The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 4:16 p.m. in the Community Board Room of the Jr./Sr. High School with Mrs. Ziolkowski, Board Vice President, presiding.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Ziolkowski asked if anyone would be recording the meeting. Curt Minich of 420 Telford Avenue indicated he might record.

**Board Members Present:**

Mrs. Larkin (arr. 4:31pm), Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Redner (arr. 4:35pm), Mrs. Taylor (arr. 4:21pm), Mr. Zeppos (arr. 4:59pm/dep. 6:49pm), and Mrs. Ziolkowski.

**Board Members Absent:**

Mrs. Waxler

**Administrative Staff Present:**

Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Arnst, and Mr. Cafoncelli.

**Attendees:**

David Kostival, Reading Eagle, Shelley Filer, recording secretary. An audience sign-in sheet is included as part of these official minutes.

**MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- School Board Business Meeting – March 25, 2019

All listed meetings are held in the Community Board Room of the Jr./Sr. High School unless otherwise noted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**ROUTINE APPROVALS**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Upon a motion by Mrs. McAvoy, second by Mr. McCaffrey, the Board approved the following minutes:

- February 18, 2019 Committee of the Whole Minutes

**Yeas:** McAvoy, McCaffrey, Phillips, and Ziolkowski.

**Absent:** Larkin, Redner, Taylor, Waxler, and Zeppos

**Nays:** None. Motion carried.

**COMMITTEES**

**A. CURRICULUM/TECHNOLOGY**

1. Frontline/My Learning Plan Software Information – Dr. Woodard is proposing replacing the District’s current archaic professional learning management system with Frontline. This software provides a catalog of goal-aligned learning opportunities and tracks progress toward district and state requirements. It would provide increased accuracy of data uploads related to certification requirements, give teachers
access to professional learning opportunities, and provide embedded learning communities. After a one-time start-up cost of $2,500, the annual subscription rate is $6,000. The ideal time for implementation would be June 2019. Dr. Woodard has funds in her 2018-19 budget to cover the costs this year.

2. Summer Programming Discussion – Dr. Woodard is coordinating the summer enrichment courses that will include offerings outside the STEAM course umbrella. Teacher proposals that have been submitted so far include courses in mythology, 20th century ethnomusicology, origami, STEAM, robotics, music including ukuleles, clarinet and GarageBand, and drama/theatre arts. The courses will be cost-neutral as needed materials will be factored into the tuition cost. Classes will be scheduled at WREC and the JSHS and coordinated with summer cleaning schedules. In recent years, enrollment in Jump Start has been declining. So this year, in lieu of Jump Start, evening sessions of Spartan Sprouts will be scheduled in late May. These sessions are geared for incoming kindergarten students and their families and will provide activities and resources for use in the summer months. Dr. Woodard introduced “Teachers in the Parks” (TIPS), a summer program developed by an Exeter teacher, aimed at combating the summer slide. Instead of bringing kids into school, teachers meet them where they like to play in the summer – parks, libraries, playgrounds, and pools. The TIPS Board is providing a $5,000 grant to start the program. The grant would cover the cost of four teachers to service 48 students. The target audience is two groups of incoming first- and second-graders, and two groups of incoming third- and fourth-graders who are Title I students. Title I funds would be used to defray the tuition and cost of materials. To qualify for the grant, the program must last at least six weeks. The District has the flexibility to choose its own curriculum materials. Dr. Woodard will contact West Reading Borough for use of their outdoor facilities. TIPS would replace the summer reading and math academies at WHEC. The academies would continue at WREC for grades 5-6.

3. Cyber Legislation Discussion – Legislation has been introduced that would require families to pay tuition to attend cyber charter schools if their home district offers a cyber-based program equal in scope and content. WASD is the only district in the county not offering a cyber option. Currently there are 36 students enrolled in outside programs. Dr. Woodard is researching options with BCIU and CCIU.
including Berks Online Learning and Brandywine Virtual Academy. The cost for a full-time elementary student is $4,500, and $6,000 for a full-time secondary student. Technology and support are included in the fees and teachers are provided either by the vendor or employed by the intermediate unit, depending on the option. Ongoing communication between the providers and WASD provides weekly progress reports and notification if a student hasn’t logged on in several days. Students earn a WASD diploma and can participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities. The district pays average fees for cyber school of $13,000 for a regular education student and $28,000 for a special education student. A district provided cyber option still allows for students to have access to counselors and support for issues that may have prompted enrollment in a cyber program, and provides a social opportunity with participation in sports and activities to help ease them back into the regular school environment at some point.

