

NORTHERN TIOGA SCHOOL DISTRICT

110 Ellison Road
Elkland, PA 16920

Minutes – Work Session
October 26, 2020

The Northern Tioga School District Board of Directors met for a work session in the Board Room at 110 Ellison Road, Elkland, PA. The session was called to order by Board President Julie Preston at 6:10 PM.

Board Attendance: Board Members Present: Ed Bonham, Ian McLaughlin, James Moyer, and Kim Strauser. Present Via Zoom: Jean Kohut, Jolene Meisner, Greg Cummings, Jim Neal, and Julie Preston.

Administrators Present: Superintendent Barnes, Kathy VanSchaick, Jeremy Freeman, Kris Kaufman, Matt Sottolano, and Cheryl Sottolano. Present Via Zoom: Jess Millard, Dan Fie, Amy Coots, and Christina Fry.

Stair Tread Replacement

Dr. Barnes shared that during a cross country meet at Cowanesque Valley High School, stair treads were damaged by players' spikes. The opposing team was invited inside to get out of the rain. The students failed to remove their spikes upon entering the building and, as a result, they damaged the brand new stair treads. Jeremy Freeman reached out to the company who installed the treads, Nittany Building Specialties, Inc., for a quote to have them repaired. They estimated the cost to be approximately \$3,485.00. Dr. Barnes has discussed the issue with the principal of the opposing team. Ed Bonham suggested that she share the quote for the repairs with the other school. Jolene Meisner asked if we are sure that it was the opposing team's students who damaged the stair treads. Mr. Sottolano said the school's cameras show them walking inside with their spikes on. He also noted that the damage was not caused intentionally. Greg Cummings suggested that the district proceed with having the stair treads repaired.

Remote Work Guidelines

Dr. Barnes shared with the Board Remote Work Guidelines developed by the district's solicitor, Chris Lantz, and asked for the Board's feedback. The administrative team has reviewed the guidelines as well. Julie Preston wondered if guidelines issued by PSBA were used to help develop these. Dr. Barnes said she will check with Chris Lantz. Kim Strauser noted that the guidelines state that the district is not responsible for costs associated with working from home. She wondered if this would change if the employee does not have internet. Dr. Barnes said the Board would decide on an individual basis. Dr. Barnes stated that these guidelines would only be used by people who are quarantining. They cannot be used if the employee is sick. Kathy VanSchaick noted that the Special Sick Leave Guidelines previously approved would not be used at the same time as this. Ian McLaughlin and Ed Bonham wondered if the item stating that in order to qualify, employees must have received a minimum of a satisfactory performance rating is necessary. They feel that if these employees can teach in class, they should also have the option of remote work if needed. Dr. Barnes said she will ask Chris Lantz about this item.

Building Project Update

Jeremy Freeman reviewed the warranty walk-through list from Cowanesque Valley High School and Williamson High School with the Board. Ed Bonham asked if the counterweights at Cowanesque Valley High School are an issue brought up by the district or by the contractor, Myco. Jeremy stated that the district is citing them as a safety issue. James Moyer asked if they pose an immediate safety concern for students. Mr. Sottolano said that area is not currently being used. Ed Bonham asked who approved the

placement of the counterweights. Mr. Sottolano stated that the safety concern was noted months ago. Kim Strauser asked how Myco responded to the issue. Dr. Barnes said they do not believe it is a warranty issue. Kim Strauser also wondered if the district is responsible for paying for items on the warranty list that need fixed. Jeremy said the district is not responsible. Jeremy will continue to work with Hunt and Fidevia on the warranty walk-through list.

2020/2021 Testing

Dr. Barnes shared with the Board that the U.S. Department of Education has stated that testing will not be waived this year. They have changed testing guidelines for the Keystone Exams this year in response to COVID-19. The testing window has been extended from the usual two weeks in December to December through March. They have also stated that not all students need to be tested at once this year.

Broadband Survey

Dr. Barnes shared that a broadband survey is going to be conducted in Potter and Tioga County. School districts have been asked to help with the survey. Flyers will be distributed to students and Dr. Barnes will work with the administrative team to discuss ways to encourage families to participate. Lack of internet is an issue for many of our students.

Cowanesque Valley High School Haunted Trail

Mr. Sottolano presented to the Board a fundraising idea proposed by the Cowanesque Valley High School Student Council. They would like to hold a haunted trail outside on the cross country trail. Families would be taken through the trail one family at a time. In addition to being held outside, masks would be required. Ed Bonham and Kim Strauser stated that, just like with other events such as sports, as long as proper guidelines and safety measures are followed, they feel it would be okay to hold the event. Jean Kohut stated that with COVID-19 cases currently rising, she does not feel the event should be held.

Transportation

Jolene Meisner asked if the district has a plan for bus contractors if schools move to remote learning for an extended period of time. Kathy VanSchaick stated that the current bus contract states that contractors will be paid for the actual number of days driven. There is currently no proposed legislation that would allow districts to pay contractors for days not driven and still qualify for reimbursement. Jolene said she feels the district should develop a plan in case schools do go remote. Kathy said she will continue to gather information and will update the Board on this issue at the November meeting.

Open Forum

No one from the public wished to address the Board at this time.

The Board adjourned the work session at 7:23 PM.

The Board Negotiations Committee convened for an executive session at this time for legal and personnel issues.

Alyson Yerrick
Board Secretary