**McKEESPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Regular Board Meeting**

**January 27, 2021**

**Presiding** Joe Lopretto, President

**Date, Time, Place** Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 7:30 PM, Board Room, Administration Building, McKeesport Area School District, 3590 O’Neil Boulevard, McKeesport, PA 15132.

**Opening Exercises** Mr. Lopretto called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM followed by the Pledge to the Flag. We met in Executive Session prior to tonight’s meeting to discuss personnel and potential litigation items and issues.

**Present** David Donato

Diane Elias

Thomas Filotei

Ivan Hampton

Steve Kondrosky

Joe Lopretto

James Poston

Mindy Sturgess – by phone

Excused. James Brown

**Others Present** Dr. Mark Holtzman, Superintendent

Dr. Tia Wanzo, Assistant Superintendent

Joan Wehner, Business Manager/Board Secretary

Charles Kiss, Treasurer  
Krisha DiMascio, Solicitor

**Board President’s Remarks** –  I just want to say the 2020/2021 school year has been a challenge for everybody. Again, I complement our administrators for doing what they did and to keep it going and we can only hope and pray that we get through the school year and make everything right. And also, we have a lady here today, Ms. Alberta Decker, that is going to be retiring. A lot of Board Members, especially this one, is sorry to see her go. So, Ms. Decker, on behalf of the Board, we would like to give these to you. I’m going to make my way down there, hopefully, I won’t trip. This Board appreciates you. I am not finished with Ms. Decker yet. Tomorrow is her birthday so I want to say happy birthday because this is the last year I’m going to be able to tell her happy birthday unless I go knock on her door next year, she’ll have a restraining order against

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

me knocking on her door. But again, happy birthday and thank you for all you have done over 37 years.

Mrs. Sturgess – Hopefully Alberta can hear me. I sent her a message earlier this month. My mom was the secretary at St. Mary’s then St. Joseph’s, I can’t even remember I was so young, I have known Alberta Decker’s name since I was probable 6 or 7 years old because every snowy morning when there was a delay or cancellation my mom would be on the phone with Alberta at like 5 AM. So Alberta, thank you for everything you’ve done.

**Superintendent’s Report** – First, thing, Ms. Decker is not leaving yet, we have a few more months together, so I’m not going to wish her farewell yet, because she’s got a lot of stuff to do before. I echo everybody else’s remarks are. It’s been our fourth year, Dr. Wanzo’s and I’s roles as Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, it feels like 40 years, but we value our folks and Alberta has helped mold us into great leaders and support our work. So, we appreciate her work. I also want to take the time, I really don’t want to talk pandemic, I really don’t want to talk other than school is running well. We’re really excited to have our children in school. We are proud that they have been in school since day one, five days a week and we are giving the best possible education that we can under our current circumstances and we are trying our best to think of new creative ways to engage our students online. Furthermore, I would just like to take the time our School Board recognition week we provided something small for them. I want to take a moment to just thank them for their unconditional support under the current circumstances in the past several years. Things aren’t easy and they make it easier by being a great group by doing what is always best for children. Although we may not always agree, and although we may have our moments, overall Dr. Wanzo and I are very lucky to be leaders in the McKeesport Area School District and will remain for as long as they’ll have us because we truly believe in our school system and our School Board supports and believes the work that we do, the recommendations we make and the efforts to do what is best for children. So, I just want to thank everybody for their volunteer work because this is truly volunteer, nobody up here is being paid to support and lead our School Board, these elected officials get a lot of challenging conversations and phone calls and endless nights and endless days and they handle themselves quite well and I’m proud to be able to be part of this team and this group of people. That’s all I have.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to acknowledge receipt of the Treasurer’s Report

for the months of November and December 2020. Seconded by Mr. Poston.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Hearing of Citizens** –

Kelly Doyle, 106 Carmella Drive, White Oak, PA 15131

Mrs. Doyle addressed the Board on the issues of McKeesport Agape Center.

**Minutes** – Mr. Poston moved to approve the minutes of the Reorganization Meeting of December 2, 2020 and Regular Meeting of December 2, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Bills** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve the list of bills. Seconded by Mr. Poston.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Refunds** – Mr. Poston moved to approve property tax refunds as presented. Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Resolution** – Mr. Poston moved to approve Resolution #1248 – Taxpayer Relief Act. Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

**Bankruptcy** – Mr. Poston moved to ratify stipulation as presented for case #20-20344 and authorize Keystone to proceed accordingly. Seconded by Mrs. Sturgess. Mrs. Wehner explained.

Mr. Donato – Just this. Mrs. Wehner, could you touch on number 5 and clarify that a little bit.

Mrs. Wehner – Yes, this is a bankruptcy case that the district is dealing with. Since it is a bankruptcy case, there are stipulations based on code in regards to this case. Did you want any other information?

Mr. Donato – Are we able to identify the property?

