

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
Regular Meeting
October 25, 2021
Report 21-38

Present: Adam Easlick, Ty Krauss, Sarah Keyes, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicki, Olga Quick, Marlene Webster
Absent: None

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

Dr. Dallas Linter began Lincoln High School's building report by introducing members of Knights of the Round Table (KORT). "Good evening, everyone. We are rekindling, retooling something that existed several years ago at Lincoln High School. More commonly referred to as a student council, for us it is called the Knights of the Round Table or KORT. I want to introduce our co-advisors Taylor Sergent and our school social worker Ms. Tracy Hyde." Mr. Sergent introduced himself and Ms. Hyde as advisors of the KORT and introduced student representatives Bryan Hudson and Hannah Spencer. Mr. Sergent shared that the initiative of KORT is to allow students to take part in government and they are planning some field trips in the 2021-2022 school year to watch government in action. Dr. Lintner added that another initiative of KORT is to improve the culture at Lincoln High School and the students will be learning at the same time they are 'doing'. President Rick Mowen commended the student representatives for stepping forward into a leadership role and that stepping into this role will serve them in their futures as well.

Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss to move into closed session at 5:40PM for the purpose of discussing attorney client privilege materials. President Mowen conducted a roll-call vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Keyes to return to open session at 6:30PM. President Mowen conducted a roll-call vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Correspondence

Dr. Tuttle began her superintendent's report by sharing a quote from Joseph Addison in recognition of Administrator's Appreciation Month. "October is Administrator Appreciation Month. I would like to share a quote from Joseph Addison, an English essayist, poet, playwright and politician born in 1672 – Yes, centuries ago, he said, "No one is more cherished in the world than someone who lightens the burden of another. This is so applicable in today's world. We have called on our administrators to be stronger and more resilient than ever and to guide us through incredible challenging times and to do so with a smile on their face. Our educational team continues to do more with less resources, including human resources, just like businesses and other entities. Although our team members love our kids, many are exhausted and call on our administrators to help. Yet, even in times of exhaustion, our administrators hold their heads high and ask how they can help to lighten the burden of another – that's called teamwork and that's what teammates do. Our administrators are amazing team leaders and sometimes it is hard to

understand the hourly pressures that are placed on them to solve issues and to lighten the burden of others. So, thank you to our administrators and all others on our educational team and in our community who have strived to lessen the burden for others rather than creating additional burdens. We can't give up on each other; we need to stay strong for our students. The Board of Education and I think we have a particularly amazing administrative team, and we appreciate the spirit of the members of our administrative team. We have a small token of appreciation to recognize you specifically in the month of October. Would the administrators that are in the audience please stand for recognition of your work. Thank you."

Dr. Tuttle continued by sharing that the Grand Opening of the Performing Arts Center will take place on Thursday, November 4 starting with a ribbon cutting ceremony at six o'clock in the evening and the program will start at seven o'clock and asked that administrators and members of the Board mark their calendars.

Dr. Tuttle then shared her thoughts on COVID. "For the past eleven years and about 264 Board of Education Meetings I have served as Superintendent, and it has been a joy to do so. At each Board meeting I have presented my Superintendent's Report that has traditionally highlighted the wonderful accomplishments of our students, of our educational team, and of our community. However tonight, although I wish to continue that tradition as there are many positive happenings in our district that I could share, I am going to use my time to speak on an issue that has become exceptionally challenging. The issue is how to keep our students safe and in school in the midst of a global pandemic. Collectively, our educational team, our parents, our students have made Owosso Public Schools a progressive, world class school district and I am incredibly proud of our accomplishments. However, above all else, I have always placed the safety and security of our students as my priority. This is often a stressful and complex responsibility and I take it most seriously. We continue to implement strategies based our on our security expert partners such as local law enforcement, Michigan state police, homeland security, etcetera. I listen to and learn from experts whenever possible. Even though I consider myself an expert in education, I still ask other educational experts their thoughts and opinions on educational matters, and I value their educated input. I do not believe there is a time for any one person to be an expert on everything. In that vein, I do not purport to be an expert on a variety of topics including but not limited to legal matters, law enforcement, taxes, medicine, and public health. I always have and will continue to rely on the assistance of experts when needed. The Shiawassee County Health Department is our local expert on public health issues and their role is to strengthen our community by preventing illness and improving health. I defer to experts on public health issues such as COVID-19 and other communicable diseases like strep throat, polio, measles, in the same way I follow the advice of safety and security experts. Our health department also employs medical experts such as Dr. Dennis Chernin who is an M.D., a Master of Public Health, and a medical director. I trust our experts. I lean on them to provide guidance, recommendations, requirements, and mandates. In speaking with our county health director Mr. Larry Johnson and his expert team, they have provided clear recommendations and requirements in writing and verbally. However, there is a discrepancy among individuals as to the parameters for requirement or mandate. Therefore, I think it would behoove the Board to at some point consider formalizing a resolution indicating how the District should proceed with COVID-19 protocols and procedures. While following the Shiawassee County Health Department's plan we have been able to keep students safe while keeping students in school which are our two main goals. Shiawassee County Health Department's leadership has proven to be successful, and I would recommend continuing with the plan from the Shiawassee County Health Department. Furthermore, I would like to commend the Owosso Public Schools team for understanding that collaboration and compromise are needed in difficult times. I know there have been disagreements. I believe in my heart that everyone has positive intentions. However we choose to act in the face of adversity is perhaps the truest measure of our character. I appreciate everyone

