas Area Schools. He was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Lentz, support by Butzin to hire Thomas Bruning as the high school robotics coach. Yes: Jenkins, Ulman, Klenow, Lentz, Butzin. Abstain: Bruning. Motion carried.

Mr. Klinger stated that Mrs. Danek is also recommending that Mr. Richard Fullerton be hired as the middle school robotics coach. Mr. Fullerton has been actively involved in supporting STEAM activities within the middle school in the past year and was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Lentz to hire Richard Fullerton as the middle school robotics coach. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mr. Mejeur is recommending that Mrs. Gina Murphy be hired as the 8th grade girls' basketball coach. Mrs. Murphy has coached and volunteered her time in Tawas basketball programs over the years and has many years of experience with different age groups. She was chosen as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to hire Gina Murphy as the 8th grade girls' basketball coach. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports – Mr. Klinger said that there were no committee reports tonight.

Legislative Report – Mr. Klinger said there is no legislative update at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Klinger said we need to pass a resolution every year prior to January 1st so that we may levy and collect taxes during the summer months. This provides funds so we don't need to borrow money to meet our expenses. Motion by Ulman, support by Butzin to adopt the annual summer tax resolution as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Klenow said that the board decided to hold a special meeting to collectively go over the data in the superintendent evaluation and ask Mr. Klinger any questions they may have before coming up with a consensus rating for his evaluation. She said Mr. Klinger was rated as highly effective. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to accept Mr. Klinger's evaluation as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Bruning made a second motion to extend Mr. Klinger's contract for an additional year. Support by Lentz. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mr. Jerashen is requesting permission for the All-Star band students to stay overnight in Alpena on January 19, 2024. Mr. Klinger said Mr. Jerashen was at the meeting to give a brief outline of the trip.

Mr. Jerashen said that this is an annual trip that the band goes on. Students audition for a spot in the Senior Honors Band or the Junior Honors Band and those who are chosen travel to Alpena on Friday night for this event. They play laser tag on Friday night and then go to dinner, which is followed by a 3-hour rehearsal. On Saturday morning, they head to Alpena High School for another rehearsal followed by a performance at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Butzin asked what the student to chaperone ratio is and Mr. Jerashen said typically it is 5 students for every chaperone, so 5:1. Motion by Ulman, support by Lentz to approve the overnight band trip as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mr. Vainer is also requesting that the varsity golf team be allowed to attend a 2-day golf invitational in Big Rapids at the Katke Golf Club. Mr. Klinger said Mr. Vainer was at the meeting to give a brief presentation regarding this trip.

Mr. Vainer said that this is a fairly exclusive event in the state of Michigan for varsity golfers. It is a 36-hole event with 18 teams total. He said that the event takes place on a Friday and Saturday in May and Tawas is one of only eight Division 3 teams invited to attend this event. The team had a very good showing at this event last year, finishing in fourth place. Mr. Vainer said this is a great opportunity to play at the course where the state championship is held. Motion by Ulman, support by Lentz to approve the overnight trip request as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that Mr. Lichota continues to monitor the fleet and is recommending the district purchase a new bus for the 2024-2025 school year. His recommendation is to purchase a new 84-passenger Holland bus for \$148,926.00. Mr. Klinger said that Mr. Lichota did get a couple bids and also provided a breakdown of the ages of all of the buses the district is currently utilizing.

Mrs. Ulman asked if this bus is being purchased with COVID funds and if the state approved the use of ESSER funds for transportation purchases.

Mr. Klinger said that this purchase will either come from ESSER funds or from the transportation allocation from the general fund, which is a new allocation this year.

Mrs. Ulman asked if there was still a surplus of ESSER funds that needed to be used up and asked if we could purchase two buses.

Mr. Klinger said that he would discuss this with Mr. Lichota and Mrs. McCoy and will re-visit this at the next meeting. He mentioned that they try to have a healthy balance of new and old buses and they don't want to purchase a lot of new buses at once because they will all have to be replaced at the same time.

Mr. Klinger said over the last several months he has been updating the Emergency Operations Plan for the district. This plan provides procedures on how to handle many different potential emergency situations that may occur on campus and/or within the community. The plan is updated annually and involves approval from many different stakeholders including law enforcement, fire service, the county emergency manager and the district. Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins to approve the Emergency Operations Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATION & PROPOSALS

Superintendent Report – Mr. Klinger said that the e-sports team finished 8th in state. Although they did not qualify for state finals, they got to attend the conference. He said students were able to network with professionals and peers in the industry at this event. Mr. Klinger stated that he continues to collect information on all of the projects going on. The pole barn estimates are coming in and he said he will update the Board once all the information has been collected. He said Mr. Lichota is also trying to work on the doors and must get an RFP together to put it out on the state website for bids.