Mrs. DiMascio – Yes, we are. I don’t know if we have the lot and block in front of me, but it is Rost Electric. They had several years of tax delinquency Mr. Donato. Past years they filed for bankruptcy. We were represented by Keystone as our delinquent collector and the stipulation through all of the parties including the county, the city and any other lien holders that they may have to make sure they are utilizing all the assets in the bankruptcy to pay off tax debt. We are taking a little bit of a decrease in some penalty and interest, but we will end up with an initial lump sum, but the idea is to get the property back on the tax roles moving forward in the future.

Mr. Donato – Ok, thank you.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Contract** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve a two-year contract with Keystone Collections Group for the collection of delinquent real estate taxes. Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

Voting aye. Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Voting no. Mr. Donato

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Resolutions** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve Resolutions #1249, #1250 and #1251 – student discipline. Seconded by Mrs. Sturgess.

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Green Sheets** – moved to approve personnel recommendations (green sheets). Seconded by

PROFESSIONAL

Tyrone Neal Permanent day-to-day substitute, McClure Elementary School,

Effective 12/14/20

Ryan Pontzloff Permanent day-to-day substitute, Founders Hall Middle School,

To be hired:

Lynne Lennon Long term substitute Title I Math Teacher at Twin Rivers

(M. Hayes) Elementary School, effective 1/18/21. Rate of pay will be

$125.00/day + individual benefits.

Josette Saunders Permanent day to day substitute at Francis McClure effective

2/8/21. Rate of pay will be $100/day + individual benefits

And increase to $125 on the 61st day.

Leave of Absence:

Courtney Reese Speech Teacher, sabbatical for the second semester of the

20/21 school year.

Marie Hayes Title I Math Teacher at Twin Rivers Elementary School unpaid

leave of absence effective 1/29/21. FMLA.

Volunteers: Extra-Curricular athletics for the 2020/2021 school year:

\*Johnathon Cornell Boys Basketball Coach

Changes to the substitute list:

Additions:

Caleb Marasco Mathematics

Josette Saunders Grades PK-4

TO BE HIRED: Effective for the 2020/2021 school year:

Kevin D. Ryan, D.D.S. School Dentist $2,000.00

Kelly Makay School Dentist Assistant $1,000.00

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

SUPPORT STAFF:

Retirement:

Kenneth Piotrowski Head Groundskeeper, effective 5/1/21.

Alberta Decker Confidential Secretary, effective 7/1/21.

Ted Panico Carpenter/Painter-Plaster/Maintenance Helper,

effective 2/9/21

Resignation:

Timeisha Andrews Instructional Assistant, High School, effective 12/11/20

Leave of Absence:

Mattie Dolfi School Police Officer, Twin Rivers Elementary School, unpaid

leave of absence effective 1/4/21 through 4/6/21.

Rose Morgan Lunch Aide, Francis McClure Elementary School, unpaid

leave of absence effective 1/19/21 (not to exceed 1 year)

Changes to the substitute lists:

Additions:

\*Maurice Reaves Food Service

\*Katelyn Cornish Food Service

Deletions:

Rosemary Gasperin Nurse Assistant

Russell Matesig Custodian

Susan Ross Secretary

Candida Tom Instructional Assistant

Diane Kolesar Secretary

Gerard Grace Custodian

\*Pending receipt of Act 24, 34, 114 and 151 clearances, Act 168 Disclosure Release, TB Tine and Drug Test results.

\*\*Step placement pending employer verification.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

**Resignation** – Mr. Poston moved to approve the resignation of Latoya Wright-Brown from the position of ELECT Program Coordinator effective January 29, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Hampton.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**Services** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve Kisan Productions to provide video and streaming services for the Athletic Department at $35 per hour. Seconded by Mrs. Elias. Dr. Holtzman explained.

Voting aye. Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Brown

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Athletic** – James Brown/Ivan Hampton – Mr. Hampton reported. We had on meeting on January 12, 2021. We discussed the posting of hiring of fall sports. We will probably be doing that during the February Board Meeting. Winter sports are a few games behind schedule. Basketball will be having an open tournament. All schools will be invited who wish to play. All teams will be invited and seeded by committee for basketball. The basketball season will be extended until February 26, 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. That is pretty much what we talked about.