working together and respecting each other and I look forward to continuing our progress. Thank you.”

In the interest of time, Mr. Brooks forwent his curriculum report.

Student Representative, Madalyn Hassyn, began her student report with an update on Varsity Football. “Our Varsity Football team went to Adrian this past Friday and came out with a win. Our Quiz Bowl team went to Flushing last week and varsity won two out of three matches and J.V. won two out of two matches, this week they will travel to Swartz Creek. We just finished our College Spirit week, and everyone really enjoyed showing their future school plans. Our days were Monday, ‘Wear a hat from your favorite college’. Tuesday was ‘Sunglasses Day’. Wednesday was ‘Pajama Day’. Thursday’s theme was ‘Wear Your Favorite College Merchandise’. This coming Friday the drama club will be hosting a costume contest and the winner of the contest will be awarded with a gift card to a local restaurant. All proceeds will go towards the drama club’s future endeavors. We had our Academic Achievement Awards on the nineteenth, these awards were given to students with a 3.5 GPA or higher. Congratulations to those who were honored that night. Our annual Volleybrawl game is right around the corner. It is College Application Month at OHS. For future reference, our student government is planning our annual can drive so we’re very excited to be helping those in need. Thank you.”

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.

Before public participants addressed the Board, Vice President Ochodnický stated “President Mowen before we do that, I’d like to take a moment to state that the events leading up to my speaking at the Commissioner’s meeting on Thursday – I understand many are here to speak to that. This was approximately two months of dialogue of things that occurred in that time. I am here with the rest of that information that I will share during the Board reports. So, there is more to hear if you are interested.”

Ann Hall
Josh Dewley
Jackie Burzmor
Kristen Bratschi
Robin Owens
Justin McGraw
Tony Newman
Krista Johnson
Michael Thornton

For Action

- Moved by Webster, supported by Krauss to approve the September 27, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes, the October 11, 2021 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes, and the October 11, 2021 Committee of the Whole Meeting Closed Session Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Krauss, supported by Keyes to approve the Audit Report from the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Motion carried unanimously. Nick West “I will briefly go over the highlights of the Audit this year. Going over some audit results, for the financial statements we expressed an unmodified or clean opinion over those. That is the highest opinion we can express on your financial statements, so kudos to the district for the clean audit this year. In your packet I handed out you will also see the governance letter. That is required communication to the Board of Education. In this letter we would say any disagreements with management, any uncorrected misstatements and I am happy to say we have nothing of that sort to report so thank you to Julie and her team for all their help with the audit. So, what is new for 2021? Quite a bit. COVID was the big issue. There is a lot of new federal relief this year related to COVID; there was the CRF funds, the ESSER funds, so all in all the district spent about 2.1 million dollars of additional federal funding this year. Your government-wide statement is a little different than what you typically see on the fund level. This includes all your capital assets, long-term debt, everyone sees the 33-million-dollar negative deposition number down at the bottom and that will scare people but really that is just due to state pension and other post-employment benefit obligations the district is required to put on its books. If you were to take those out the district would have about a 37-million-dollar positive. Some highlights looking at the government-wide statement; the district increased its net investment in capital assets by about 2.5 million dollars so essentially you are paying off your debt quicker than your assets are depreciating which is always a great sign. The other postemployment benefits liability went down a bit this year and the district also added about 13.7 million dollars in capital assets as the Bond was spent down throughout the year. Looking at the balance sheet of the governmental funds, the general fund ended the year with about a 5.7-million-dollar fund balance. Across all funds you had about 13.7-million-dollar fund balance. The statement of revenue expenditure changes the fund balance; the big decrease in the 2018 capital project fund, that decreased about 10 million dollars this year as the Bond was spent throughout the year. In your general fund, you added just over a million dollars to the fund balance which left you at the end of the year with 18% fund balance as a percentage of expenditures. If you compare that to some other districts and the state-wide averages, last year the average was 14.9% and in the Shiawassee area the average fund balance was about 12.6%. Last year you were at 13.5% and ended the year at about 17.5% so that is a very healthy fund balance for the district. Looking at revenue for the year, the district is very dependent on state revenue. They took away some funding at the end of last year for the fiscal 2022 year, it went back up locally but I like to point that out because your property taxes, federal sources they won’t cover everything. You must have money from the state of Michigan. Looking at the three-year trend, you had a large increase in your federal revenue and an increase in the COVID release funds this year. Expenditure wise the district spent about 71% of its expenditures on instruction so it’s going straight to the classroom, that is a great number. About 28% goes to support functions, which if you compare that year to year, you will see a large increase in support expenditures this year due to the COVID relief funds. You bought PPE, chrome books, all that kind of stuff. Finally, the Notes to the Financial Statements, these go into more detail of some of the numbers. A couple of highlights from the notes; Audit bond expenditures in accordance with Section 1351a for bond construction funds as well as the voter approved bond language, in compliance so that means the Bond funds are being spent on what they should be spent on in accordance with how the public voted on the Bond. We audit your sinking fund expenditures as well in accordance with Section 1212(1) and again the district is in compliance so those funds are being spent how they should be. Looking at the debt millage rate, the district is about 4.7 mils in debt, 1.99 for the sinking fund so all in all you’re just under 7 mils. Many districts that I work with are in the 7-12 mil range and you are below that which is great to see. Your capital asset

