The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors convened at 4:47 p.m. in a virtual meeting via Zoom with Mr. Redner, Board President, presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Following the pledge of allegiance, Mr. Redner asked if anyone would be recording the meeting. No one indicated their intent to record.

Board Members Present via Zoom:
Mrs. Harenza, Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Phillips (audio issue resolved at 4:51 p.m.), Mr. Pottieger (arr. 4:55 p.m.), Mr. Redner (dep. 6:26 p.m.), Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Waxler, and Mrs. Ziolkowski.

Administrative Staff Present via Zoom:
Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Cafoncelli, and Mr. Arnst.

Attendees:
Todd Vukmanic and John Beddia, Crabtree Rohrbaugh Assoc.; Shelley Filer, recording secretary. Virtual audience members included staff members Doug Shuey and Cathy Barra.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- School Board Business Meeting – May 26, 2020, 6:00 p.m., via Zoom
- Committee of the Whole – June 8, 2020, 4:45 p.m.

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 Mr. McCaffrey, second by Mrs. Taylor, the Board approved the following minutes:

- April 20, 2020 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Absent: Pottieger
Nays: None. Motion carried.

COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE

1. 2020 Budget Discussion – Mr. Boyer reported that the current economic conditions under Act 13 COVID-19 closure has resulted in a projected surplus of approximately $452,000 for the 2019-20 year. The budget was originally projected to be a deficit of $325,000.
Moving ahead to the 2020-21 budget, many questions remain on the revenue side with local taxes, state subsidies and the impact of the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds. PASBO created two assumption models of how revenue will react. One model follows a conservative approach, the other a more rapid recovery in a V curve. The District historically has used a rate of 97% for collection of real estate taxes. Guidance from PASBO was used in determining reductions in tax delinquency, real estate transfer tax and business privilege tax based on the economy. Under these assumptions, revenue would be $933,000 less than projected as of last month. Mr. Boyer displayed a chart showing revised revenues at different tax increase rates. He also listed revisions to expenditures resulting in approximately $448,000 of reductions. At a 1.5% tax increase, using the assigned fund balance for 2019-20 which is now not needed, and the surplus of $452,000, the 2020-21 budget would be nearly balanced.

Mr. Boyer reviewed four examples showing the impact of a tax increase assuming an assessed value of $150,000 for a home. He also reviewed the District’s millage history compared to the Act 1 Index, and stated that WASD’s millage rate is sixth in the county. He asked the Board to determine the tax rate at which he should prepare the preliminary budget for approval for May 26. In answering questions from Board members, Mr. Boyer said that in the six years he’s been with the District, three years ended with a small surplus but were still accompanied with a tax increase. This would have been the third year in a row with a deficit with one year having no tax increase. They discussed using fund balance or borrowing from the PSERS reserve; however, those funds are difficult to replenish once used. Although the rate for PSERS isn’t increasing for 2020-21, there could be a sizable increase the following year depending on the recovery in the markets. After much discussion regarding the current state of the economy, and not overburdening taxpayers, although not unanimous, the consensus was to build the preliminary budget on a 1.5% tax increase.

Mr. Boyer provided clarification on real estate tax collection. State statute mandates that the deadline for collection is December 31; however, the District has the latitude to alter the dates of the discount period, flat period, and penalty period. Legislators are discussing extending the discount period and eliminating the penalty period.
The meeting was recessed at 6:00 p.m. for a School Board Business Meeting and reconvened at 6:09 p.m.

B. CURRICULUM/TECHNOLOGY

1. Summer Education Opportunities – Dr. Woodard reported that ESY will be provided virtually this summer with a more flexible schedule to accommodate student needs. Therapies and parent trainings will continue. The Special Education Department will begin issuing NOREPs the week of May 18, detailing ESY. The Teachers in the Park (TIPS) program will also be run virtually. Students receiving Title I services will be invited to participate in TIPS Live, hopefully free of charge through grant funding. Students in grades 5-6 may also be invited. Two synchronous sessions per week will be offered. Credit recovery will be offered through Berks Online Learning (BOL) for the students who need it. Students are responsible for a portion of the cost for credit recovery courses.

2. Distance Learning Surveys – Dr. Woodard has been participating in several webinars to learn how to support teachers and students in distance learning. A survey is being developed to solicit feedback on the well-being of students, SEL, access to resources, and teacher effectiveness. Students, parents, and teachers will be surveyed. She hopes this will allow the District to refine distance learning for the next school year to assist the transition through the phases of reopening. Dr. Woodard has been meeting with all grade levels and departments discussing what has been effective and what the challenges have been. Survey results will be used to determine consistency in resources across buildings and professional development in online platforms and resources.

3. Planning of Educational Delivery/Phased Reopening for 2020-21 – Administration is in the infancy stage of creating a plan for phased reopening for the 2020-21 year. Per Governor Wolf’s plan, red and yellow opening phases still prohibit in-person instruction. In a hybrid plan, students may be invited back into the buildings at less than full capacity. That would be more easily accomplished at the elementary level. At the secondary level the challenge would be with classes of mixed grade levels. Several scenarios are being discussed such as morning versus afternoon attendance, attending alternate days, or attending by alphabet so all students in a family would attend the same day.

4. PreK Counts and Kindergarten Registration Update – Thirteen students are officially registered for PreK Counts. BCIU considers 18 a full class. The second in-person registration
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night scheduled for May 12, was cancelled. The BCIU coordinator is creating online and social media marketing tools to encourage additional registrations.

Forty students were registered for kindergarten in the first two weeks the online registration opened. Area preschools have been emailed encouraging them to have their students complete the registration. Mrs. Waxler suggested using lunch pick-up to advertise. Mrs. Ziolkowski asked if Spartan Sprouts would be held virtually. Dr. Woodard said she is looking at options that allow kindergarteners to familiarize themselves with the building and teachers throughout the summer like Spartan Sprouts and orientation. Another option might be a virtual meet-and-greet story time or a slower rollout of kindergarten in late August to get the students and parents acclimated.

5. COVID-19 Information Hub – Mr. Arnst said a bright red banner has been added to the home page of the website that consolidates and information, communication, and services related to COVID-19.

6. STEM Science Kits – Dr. Woodard said Molly Murrill has contacted the Reading Public Museum and they have agreed to help the District create some STEM activities for use by families over the summer months to promote family involvement.

C. FACILITIES

1. New Construction Update (Option 4) – Mr. Todd Vukmanic from Crabtree, Rohrbaugh Assoc. presented a tentative schedule for the project timeline. Starting in May and throughout the summer months CRA will be working on the schematic design and reviewing educational specifications. Requests for proposals for consultants will be issued. Meetings will be conducted with administration and staff over the summer. Throughout each phase, they will come back to the Board to report on the progress and gain approval of the schematic design. The construction document phase should be completed by March 2021. The bidding phase is expected in early Spring 2021. The construction phase will last approximately 24 months and the buildings should be ready for occupancy in August 2023.
WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. McAvoy, seconded by Mrs. Waxler to adjourn at 6:52 p.m.

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Board Secretary