

December 7, 2021

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

MINUTES

December 7, 2021

Hanover Area Junior/Senior High School
Hanover Township, Pennsylvania
December 7, 2021

NOTE: The Board of Education held this Regular School Board Meeting in person. Due to the ongoing pandemic and for the health and safety of individuals, the meeting was streamed live using the virtual platform Zoom, so that the public had the option to attend in person or participate virtually.

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Hanover Area School District was held on Tuesday, December 7, at 6:17 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, Paul Holmgren, Michael Mazur, Rick Oravic and Matthew Redick.

ABSENT: None

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 December 7, 2021, 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 5:15PM and began the public meeting at 6:06PM. 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?"

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APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES/REPORTS:

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

- Regular Board Meeting minutes of November 9, 2021
- Luzerne Intermediate Unit Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2021.

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

No: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Chair declared the motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent, offered the following report: "Yes, Mr. President. I would like to congratulate all the returning board members and the incoming board member, Director Oravic and congratulate them on being sworn in this evening. The next announcement I would like to make is that we seem to have missed this incoming storm that is headed in our direction, but I do want to inform families that are listening online and those in the audience that we do have five flexible instruction days that will allow in the event of inclement weather, we will simply turn on our Google Classrooms and for five days this year we have the flexibility to have what we call flexible instruction days. So, there will be an announcement as we did in the past, instead of a cancellation, we would announce to the community that we would be conducting a flexible instruction day, which would be instruction being carried out in your Google Classrooms, as it was during the height of the pandemic. So, this is a nice, new option that we discovered during a terrible time in education, but we do have 5 days to utilize this and if we did happen to stumble upon a storm that let's use tomorrow as an example, we would simply text out that your students are to log onto their Google Classrooms at their normally scheduled times, but in the Google Classroom. So, I want to inform families of that. In addition to this tomorrow evening, we will be hosting a Hanover Area School District Listening Session. This event is something that is a culminating event of a Pilot Program we have been hosting with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. We have been working on this for a nearly three month period of time where we are trying to better serve this community. So tomorrow evening we will simply be hosting an on line session for families to give recommendations of how we can better serve

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this community and their children. So that's tomorrow night at 6PM. We will be advertising this link tomorrow on our social media and on our website. Besides that, I want to wish everybody a happy holiday. In just a few short weeks, we will be ringing in the new year and celebrating the Christmas holiday, so I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you."

It was motioned by Stacy Bleich, seconded by Paul Holmgren: To accept the Report of the Superintendent.

BOARD VOTE: YES: Bleich, Holmgren, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potksko, Stevens and Redick.

NO: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Chair declared the motion carried.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

GENERAL:

It was moved by Matt Redick seconded by Rick Oravic: To approve the following motion #1:

1. Approve the second and final reading of the following Board Policies as per exhibit G-1:

#718 Service Animals in Schools
#718.1 Therapy Animals in Schools

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

NO: NONE
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motions carried.

FINANCIAL:

It was moved by Joyce Potksko, seconded by Rick Stevens: To approve the following motions 1 through 8:

1. Ratify the following PNC check register(s): (Exhibit F-1)

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November 3, 2021 to November 30, 2021

2. Approve the PNC check register(s): (Exhibit F-2)
December 1, 2021

3. Elliott, Greeleaf & Dean \$1,759.68
October 2021
Invoice #160445

4. Approve the resolution between the Hanover Area School District and Berkheimer Tax Associates, for the express purpose of sharing confidential tax information with a district authorized representative, as per Exhibit F-4.

5. Approve the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between the Hanover Area School District and Ashley Borough for compensation of crossing guards. (Exhibit P-5)

6. Approve the following 2021 Tax Refund: \$800.34
Joseph and Carol Goyne

7. Approve the following 2021 Tax Refund: \$13.80
Schiel Development, LLC

8. Approve the following 2021 Tax Refunds: \$3,561.55
Heritage Hill Estates

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTIONS #1 TO AND INCLUDING #8 ABOVE):

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

NO: Kopko (on #2)

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: Masur (on #1 and #2)

Chair declared the motions carried.

PERSONNEL:

It was moved by Mike Masurr, seconded by Paul Holmgren: To approve the following motions 1 through 6:

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

Sean Gallagher

2. Approve the September 2021 Salary Adjustments as per the HAEA Union Contract. (Exhibit P-2)

3. Approve the new salary of \$46,268.46, prorated, for Anthony Marcincavage, Food Service Coordinator/Transportation Coordinator.

4. Appoint John Bleich as Government Liason at a salary of \$60,000, prorated. This is an Act 93, Category 1 Position.

5. Motion to appoint Alaina Garubba as Special Education Teacher at a Salary of B, Step 1, \$49,328, prorated.

6. Motion to appoint Gina Thomas, as Business-Computer-Information Technology Teacher, at a Salary of B, Step 1, \$49,328, prorated.