**Buildings & Grounds** – Steve Kondrosky/Mindy Sturgess – Mr. Kondrosky reported. Yes sir Mr. President. We met this morning Mr. Balogh and myself and much to Dr. Holtzman’s wishes, I am going to cut this extremely short. In December I have a list of things that were accomplished and completed by the maintenance department and custodial staff. It’s lengthy, but I’m not going to elaborate on it because it seems too old now and it doesn’t mean anything. The newest thing that they have done is the Neenie Campbell gym floor was refinished for the basketball season and it looks outstanding. The same was properly cleaned for the Covid-19 and sanitized and the locker rooms are cleaned in between games. Sump pump was changed out in the South Hall boiler room that was very necessary due to the situation down there. Technology office at Founders Hall was prepared for the library. Promethean boards are being installed in a pretty good fashion. Unfortunately, we are a little short staffed so they are a little bit behind on accomplishing everything there. Water bottle station was installed at South Hall and they are

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

going to do another one according to the wishes of the Principal there. Elevator, we had a quarterly inspection and everything passed. Vegely Welding repaired the railing that was damaged on the Thanksgiving Day accident. Fire protection and auto body paint booth was completed. Eichenlaub was here for the gym bleachers and they were repaired and working. I think there are just minor problems now that need to be addressed. A sink hole at Founders Hall in the walking area right off the grass by a manhole was brought to the attention of Mr Balogh by one of these local gym runners. They took care of that. McClure plumbing situation we have a continuous situation with a sick drain up there and it’s going to need some attention in the future, but they opened it up and it seems to be working properly. Twin Rivers room 204 compressor overhauled and changed out CS&E was in there on Martin Luther King Day and I think Steve Cmar came in that day and assisted them. We finally got a new salt spreader for our pickup truck for the snow season and as the gentleman was pulling it out of the garage in order to have it installed, the transmission went and we had to send it out for a new transmission prior to putting the new spreader on. Teacher in school pick up supply the educational partnership in McKees Rocks was handled by Mr. Harper doing a nice job and is back and forth quite often. Ice machine repaired at Founders Hall training room and new filtration system installed and snow removal and salting equipment is being used as necessary and that includes my report. Thank you.

**Community Relations/Cultural Diversity** – Mindy Sturgess/Ivan Hampton – Mrs. Sturgess reported. The Cultural Diversity Committee met today and we met with a teacher from the High School and some representatives from Penn State to talk about the GAME program that we are involved with. What GAME stands for is Giving Adolescents Meaningful Experiences. It is a hybrid mentoring program and we will work with individual students in the schools through a partnership and we will also do professional development with our staff that will hopefully be rolled out at some point this year and definitely into next year. I know during last Board Meeting I mentioned that part of this process will be developing a Cultural Diversity Mission and Vision Statement. Today we established steps for that. Before we do that work we will be engaging with student groups, especially from our High School to find out what their mission and vision is. What they see life is like in the McKeesport Area School District so that we are making an informed decision and representative of our student population. That concludes my report.

**Education/Legislation/Policy** – Diane Elias/Mindy Sturgess – Mrs. Sturgess reported. We met today and did not cover any legislation issues. I know that Mr. Donato brought that up in the back. We may have done agenda items that came out of this evening and we will address those. The Education Committee primarily focused on our student data and when I say data we are looking at pass/fail, we are looking at grades to really compare how our students are performing in brick and mortar and online. Of no surprise, we know that brick and mortar in person,

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

synchronous instruction is ideal but we have a lot of students in our online environment which is asynchronous meaning independent who are struggling. We see some different trends at different grade levels, but overall we see some concerns and that was after hearing Dr. Holtzman’s opening statement that they are going to look at solutions to supporting those students moving forward so they are more successful because that is a pretty significant group of students that need to be on our radar as well. That concludes my report.

**Finance/Grants/Outside Funding** – Diane Elias/James Poston – Mr. Poston reported. We met last Wednesday on the 20th and we discussed some of the Cares Act money that we are going to receive from the government. We talked about Keystone Collections and the larger amount of taxes that they have collected last month and for the entire year. We talked about Keystone proceeding on with case #20-2344 and that concludes our report.

**Personnel** – Mindy Sturgess/Steve Kondrosky – Mrs. Sturgess reported. The personnel committee met on January 13th to discuss those personnel items approved on this evening’s green sheets. That concludes the personnel report.

**Safe Schools** – James Poston/David Donato/Thomas Filotei – Mr. Poston reported. We met today and met with all of the building principals and police and it seems to be our biggest concern is our cameras in our school district. We have our IT department looking into trying to find some way to come up with a new solution with cameras and some of our cameras are 10 or 15 years old. We were notified today, Dr. Holtzman was notified the other day about a crossing guard issue at White Oak. I was in contact this afternoon with the mayor of White Oak and I’m going to meet with her tomorrow to see if we can work something out with that. That concludes our report.

**Solicitor’s Report** – My report was given in Executive Session unless anyone has a question.

**Correspondence** – None

**New Business** – Mr. Filotei – Mr. President, I would like to have a motion to give notice to Dave Seropian, 30-day notice. Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

Voting aye. Mrs. Elias, Mr. Filotei, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Voting no. Mr. Donato, Mr. Lopretto

Excused. Mr. Brown

Regular Board Meeting

January 27, 2021

**Adjournment** – 8:15 PM – Mr. Kondrosky moved for adjournment. Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

Voting aye. All Members present.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Joan Wehner, Business Manager/Board Secretary