detail the district has had about 13.7 million dollars of adds and 1.5 million dollars of depreciation. Note six will break down detail of bonds outstanding so if you ever wonder how much debt is due next year or the next five years you will look at note six. Note eight will detail out the retirement services and other postemployment benefit liability. For the budget to actual comparison, the district started the year expecting a deficit of about 177,000 dollars, final budget was about 131,000-dollar deficit and as I mentioned you had a great positive variance this year of just over one million dollars which ended the fund balance at about 18% as a percentage of expenditures. As the district has in the past you had a single audit, so essentially, we audited your federal expenditures, we audited all that new COVID money, the CRF, the ESSER funds and we're happy to report no findings, no misstatements nothing of that sort so again kudos to the district. Briefly, on some future issues, the GASB 87 related to leases so if the district is leasing any busses or buildings, it would be a discussion to have for fiscal year 2022 how it will affect your financial statements. The GASB 96 related to Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangements, that is implemented for fiscal year 2023 so if the district is looking at any of those arrangements it would be a good discussion to have in how that will affect your financial statements. That is all I have for you, thank you for allowing me to present to you tonight." Dr. Tuttle ended the Audit Report by commending CFO Omer for her hard work and thanked Nick for his presentation. Nick also commented that CFO Omer is one of, if not the best, CFO that he has had the pleasure of working with.

- Moved by Ochodnicky, supported by Easlick to approve the 2021-2022 Owosso Middle School Washington D.C. Trip. Motion carried unanimously. Dr. Tuttle explained "This is probably the most favorite trip we do. We are hoping to include the students who have missed out on field trips the last couple of years due to COVID. I want to thank Dr. Dwyer and Mr. Collins for working to include all eighth-tenth grade individuals in this trip, it is normally only offered to eighth graders. I am excited that we get to bring these opportunities to kids and try to recoup some of the lost moments of years passed."
- Moved by Keyes supported by Quick to approve the Performing Arts Center Fee Structure. Motion carried unanimously. Dr. Tuttle stated "Mrs. Thompson spent a lot of time researching similar facilities in districts like ours, you can see the breakdown of cost depending on whether the renters are profit or non-profit, whether they are local or not local, I think she did an outstanding job. We did find an individual who may be able to run the PAC for us, she brings twelve years' experience to the table. We are working with the Cook Family Foundation to on how best to utilize her time between the Lebowksy Center and the PAC. I am excited to get the PAC up and running for not only our kids but the community as well."
- Moved by Webster, supported by Krauss to approve the Revised Policy 5460.01 LHS Graduation Requirements. Motion carried unanimously. Dr. Tuttle explained "We just revised this policy thinking there were going to be some changes to the programming at Lincoln High School. However, those changes were not made so you can see the reduction of hours from seven to six and corresponding to that the number of credits associated with those hours. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them."

For Future Action

- Moved by Easlick, supported by Keyes to move 'Obsolete Material – Transportation' to For Action. Motion carried unanimously. The Board of Education will be asked to authorize the Owosso Public School's Transportation department to dispose of two buses that can no longer meet the transportation needs of students. Dr. Tuttle explained "This includes Bus #99-31 and Bus #04-38. These vehicles have given their time the district and they likely will not pass inspection. So, we would like to put them out for scrap or to bid, whichever garners more for the district in revenue."

