

February 1, 2022

**HANOVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

February 1, 2022

Hanover Area Junior/Senior High School
Hanover Township, Pennsylvania
February 1, 2022

NOTE: The Board of Education held this Regular School Board Meeting in person while providing a virtual option using the Zoom platform.

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Hanover Area School District was held on Tuesday, February 1, at 6:00 PM. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, John J Mahle.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO OUR FLAG

ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS:

PRESENT: John J. Mahle, Jr., President; Dr. Vic Kopko, Vice President; Joyce Potsko, Treasurer; Rick Stevens, Secretary, Stacey Bleich, Michael Mazur, Rick Oravic and Matthew Redick.

ABSENT: Paul Holmgren

Rick Stevens, Secretary, stated a Quorum was established for the meeting.

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT: Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent; Attorney Jack Dean, School Solicitor; Mrs. Lisa Kitchen, Administrative Assistant; and a number of citizens, both in person and via the Zoom Platform.

John J. Mahle, Jr, Board President, provided the following Executive Session Report: "Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, the Board President wishes to announce that at its Regular Meeting on Tuesday February 1, 2022, the board of education of the Hanover Area School District held an Executive Session to discuss matters of employee relations, labor negotiations, threats of or actual litigation and went into a closed executive session at 5:00PM and began the public meeting at 6:00PM. The subjects discussed in executive session related solely to matters of employee relations, labor negotiations and threats of or actual litigation. Is there any public input on the Agenda Items Only?"

Mike Potsko, a district resident, approached the microphone to address the board. Mr. Potsko asked for public comment on the board meeting minutes and asked if the board would be able to provide the minutes prior to the meetings so that the public would have an opportunity to look them over and have an opportunity to speak to them in the future.

February 1, 2022

Attorney Dean responded that the problem with that is that the minutes would be provided and then changes would be made, but offered that the board would see what they could do to provide a draft prior to the meeting.

Mr. Potsko then indicated that the meeting minutes for December 20, 2020 were not available on the district's website to view. Attorney Dean thanked Mr. Potsko for bringing that to the attention of the board and noted that it would be rectified.

APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES/REPORTS:

It was moved by Stacey Bleich and seconded by Rick Stevens: To approve the following minutes and accept the following reports:

- Regular Board Meeting minutes of January 11, 2022.
- Luzerne Intermediate Unit Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2021.

BOARD VOTE: YES: Bleich, Kopko, Mahle, Mazur, Oravic, Potsko, Redick, and Stevens

No: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Holmgren

Chair declared the motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent, offered the following report: "Thanks, Mr. Chairman. This evening, I want to start off by congratulating Ashton Schiel. He is the January Student of the Month at our Junior/Senior High School. This senior is being recognized for his academic performance, but he is also well known for his leadership in our "Hawk's Nest". So I want to congratulate Ashton and his family for his academic performance and his accolades.

I also want to bring attention to the public that our Inservice Day is switching from Monday, February 7th to Monday February 14th. It is a full Act 80 Day. No school for students on Valentines Day. This is replacing this upcoming Monday's Inservice Day. We are just moving it back one week. We are also making up one school day. It will be April 19th. We are taking that day off Easter Wednesday.

That is for the cancellation of school on September 2nd for the flash flooding in the area. So our replacement day will be April the 19th.

That is all I have for you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board."

February 1, 2022

It was motioned by Mike Mazur, seconded by Rick Oravic: To accept the Report of the Superintendent.

BOARD VOTE: YES: Bleich, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potkso, Redick, and Stevens

NO: None

ABSENT: Holmgren

ABSTAIN: None

Chair declared the motion carried.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

GENERAL:

It was moved by Rick Stevens seconded by Stacey Bleich: To approve the following motion #1:

1. Amend the 2021-2022 school calendar as follows:

February 7, 2022	Full day for Students/Staff
February 14, 2022	Act 80 Day— No School for Students
April 19, 2022	First Make-Up Day (for September 2, 2021)

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTION #1 Above): YES: Bleich, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potkso, Redick, and Stevens.

NO: NONE

ABSENT: Holmgren

ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motions carried.