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTIONS #1 - #6)

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

NO: NONE

ABSENT: Bleich (on #4)

ABSTAIN: NONE

Châir declared the motions carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

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PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Potsko of 13 Steele Street addressed the Board in person. Topics included:

- Asking the board members individually if they believed parents in the district are capable of making decisions to keep their children safe.
 - Mr. Redick responded that he believes we have rules in the school and they are to be followed.
 - Dr. Kopko responded that parents must make decisions to keep their children safe. However the collectively as a school board must make decisions to keep everyone's child safe and those decisions are made collectively for the good of all, not just one.
 - Asked if there was any vote or any policy change regarding any of the precautions outside of the mask mandate by this board.
 - Mr. Barrett responded that there was a Health and Safety Plan passed by this Board of Education on August 6th.
 - Potsko asked if that policy is available on the website, and Mr. Barrett confirmed that it is posted there.

Sarah Miscavage of 28 Steele Street addressed the Board in person. Topics included:

- Expressed her opinion that the board is overlooking the parents that believe they know what's best for their kids. There's a mental effect, a negative effect, a positive effect to everything the board is doing and she does not understand why the Board has the right to determine what is best and the parents don't. She acknowledged the board is correct in their own regard, and notes that parents aren't arguing that, but does not understand why no one respects the opposite view. She questioned why they couldn't come to an agreement on what is right for her children versus the rest of the school population.
- Noted that there are studies regarding the psychological and physical health effects of children wearing masks, cited the recommendations to place ionizers into buildings to improve air quality and asked where we were with the installation of the ionizers.
 - Dr. Kopko replied to the use of funding to pay for improvements to our buildings' systems, explaining that the ESSER funds come in gradual increments over time and not one lump sum of money.
 - Miscavage replied that 2 neighboring districts, Lake Lehman and Dallas, have already secured the bids and funding to move forward with these projects and questioned why Hanover cannot follow suit and get on track with securing the bids and money needed to complete these projects in a faster manner.

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- Dr. Kopko responded that the 2 districts mentioned are very affluent school districts that do not operate under the same financial constraints that Hanover does. Mr. Barrett explained that Hanover Area experiences a high rate of poverty and as such, does not have the access to the cash flow that affluent districts do. He further explained that there is a process to the disbursement of state and federal funds and that process is often slow. He assured that there is nothing slowing the process on the district's part and that the money will be coming to complete these projects, but that the financial process had to play out. He expressed that he understood why that would be confusing to the public.
- Potoski continued to question the board as to who she could call (a congressmen, the state department of education, etc) to assist in securing the funds more quickly, to get on board with the progress of Lake Lehman and Dallas. She continued to express frustration over the use of masks and desk shields, when students continue to be packed into the auditorium at the high school where seating is less than 3 feet apart.

Mr. Mahle ended her time, stated that her allowable 3 minutes were up.

Miscavage thanked the Board for her time, but persisted in asking Mr. Barrett for an email of the timelines for disbursement of the 11.3 million in funds. Barrett stated that the information requested could be found on the district's website in a "State of the District" Power Point he made public several weeks ago. Miscavage ended by saying that Barrett had a COVID Community Night as well, but everything he said at that meeting he contradicted, so she doubted what he was saying now.

Pat Meyers of 9 Green Street addressed the board in person.

- Asked what kind of medical exemption forms for kids here are allowed.
- Mr. Barrett responded that we would receive those requests through our medical staff.
- Meyers thanked the Mr. Barrett for his reply.

Jaimie Walsh asked to address the board on behalf of the Parents for Freedom Group. He cited his address in Sweet Highland in Sweet Valley, Pennsylvania.

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- Attorney Krysten Gerratano, acting Solicitor, questioned the residency of Parents for Freedom in Sweet Valley. Walsh replied that Sweet Valley is part of the Lake Lehman School District, but is speaking on behalf of Hanover Area School District Residents and Parents who are members of the Parents for Freedom Group.
- Attorney Gerratano asked "what is the address for Parents for Freedom group?"
- Walsh replied that the group is a group of parents that want parental choice back. Attorney Gerratano interrupted that she was asking for the location of the group. Walsh responded that the location is 5348 Main Road Sweet Valley Pennsylvania.
- Attorney Gerratano responded that the Board of Education has a right to deny the opportunity to speak as a non resident/tax payer. Walsh agreed that the Board does have that right but was asking for the opportunity to speak on behalf of district residents. Gerratano stated that this Board serves the Hanover Area School District and is not agreeable to hear him speak as a non resident/taxpayer.
- Walsh stated that he had an educational piece that he would love to share to help them make decisions moving forward. He stated that he had nothing confrontational in his remarks. The board, through Attorney Gerratano, stated that he was welcome to submit his information in writing.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

January Work Session: Tuesday, January 11, 2022

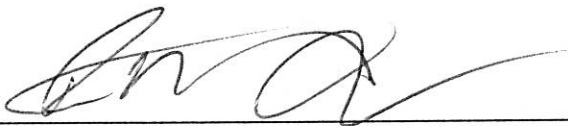
January Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 11, 2022

President Mahle then called for Adjournment.

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ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Paul Holmgren, seconded by Rick Oravic: To adjourn the Regular School Board Meeting at 6:37PM.

ATTEST:  _____, Secretary
Rick Stevens
Hanover Area School Board