For Information

Accepted positions

- Madalyn Patrix accepted a food service substitute position at Bryant Elementary.
- Dana Shepard accepted a substitute paraprofessional position at Bryant Elementary

Public Participation

Tom Kurtz

Board Member Comments/Updates

Member Krauss “I want to reach out and commend everyone for their public comments. Thank you for participating in the process, we appreciate all that you bring to the table, your thoughts, and ideas. I want to congratulate the Lincoln student council. I think that is fantastic. That’s great leadership and I wish you the very best as you follow through on your year. In regard to COVID, I implore everyone to continue to work as a collaborative group, let’s rely on the professionals for the best information they can give us and let’s continue to make the best decisions for our community, for our kids and let’s be safe. That’s it.”

Member Easlick “I want to say I appreciate Dallas and his team for bringing back Knights of the Round Table. His team is giving Lincoln students the true high school experience. I want to thank all the administrators for everything they do. I want to thank all our public participants tonight for their thoughts and suggestions. I can’t imagine what it would be like to experience this as a child, but our kids will have such a better head start if something were to happen in the future. Lastly, I’d like to thank Julie for being so detailed and taking such pride in her job.”

Treasurer Keyes “I don’t really know where to begin because I feel like there are so many divided opinions in the room especially concerning COVID. We all know that it’s important for our students to be in school. I do think Dr. Tuttle is correct in saying that it is time to sit down and discuss what that means, whether our COVID guidelines say that we always follow the health department, or we say we are going to mask our kids or whatever that might be, it sounds like we need to have a thorough discussion as a Board and listen to our teachers, our parents, our community members and see what they would like to do from here on out. We need to work together to come up with a solution that works for everybody. Obviously, some people are going to have to compromise. So, let’s keep that in mind moving forward. Hopefully everyone knows our intentions is to keep our students safe, our teachers safe, and to keep kids in the classroom. We appreciate all of you coming here to voice your opinions.”

Member Quick stated “I would also like to congratulate the Lincoln High School students. All that they learn as part of this student government they will be able to carry with them through the years. I want to thank the administrators for their leadership, especially during these difficult times. It’s important that we continue moving forward and work hard on behalf of our students so thank you. I also want to thank Julie for the excellent work that she’s done with our finances. Finally, it has recently become abundantly clear that nothing is clear. Two things that are clear and I want understood is that I believe Dr. Tuttle has acted in accordance with the information yielded to her with the consent of this Board. Secondly, I believe that this Board can and must provide for the safety and welfare of our students and staff while at school. This is outlined in our bylaws. Thus, I move that we pass a resolution reaffirming our intent to comply with policy 8450 and the guidelines and protocols of the Shiawassee County Health Department, that district

administrators be directed to continue to comply with policy 8450 and the guidelines and the protocols of the Shiawassee County Health Department, that all resolutions and parts of resolution that conflict with the provisions of this resolution are rescinded. I have with me a copy of the resolution that I propose, and I have copies for everyone including policy 8450, as well as the resolution and the current guidelines as provided by the Shiawassee County Health Department on October 7, 2021. I have a motion and I would ask for support.” Motion supported by Easlick to adopt the Owosso Public Schools Board of Education Resolution.

Secretary Webster stated “I think all of us sitting at this table have very long wanted full control of our schools and we have not always been happy with state mandates, especially unfunded ones. We want control and now we have it. We have very frequently, no we have always, followed recommendations of the health department. If a student comes to school with chickenpox, they must return home. If a student comes to school with head lice, they are sent home. If a student comes to school with strep throat, they are sent home. Those are not pandemic situations; those are much less communicable than the disease we are currently facing. We have heard our community. I know we are divided on the issue of the masks, and we’re divided on the issue of the vaccine, and as a Board Member I would like to see our kids in school without masks and without vaccine mandates. But we’re in a pandemic so we can’t do nothing. If we’re not going to require masks or vaccines, we have to do what we’ve always done with communicable diseases and continue to quarantine and isolate. That is our duty. We have followed the recommendations from the health department in the past without a mandate. We weren’t mandated to send kids home because they had head lice, we weren’t mandated to send children home who had chickenpox, we did that because it is our duty to follow the law and we want to keep our students safe. That is one of our priorities second to educating children and sometimes it’s first. I support this resolution. I believe that we need to continue with our practice of quarantine and isolating so that we can continue to keep kids in school without masks and without requiring the vaccine. We’ve heard loudly from probably the majority of the community that they are in favor of not having masks, not having mandated vaccines, so we have to do something. We can’t do nothing or else we’ll risk our students’ and teachers’ safety. I am willing to support this resolution, but we are not doing anything new that we haven’t always done and that is following the recommendations of the health department on communicable diseases. Why would we not do that for COVID-19?”