4. Technology Assessment Update - The surveys for Phase II - Professional Development have closed. There was a high degree of participation from administrators and professional staff, but low participation from the classified staff. The results indicated that the iPads are primarily used by students for apps, research and substitution activities. Teachers report needing more time to collaborate with colleagues on integrating technology into instruction. They requested a K-12 alignment of platform, updated devices/projectors and increased technical support. They prefer their professional learning to be delivered in-person, to be content-specific, and to be ongoing from colleagues or experts – job-embedded, ongoing professional learning. They are also interested in integration of 21st Century skills and classroom management techniques and strategies utilizing the devices. Mr. Arnst added that emerging themes from the technical aspect included addressing monitors and projectors, customer service, cross-training and vertical alignment of the platforms for software and services. Rather than having a bunch of items, it was suggested to focus on one platform and do it well. The results stressed communication especially in the change management process – when rolling out something new, communicate to stakeholders what’s involved, the timeframe, and who it impacts. He also addressed the development of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which defines how support is handled. A summary report will be shared when complete.
5. Website Update – Parents of former students and residents without children can subscribe to e-newsletters through the website in order to stay connected with the District. An intranet is being developed for the website for different groups of users to house items like curriculum documents and human resource documents. The framework for teacher pages has been developed. Student volunteers will assist with the photography. Expectations on frequency of updates will be discussed with WAEA and teacher representatives.

B. FACILITIES

1. Flannery Field Update – The large trees at High Road and Cambridge Avenue are being removed. The track improvements will follow. The pre-bid meeting is March 14.

2. Feasibility Study Update – Crabtree Rohrbach Associates was the low bidder. A meeting with them is scheduled for March 19, to review the contract and next steps. A representative will attend both Board meetings in April to answer any questions. With approval in April, the study should be completed by the start of the 19-20 school year.

3. Capital Budget Review – Mr. Boyer reviewed the five-year Capital Plan by funding source. A placeholder for the new bond funding is in 2020-21 and designated for the JSHS Phase III project. The cost of track renovations may be lower than the $1.5 million allocated, so the difference could be used for other projects. Consideration is being given to installing turf on the A-field. Considerable funds are used for maintenance and sod due to extensive use and between football and lacrosse seasons there is limited time for grass to grow. Turfing the field would allow the option of using it for competition with the addition of ball control netting. Mr. Boyer reviewed items paid through the general fund budget that are used to maintain capital assets such as the fields and sports facilities. The wrestling mats are ripped and pose health concerns. They have not been replaced since 1993. Wrestling alumni have expressed interest in donating $9,000 toward the cost of $12,000 needed to replace them. Next, Mr. Boyer reviewed items to be funded through the capital reserve budget. A long-term priority is the repaving and painting of parking lots at the JSHS and WHEC, the track lot, and the bus lot. The $22,000 allotted for 2018-19 is for a study for boring samples and bid documents. A priority for the 2018-19 year is approximately $77,000 worth of equipment for the STEAM wing requested by the teachers. Mr. Scoboria said a description and of the equipment and its use could be provided to the Board. Technology upgrades slated for 2019-20 include replacement
Minutes  March 11, 2019

of projectors at the JSHS and WHEC. Fiber technology needed for security cameras, electronic fence access, and connectivity to WiFi for track events at Flannery Field has been discussed for about three years. Preliminary quotes were higher than expected. Mr. Boyer reviewed the fund balance section for vehicle purchases. Replacement vehicles are expected in the 2020-21 year. Of the current balance of $5,072,256 in the capital reserve budget, $1.6 million is earmarked for the Flannery Field project. Transfers from the general fund to the capital reserve fund need to be made judiciously because once moved, the funds cannot be moved back to the general fund. The rate of return on the money is the same regardless of which fund the money is in. Future updates on the Capital Plan will be given in April and May so the Board can make informed decisions on which projects to pursue.