FINANCIAL:

It was moved by Rick Oravic, seconded by Joyce Potkso: To approve the following motions 1 through 6:

1. Ratify the following PNC check register(s): (Exhibit F-1)
January 6, 2022 to January 25, 2022

February 1, 2022

2. Approve the PNC check register(s): (Exhibit F-2)
January 26, 2022
3. Elliott, Greeleaf & Dean \$2,463.00
December 2021
Invoice #160915
4. Approve the following Tax Refund for the period 1/1/21 to 12/31/21:
GB Relty Company, Inc. \$108.40
5. Acknowledge the Audit of Financial Statements of the Hanover Area School District, as prepared by BBD, LLP, Certified Public Accountants for the Fiscal Year, June 30, 2021.
6. Approve the Luzerne Intermediate Unit #18 General Operating Budget and Resolution, for the Fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30 2023. (Exhibit F-6)

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTIONS #1 TO AND INCLUDING #6 ABOVE):

YES: Bleich, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potsko, Stevens and Redick, and Stevens.

NO: Kopko on #2

ABSENT: Holmgren

ABSTAIN: Bleich on #1; Masur on #2

Chair declared the motions carried.

PERSONNEL:

It was moved by Stacey Bleich seconded by Vic Kopko: To approve the following motions 1 through 20:

1. Ratify the following substitute teachers for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of \$100/day:

Thomas Gilmore
Anna Kadysweski

2. Ratify the resignation of Michelle Wollard, Accounts Payable Clerk, effective January 14, 2022. (Exhibit P-2)

3. Ratify the resignation of Mary Cozzi-Kennedy, Social Worker, effective January 28, 2022. (Exhibit P-3)

February 1, 2022

4. Accept the resignation of Kelsey Gabriele, Secondary Mathematics Teacher, effective March 22, 2022. (Exhibit P-4)
5. Accept the resignation of Kelsey Gabriele, Senior Class Advisor, effective March 22, 2022. (Exhibit P-5)
6. Motion to approve entering into a contract addendum for the superintendent of the Hanover Area School District, adjusting the superintendent's salary to \$140,000 per year, prorated, effective January 1, 2022.
7. Ratify the appointment of Mildred Albino-Morales as per diem bi-lingual aide at a rate of \$15.00/hour.
8. Appoint Paul Wazenski as Cleaner Position #1 at Memorial Elementary, at a rate of \$15.00/hour, no benefits.
9. Ratify the appointment of Diane Johnson as Paraprofessional, at a rate of \$15.00/hour, no benefits.
10. Approve the request of Woodly Augustin, Secondary Guidance Counselor to take May 16th to May 20, 2022 off as Unpaid Days, with the understanding that this does not create a precedent or establish a past practice. (Exhibit P-10)
11. Approve the request of Catherine Rinaldi, Title 1 Teacher, to take March 7th and March 8th, 2022 as Unpaid Days, with the understanding that this does not create a precedent or establish a past practice. (Exhibit P-11)
12. Motion to approve expulsion adjudication regarding student D.I.
13. Motion to approve expulsion adjudication regarding student A.R.
14. Motion to approve expulsion adjudication regarding student E.R.
15. Motion to approve expulsion adjudication regarding student G.W.
16. Motion to approve expulsion adjudication regarding student N.S.
17. Approve the following Extra-Curricular personnel for the 2021-2022 school year:

Al Weston	Head Track Coach	\$3,348
Todd Kolbicka	Head Baseball Coach	\$3,348
Don Pientka	Head Boys' Volleyball Coach	\$3,123
Brianna Horton	Athletic Intern	UNPAID

February 1, 2022

18. Approve the salary increase for Ronald Hummer, Technology & Student Information Director, in the amount of \$7,000, effective February 2, 2022.

19. Approve the salary increase for Suzanne Schappert, Confidential Secretary, in the amount of \$5,000.00 effective February 2, 2022.

20. Approve the salary increase for Brian Bannon, Network Coordinator, in the amount of \$5,000.00 effective February 2, 2022.