Vice President Ochodnický stated “I support the idea of the Board passing a policy and that is kind of where I was going to go. I would like to share my thoughts before this is voted upon. So, very clearly, I do not claim to be a doctor, I do not claim to know all of that. I am an alumnus of the school, I raised my five children here and now grandchildren here, anyone who knows me and I see many faces out there that know me, knows my passion for our children, for the kids in the community and everything we do every day outside of this Board room and what I bring to this Board. I am MASB certified, level two which very few people in the state of Michigan are. I pride myself, my time, my efforts, my volunteerism, and my preparedness for these meetings. I don’t claim to know everything, and I ask a lot of questions. In my twelve years on being on the Board I have enjoyed my time on this Board, working with Dr. Tuttle and our Administrative team. When this all started, we had many unknowns, things were moving fast and furious and we reopened last August with the plan the state mandated. We didn’t have much wiggle room with that, we had to follow that, and I believe Owosso Public Schools went above and gave beyond 110% to do what they needed to do. Following that plan, taking care of our kids and being safe. Online, they did the best they could do with that. Today, eighteen months into this, we now have a lot of options. We have online for parents who want to keep their kids home, we have a vaccine, we probably vaccinated our staff first, probably the first ones to get it in the county. Masks, if you want to wear a mask you can wear a mask and obviously if you wanted to come back to school as normal that’s kind of where we were in our meetings. From there, I want to

take a step back a minute because I want to make something very clear. I do my homework; I ask a lot of questions as I said. But I have always had the utmost respect for Dr. Tuttle, for Mr. Johnson as our health director, throughout the pandemic there were times I texted him ‘How are you doing? Hanging in there?’ you know, this is not personal I want to make that clear. I wouldn’t want to walk in Mr. Johnson’s shoes, or Dr. Tuttle’s shoes, heck most days I think my shoes are falling off. So, this was a series of events that I want to go through while we’re here. Our 2020 plan ended July 30, or June 30, and July we reported back to normal – it was going to be our best year ever. We went with that and started the year. A week before school started, we unfortunately got correspondence that, Dr. Tuttle relayed to us that this year might be more challenging than last year. I think we were all taken aback by that as we all had heard nothing through the month of July. Governor Whitmer sent out a correspondence that she planned to give recommendations to health departments to adopt policies or requirements to then take that to the districts and go from there. So, quite honestly, I felt bad for Mr. Johnson. Here he is thinking he’s got an idea of what’s going on in the county and now he has this thrown onto his plate. From there, we ended up with just recommendations on August 13. From there we went, started school relatively normal with recommendations. We as a Board had not adopted a policy at that point. A few weeks into school I am getting phone calls from parents that children of possible contacts were being sent home for quarantine and were concerned as to why, how, what we were doing. We sent out the guidance, but we did not have a requirement from the Health Department. In that time, I did go to Dr. Tuttle and asked ‘Why are we doing this? We do not have a signed requirement from the health department.’ From there, I asked how it is we were quarantining kids and she cited policy 1230 and 1230.1 ‘The Board itself will formulate and adopt administrative guidelines and rules only when required by law – which we did not have a law at that time- and when Superintendent recommends Board adoption. So, this is 1230 and 1230.1 that she cited that as what she was using to impose quarantine and isolation and other measures. I then said OK, I’m thinking we need to adopt a policy, that did not happen, that was my conversation with her. Then I said, citing this policy, this was adopted by Board long before all of us. This policy is almost twenty years old. So, we could revise it and we could somehow add in if we want to give that to as Superintendent to be able to do. Bring it before us in a committee meeting, let’s have that conversation, it is time to start having these conversations regarding policy and procedure. As the Board of Education, we have a couple of roles; we hire, fire, and evaluate the Superintendent, we create policies, amend policies, take away policies. In fact, there was a conversation at one point we were talking about policies, and we said for every policy we add we should take out ten. We haven’t done that obviously, but we don’t amend them very often. It’s a lot and very time consuming. So, I requested that and that didn’t happen. From there, I moved on and at the September Board meeting I shared my thoughts again on that. My thoughts are very different from some here. I know that, and I’m ok with that. What was important to me is that we come together and have a conversation. I know where I stand, others have other opinions, and I know that I am one of seven. I just wanted to have dialogue regarding who should be in charge of making these decisions in a pandemic. When these policies were created, I don’t think our former Board members had any idea we would be in a pandemic. So, from there, I requested that we don’t continue to quarantine kids and follow that guidance without Board approval and that was all I was requesting at that time. I got a phone call from a really upset dad, his healthy child was in quarantine a second time being out of school more than she was in school and he couldn’t understand that. The child struggled throughout the pandemic, they chose not to bring the child back last year and then finally got back to school where she needed to be socially and mentally. So, she came back to school and now has been quarantined twice. Let me also make this clear I don’t have a problem with a policy or adjusting a policy we already have for isolation like we do of some other diseases that are mentioned in here. But again, as a Board we have not come together and had any of these conversations, so this continued. Dr. Tuttle followed Mr. Johnson’s guidance and then from there we went into September, the September meeting which is where I expressed my thoughts and where we need