4. Outdoor Classroom Update – Mr. Scoboria said the architectural firm completed the sketch for the outdoor classroom and estimated the construction costs would be about $58,000. No roadblocks have been encountered in early work with the Borough. About $9,600 in funding is available. No additional fundraising is expected at this time. Mr. Scoboria discussed two options with the Board on how to proceed. Bidding the project at this time would provide more accurate construction costs, but quotes expire after 90 days. The project could be tabled, and architectural plans would still be viable, until another group may be interested in fundraising for the project. The administration maintains its position that given other budget challenges, the District would not recommend funding any fundraising shortage. Although some expressed continued interest in the project, the consensus was to table it, and perhaps the funding already raised could reimburse the District for the amount paid for the architectural plans.

The meeting was recessed at 6:03 p.m. to conduct an Executive Session for a personnel matter, and reconvened at 6:41 p.m.

C. FINANCE

1. Budget Projections – February 2019 – The budget projection is better than expected at this point excluding the STEAM renovations and the truck purchase. Revenues are trending a little higher than expected due to some one-time money received.

2. Enrollment Projections – Free/reduced enrollments and special education enrollments are trending slightly upward. Both are major cost drivers in the budget. Birthing data is trending
Minutes  March 11, 2019

downward which ultimately will mean fewer kindergarten enrollments. Enrollment projections for the last two years have been pretty accurate. Administration is recommending seven sections for K-2 for next year because recent data is showing that 60% of the students are coming to kindergarten with limited or no experience in an educational setting.

3. Budget Update 2019-20 – Mr. Boyer presented an update for closing the deficit assuming the maximum tax limit. He reviewed the assumed changes to revenue based on additional real estate taxes and business privilege taxes. The new revenue figures do not include possible money from activity fees or reduction in the PSERS subsidy due to retirements. He then reviewed the changes to expenditures including a freeze on uniforms, and a 10% reduction in expenses other than wages, healthcare, and debt service payments. Principals are working to fine-tune their budgets and will resubmit them in April. Mr. Boyer also included a reduction in communications cost, printing, and extracurricular activities with low participation. Updates to personnel were reviewed in four categories—extracurricular, summer programming, support staff changes and professional staff changes. The goal is to reorganize staff for efficiency rather than furlough. At the maximum tax increase, the deficit is approximately $624,000. Mr. Boyer cautioned about using fund balance for the third year to close the gap. In April, Mr. Boyer will revisit enrollment, staffing, transportation, state revenue, the healthcare rate, and the will have a five-year forecast. Per Board policy the District should maintain 6-8% in unassigned fund balance. Taking the $624,000 would drop the balance below the 6%.

4. Donations – Additional donations received from the DeCusatis memorial will be on the agenda for approval.

5. Budget Transfers – Approximately $3,700 in transfers will be on the agenda for approval.

6. BCTC Budget Approval – BCTC’s budget will be on the agenda for approval. There is no change from what is currently in our 2019-20 budget.

7. ESSA Update – Financial Reporting Component – As a requirement of ESSA, expenditures must be broken down by building level. Forecast5 has a tool that will help with submitting that data to the state.
D. PERSONNEL

1. Communications Update – Mr. Scoboria presented a proposal to change district communications to be run internally through the use of student interns. The District would identify a teacher to receive a stipend to supervise the students during the school day and afterschool hours. Ideally two to five students would be responsible for organizing material, writing stories, and managing aspects of the District’s communications. An afterschool club opportunity would also exist for students to attend events and submit photographs and articles. The current contractor would be retained through July, and the internal process would begin in August. In addition to the stipend, approximately $1,500 would be needed for the layout of the print version of the newsletter. This proposal would be less expensive, provide opportunities for students to build resumes and portfolios of photographs and articles, and promote collective ownership of district communications.

2. Position Guide Updates – The position guide for the Director of Facilities is being revised to include the responsibilities of district safety and security. The position guide for Crossing Guards has been revised to include the responsibility of completing training with the respective Boroughs as assigned. Upon approval of the new communications plan, a proposed position guide for the Communications Coordinator was reviewed. This is a stipend position.

3. Routine Personnel Items – A listing of routine personnel items to date was included in the Board packet for review.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. McAvoy seconded by Mrs. Ziolkowski to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

__________________________________
Board Secretary