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTIONS #1 - #20)

YES: Bleich, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potsko, Stevens and Redick

NO: NONE

ABSENT: Holmgren

ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motions carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Alli Schappert addressed the board in person. Mrs. Schappert raised the following points:

- Asked the board to revisit the current Health and Safety Plan of the District
- Expiration of the Mask Mandate by the PA Superior Court
- Local area school districts that shifted to "mask optional"
- Requiring Masks violates students' rights
- Questioned the legitimacy of district policy on following CDC Guidelines
- Asked that the district's health policy focus more on healthy habits and smaller class sizes, weekly gym classes, and outdoor recess
- Cited local districts who do not require making during outdoor activities and asked if Hanover Area could revise plan to reflect the same practice

February 1, 2022

- Cited that the District's Health and Safety Plan Template comes from the PA ARP ESSER State Plan and that it should be revised every 6 months to reflect updates and best practices and take public input into account.
- Concluded by asking the district to revisit the health and safety plan and to reconsider the "unlawful" mask requirement.

Mike Potsko addressed the Board in Person. Topic addressed included:

- Board's knowledge of the PA ARP ESSER State Plan, specifically if anyone on the BoE has read the document
- Concerned that the district's Health and Safety Plan "came from" that document and that the district will be financially bound to the requirements of that document once the grant money "runs out".

Mr. Barrett, Superintendent, responded that the district has applied for the grants and the money is released in waves. He explained that it is not possible to predict what funding will continue or become available at the end of the ESSER funding period, but that it is a prescribed process that Hanover Area has no control over.

Dr. Kopko intervened and stated that he just signed off on the recent audit which he noted was one of the best audits we have had since he served on the board. One of the categories was the ESSER funds. There are specific targets on how we can spend the money.

- Mr. Potsko intervened and asked that we consider not accepting the ESSER grant money, as he does not believe that the "strings attached" to the grant is worthwhile.

Dr. Kopko intervened and stated that this BoE will not turn down one penny of any grant money that will come into the school district to benefit our children.

- Mr. Potsko stated that the document is "78 pages of Social and Emotional Learning" that is not beneficial to our students.
- He asked that the public have the opportunity to review the document and have input on it.

Sara Miscavage addressed the Board in Person. Topics addressed included:

- Status of the full time business administrator
- Reasoning behind the Superintendent's salary increase
- Recent loss of several professional staff members
- Causes of high district turnover rate
- Opined that the district can "do better" with programs that can benefit children

Attorney Jack Dean replied to the query on the Superintendent's Salary stating that Mr. Barrett was hired at a below market rate because the hiring was Mr. Barrett's first Superintendent's position. A review of Mr. Barrett's performance over the last 3 years revealed that his performance raises were still well below

February 1, 2022

the average Superintendent's salary in Luzerne County. Two years ago we had a negative \$700,000.00 fund balance. Right now, we have a \$850,000 to 1.2 million projected, we need 3 million to get the district financially stable. In that time, he has significantly saved cost by bringing back in creative ways, programs from the LIU. That was 100% his idea. (Kopko: That was a million dollars in savings.) He has significantly addressed and continues to address transportation issues. He has successfully worked with our administrations to increase our grades. Based on all of these factors, the board made the decision to raise his rate, and he still continues to be one of the lowest paid in Luzerne County.

- Who is our business manager

Attorney Dean responded "Joseph Caputo". Dr. Kopko explained that we may not replace the full time position as trends in the market use larger firms for these purposes.

Dr. Kopko proceeded to explain that Mr. Barrett's salary, for a budget of our size, remains significantly under market value. He highlighted that two state senators recently visited the district to learn of Mr. Barrett's initiatives within the district, specifically his plan to accommodate virtual and hybrid learning throughout the course of the pandemic. I respectfully disagree with you that he is not successful.

Jude Schappert addressed the Board in Person. Topics addressed included:

- ARP ESSERS – would it be possible to put it on the agenda for a vote on it at next month's meeting
- The ESSERS plan states there should be public discussion and at the June 28th passing of the district's plan, there was no public discussion regarding the mask mandates and the plan overall

Attorney Dean replied by referring Mr. Schappert to several court cases that, as a matter of law, put the district at risk if a decision to relax mask mandates is made.

February 1, 2022

FUTURE MEETINGS:

March Work Session: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

March Regular Meeting: Tuesday, March 1, 2022

President Mahle then called for Adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Stacey Bleich, seconded by Rick Stevens: To adjourn the Regular School Board Meeting at 6:29PM.

ATTEST:  _____, Secretary
Rick Stevens
Hanover Area School Board