to express them whether people agree with them or not that is what we are here to do. I know that other people, I respect the thoughts, I respect the comments here tonight, but I also respect the process that I feel needs to happen here through policy and procedure. So, from there after that meeting, on October 7 we then get the requirements that came out from the health department and I'm reading through it and kind of wondering, again, I didn't know those were going to be coming, haven't heard this was coming, and why and how, and I felt like we were not a part of that process that we have to own at the end of the day. Just being a part of the process, Dr. Tuttle did try hard to get Dr. Chernin to come before the Board and to answer these questions. Dr. Chernin is hired by the county to help Mr. Johnson make these decisions. I don't claim to be a health expert or anything of that nature by any means. But I desire for us to do our due diligence and to be able to have these conversations, and to be able to be together as a Board and hear those things and ask those questions because there is so much unknown. There is so much that is changing every day, information, where you get it from, who's right and who's wrong. At the end of every day, I put my head on my pillow hoping that we are doing the right thing for our children and anyone who knows me knows that that is my passion. I do not take lightly what I do here. I have always worked hard, worked well with our Board, and worked well with Dr. Tuttle. This is not personal I am going to say that again. This is hard. This has been so hard. Twelve years I've done this, and I love what I do here. I love representing the kids in this district, especially the kids that need us the most. That is my work every day. From there we got this, and I question it. First, how did we come about to this because I wasn't aware this was coming or anyone else, I don't think. But then it was, it seems like another memo. I had questions, I wanted to ask questions. Leading up to all of this I reached out to Mr. Johnson on several occasions, because I need to understand all of this, why, how, who is being asked, why would we mask our kids or wouldn't we, why would we mandate a vaccine, and was Dr. Chernin a part of that process. I feel like we were not allowed that. So, then I just went, because I don't know, I'm not an attorney either, so from there I did not hear back so I called Dr. Boggs who is a county administrator and asked him to help me better understand this. He said he didn't have the answers because I felt we were told there is a state mandate on the quarantine and the isolation, but I could not find that, I found these two documents which were recommendations from the state to the health department to the schools on isolation and quarantine. It was just recommendations. I could not come up with that either. So, the two questions I had were, is this a legal document and is it not, is it just a recommendation still? And I am ok with recommendations because I think what has needed to happen is now happening tonight that we are going to have a conversation ideally and what should this look like? Should we be amending policies? There are two different policies Dr. Tuttle has cited, do we want to create a COVID policy? Should we do a survey with our parents, the people we serve I feel like haven't even had a voice because we haven't done all of this until now. So, from there, Dr. Boggs said he would facilitate a meeting me, Mr. Johnson, himself, and chairman Brodeur. So chairman Brodeur, who served two terms on the Board of Education years ago, and I was happy to meet with them so I said 'OK, let's do that because I would like to understand the state requirements if I'm missing something, did I miss something that I couldn't find, is this a legal document and how are we making these decisions and can we be a part of the process?' Mr. Johnson declined to meet so I then went ahead, and I did go to the commissioners meeting as a part of the Board of Education regarding these questions I had. I then did meet with Dr. Boggs and Chairman Brodeur, they did not bring answers to that meeting with them, so I asked how do we get those answers? Chairman Brodeur said he would look into it, and I left the office. So then, like I said, I found these other plans here and I wasn't given this information that I've asked for and so I went to the commissioners meeting. From there, apparently after I left because I had other appointments, Chairman Brodeur spoke to that and the policy was a mandate, signed and whatnot, which OK, that's fine I appreciate that because now we can take Mr. Johnson's given guidance have a conversation at the Board level which I have been asking for since before school started and have not gotten until tonight. So, simply worded what I thought was extremely important in this, like I