Student Representatives – Ms. Push said that NHS has a meeting this week, on Wednesday and they are really pushing kids to get their hours in and meet a certain goal prior to Christmas break.

She said the rotary interact club is doing a door decorating contest in 1st hour and the winner will receive donuts and hot chocolate. The student senate recently did a blanket drive and was able to donate blankets to several foster families in the area and will donate remaining blankets to fire/ems personnel to use for victims of tragic events. Ms. Push also talked about next week being Holiday Spirit Week, which will give the students a good, positive push into winter break.

Administration – Mrs. Danek said that recently the 8th and 10th graders got to tour the tech. center and the 7th and 8th graders took part in an assembly called “Decisions Last a Lifetime.” She said Mr. Bruning attended a lunch period with the students and brought some robotics displays and was able to significantly increase student interest in the program. She said next week they have a home wrestling meet during the school day and tomorrow, Tuesday, is the middle school holiday concert and Thursday is the high school holiday concert, both at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Livingston said that Dave Willey, who painted the mural in the gym, was back and designed a new mural for the student section in the gym and it has been completed. He also spoke about a holiday shirt fundraiser that is currently happening to raise funds to bring back the PTA. Mr. Mejeur gave a breakdown of post-season awards for fall sports. He said there were a lot of post-season accolades for our students, both academically and athletically. Mrs. Tiffany highlighted the middle school students of the month and said the coffee fundraiser will be delivered on Wednesday. She said the middle school is doing a fundraiser called Santa Paws to raise money for the animal shelter. She also said that her son, Gabrielle Tiffany, was the only student to make it to the all-state band which was pretty awesome. Lastly, she said she got to attend the MEMSCA conference with Mrs. Clouse and she learned a lot of very helpful information and about different mentoring opportunities. Mrs. Clouse said that the Santa breakfast took place at the gym this past weekend and there was a great turnout for the event. She said the MEMSCA conference was great and she learned about personal wellness and the principal’s role in special education, as well as about some PD opportunities for teachers. She said overall it was a rewarding time. Mrs. Clouse also highlighted the elementary students of the month and said that the kids have been practicing and rehearsing for the Christmas program which will take place on December 20 at 1:00 p.m. in the alumni gym.

From the Board – Mrs. Lentz said she loves the purple pinky idea from the rotary club. She thanked Mrs. Davidson for her service and wishes her well. She also gave huge congratulations to Mr. del Rio and the e-sports team. She said she is glad NHS is on top of volunteer hours early and congratulated all of the sports teams for their honors. Mrs. Lentz said she is glad that Mrs. Clouse and Mrs. Tiffany got to attend the conference and share their ideas. Mrs. Jenkins welcomed all the new hires and congratulated the fall sports teams. She said she is excited for the band events. Mr. Butzin had nothing to add. Mrs. Ulman said SLS is doing a great job. She also wanted to thank everyone who had a hand in improving the board room. She said she is hoping to attend the music events. Mrs. Ulman said she thinks the networking opportunities at conferences are great for administrators. Mrs. Ulman said that regarding the superintendent evaluation, she agrees with what was presented and with the rating, but did not feel the process to get to a consensus was fair. She said she was unable to attend that special meeting and did not know her score would not be taken into account and was not informed of this beforehand. She said there needs to be better communication. Mrs. Klenow expressed that she doesn’t know how they could do it differently. Mrs. Ulman said that if procedures are going to be changed, they should know beforehand. Mr. Butzin recommended having the rubric of anyone who couldn’t attend the evaluation and consulting it through the evaluation process. Mrs. Bruning had nothing to add. Mrs. Klenow said that she appreciates the hard work of administration and appreciates the high school PTA starting back up.

ADVANCE PLANNING

Mr. Klinger said he needs to schedule a meeting with the policy committee prior to the next board meeting in January. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. Mrs. Lentz is unable to attend this meeting. Mrs. Klenow said she would sit in for Mrs. Lentz.

Mr. Klinger said he just wanted to remind the board about the special meeting on January 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. for a board workshop.

Mr. Klinger also reminded the budget committee that their next meeting will be on January 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., before the regular board meeting. He did say that there are some extenuating circumstances going on in Central Office with new staff and another staff member dealing with some family medical issues that may cause the budget committee meeting to be pushed back. In that case, he said the meeting would take place on February 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Ulman, support by Lentz to go into a brief recess at 8:05 p.m.

Motion by Lentz, support by Jenkins to go into a closed session for an attorney/client update at 8:17 p.m. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Lentz, support by Jenkins to return to open session at 9:04 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ulman, support by Bruning to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.