said in consideration of revising policies or not revising policies or creating ones specifically for this school year. Can we do a survey with the parents, staff, have everybody give their input with that guidance and get a feel for where everyone is at as a district. So in that guidance we are now following the other concern I had is the daily testing in order to be in school, for possible exposures. My question was what about the kids with parents who do not have a car to drive them to the school at 7:00am? Or the kids whose parents have to be to work at 5:00am, how are they going to be able to test? Well, they can't, the kids would have to stay home and quarantine. Obviously, that poses other challenges on our families that I don't know how to resolve but we always talk about fair and equitable for all while we're doing this. So today, I'll move into an experience I had today in my own family. My daughter was texting me this morning. My grandson was at school, he just turned five, she was very concerned that parents can't go into parties, can't come to the parties, they are not having the Halloween party in the gym, we're not allowing parents to come into the buildings like last year, I was not made aware of that, and these are decisions I feel like we all need to be a part of and own. I don't know if anyone else here was aware of that but from there my daughter called me crying, extremely upset wanting to know why her son came out of school today with a mask on. These are the things we must be clear on. This is this, this is why, this is how this happens, there is no clarity to this. There's none of that. She was very upset her young and healthy child came outside with a mask on today. Now I redirected her to call the school, it was about 4:00 in the afternoon and she said she got hung up on. So obviously thing brings forth more concerns in how we're going to move forward and how we're making these decisions. I understand her being upset. I asked her if she had any missed calls or if she had received any emails and her answer was no. So, I am following up with that. But, trying to do this on all sides having to watch what my daughter and her son went through last year, obviously preschool online was a disaster. But looking at the mental health side or at least the bigger picture of this, in what part do parents have control or don't they? These conversations have not been had we just keep coming out with requirements eighteen months into this...the end game was the vaccine and now here we are. Are we going to have this around forever? It depends on what guy you ask. But what is the bigger picture, where are we going will all of this? I don't have a problem having a discussion as a Board about a policy I just don't feel like we have had time to look at this and have a discussion. I feel like here we are, and we can follow these things that came with that."

Secretary Webster stated "We have had these discussions. We had these discussions two weeks ago. We talked about Test to Stay in our Committee meeting. We've talked about this stuff. So it's not that we haven't had any conversation. We haven't done anything formal because I think we've all been operating under the assumption, under the policy 8450 that the Superintendent has authority to act regarding communicable diseases. As you've pointed out, Vice President Ochodnicki, this situation changes daily. We currently have a positivity rate, and I know that Larry Johnson confirmed that, a positivity rate of 15%. Which is astronomical, those numbers are on the rise. This is not something I want to get the Board together for every day, to decide if we can have a Halloween party at Central school. That's a decision we're going to have to authorize and empower our staff, we hired them for that, to make the decisions that need to be made in a rapidly changing climate. We have other districts that did nothing, and they had to close down. We're working hard to stay open. That's why we've authorized our staff and our administration to do what they need to do daily. We have not formalized that as a policy but there are state laws and policies that we have locally that say they are authorized to do that. So, like I said before, I feel like tonight yes, we are going to pass a policy, yes, it is a little redundant because staff already has the authority to do that. To put it in black and white, I want to say again, we give our administrators the authority to enforce those policies that are necessary to keep our kids safe. This is a governance body, not a managerial body, we don't make managerial decisions. We want to make sure that whatever we do is broad enough so that they can do what they need to do as they see things evolving daily to keep students safe. I do not want to be part

of these decisions. I do not know anything about whether Central school should have a Halloween party in the gym. I trust the people that are in that building every day, to know the circumstances, to know how many kids have been sick, to know what the numbers are. I have no sense of what the schools' numbers are and if I knew them today, they would be different by Thursday. I think that's why we haven't formalized anything; we've tried to keep it open ended so that our administrators can do what they need to do."

Vice President Ochodnický said "So I'm going to ask here, how was this decision made today on the masks that were being put on kindergartners? I mean, did Dr. Tuttle make the call, or the principal, did the teacher do it? Because I need to better understand. Don't answer it now, get with me tomorrow, but these are questions that are being asked regularly so I thought I would use my example of the situation that happened today."

Dr. Tuttle responded "I cannot address that. Vice President Ochodnický, I don't know. I didn't give a directive to put masks on anyone. We have been so consistent from the beginning to the end, that we do what our health department tell us to do no more no less. We did have a case of eight quarantined students and three positive students in a classroom at Emerson Elementary. I called Mr. Johnson and asked him what I should do, and he told me I need to shut that class down. So, we did it. I didn't have time to call the Board and ask for permission, the decision needed to be made right then. If you want to know, did I make a directive to put masks on whatever grade, the answer is no."

Member Quick stated "I think perhaps what is best for the audience, because they don't have the resolution in front of them, is that I read through this for them. What I am proposing, is that we adopt a policy with regard to reinforcing policy 8450 which is the Control of Casual Contact Communicable Diseases as well as guidance from the health department on October 7, which defines isolation, quarantine, and procedures for the Test to Stay program. For clarification, it does not include a mask mandate. There is not a mask mandate included in this. This is for quarantine, isolation, and Test to Stay."

Member Keyes asked, "Which is exactly what we've been doing right?"

Member Quick stated "Exactly."

Member Keyes stated "I think what Shelly has wanted out of all of this is more communication, between the Board, Owosso Public Schools and the community at large. I don't think a survey to the parents is a bad idea, getting more information about where our staff and parents are at could be useful. I think she has just more or less wanted us to talk about it to see where we're at, so we can own it and does not all fall on Dr. Tuttle. And Shelly, would you like to take an opportunity to address the fact – I didn't go to the Board meeting, I don't know what was said or anything like that – there is a difference between saying 'I am here on behalf on' and saying 'I serve on' and I think there are a lot of people in the audience that are under the impression that you were there on behalf of the Board and I don't think that was the case. Correct?"

Vice President Ochodnický stated "Correct. It was just a part of my pursuit for information."

President Mowen "As I said earlier this is an ever-evolving thing and I do look for information from people that know better than I certainly know. From a September 10, 2021, statement from Michigan.gov states that "The Michigan Department of Human Health and Services recommends local health departments and schools work together to quickly isolate COVID-19 cases among students and staff, identify close contacts that will help reduce the risk of transmission in schools and the community while allowing in person services. It also says that schools and the health

departments should work together to decide what policies work best. At this point in time, it is the health department that quarantines and isolates students, not the school. On October 18, the statement from the CDC says that to resume in person learning administrators must be prepared to respond quickly when someone who has COVID-19 has been at school or at a school event. But isolation and quarantine and testing can slow the spread of this virus in schools and the community and helps prevent school closures. Some schools have reached a point where they have either had to close or introduce different mandates so they can remain open. On October 21, a local radio station in the Detroit area stated that despite falling COVID-19 cases across the country Michigan is bucking the national trend. Cases remain high. In fact, new cases of COVID-19 in the State of Michigan remain twice as high as most larger states like Florida and California. Last month, I brought some statistics to the Board and at that time there was something like 6500 cases in the county. Yesterday I looked again on the state website and they have increased again from 6,500 to 7,700 and out of that the 0-19 age group positivity rate has increased from 15% to 18% so it is a growing concern. With that growing concern of our young population, we have, through our Superintendent, our administrators and guidance from our health department, kept our schools relatively safe. Can we prevent everything? No. But we have done our very best job on all levels to see that our students and our staff get to go to a safe environment for learning. If there is an outbreak it is handled through the guidance of the health department that we are incensed, whether you call it a mandate or requirement , I think we are obligated to follow and adopt.”

President Mowen conducted a roll call vote on the resolution. Ayes: Trustee Quick, Trustee Krauss, Trustee Easlick, Trustee Keyes, Secretary Webster, President Mowen Nays: Vice President Ochodnicky. Resolution passed in 6-1 roll call vote.

President Mowen continued Board Correspondence. Secretary Webster stated “I think I have said quite enough. Thank you everybody. You are all amazing. Thanks for all you do.”

Vice President Ochodnicky stated “I think they only thing that I would add, looking at the bigger picture of all this, looking at what has changed in our community. Our kids are least affected by COVID we now know that 18 months in. We, outside of school, are going to graduations, open houses. I drove by the Corunna bowling alley one day, there were a hundred cars there, no masks, people are living and back to normal, things of that nature outside of here. We all live very differently, and I hope that there is something to the hypocrisy of how we are living and versus what we’re asking of our parents and our children. And I think that at the end of the day I think our parents should have more say. I have said that and stay by that, and I feel like we still need to have some of those conversations. That’s it. Thank you.”

President Mowen stated “I do want to take an opportunity to address one or two issues that were brought up this evening during public participation. At the beginning of the meeting, Vice President Ochodnicky acknowledged that she did attend the Commissioner’s meeting on a couple of occasions. With the concerns that were brought back to me I did reach out to our MASB legal counsel, Mr. Brad Banasik. The concern here was, not that an individual has a right to speak, we do have that freedom of speech in this country, but perhaps the perception that she indicated her position on the Board as the ‘governing body of the Board’ did create an issue. Mr. Banasik said that the comments and actions of a single member of the Board do not represent the position or opinion of the Board itself. The community and its members must be placed on notice that unless specifically authorized by a motion of this Board an individual member of this Board has no greater authority than that of an individual community member and that such individuals’ comments should not be construed as representing the opinion or position of this Board. I also want to, for the benefit of the Board itself, want to mention that we just two weeks ago had our Board retreat. It brought up some important things for us, one that a gentleman here addressed

this evening, we are seven individuals with seven voices. When we take action, we have one voice that we use to communicate with our community. Our Board norms indicate that we are respectful, and we put our students first. Something else that was brought up at that retreat, and I think it's common knowledge to everyone here, trust takes time. I think for the community and our staff it's important to earn their trust. Trust can be lost very quickly and once that trust is lost it is a very difficult thing to regain. I think Dr. Tuttle, through her leadership in this district and through each of our administrators, by following the guidelines that have been recommended by Mr. Johnson and our county Health Department, has done a great deal to keep this community safe. I thank you all for your attendance this evening."

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

- **October 26:** Board of Education Appeal of Student Discipline Meeting, 5:30pm Washington Campus Gymnasium
- **November 8:** Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 Washington Campus Conference Room
- **November 22:** Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 Washington Campus Gymnasium

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Brooke Barber.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Webster

Marlene Webster, Secretary