

*SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
September 13, 2017 – Administration Building  
Minutes*

The Board of School Directors of the Shaler Area School District held a Committee of the Whole Meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2017, at the Shaler Area Administration Building, Glenshaw, PA, with Dr. April Kwiatkowski, School Board President, presiding. This meeting began at 7:25 p.m.

Board Members Present:                   Mrs. Suzanna Donahue  
  Mr. James Fisher  
  Dr. April Kwiatkowski  
  Mr. Jason Machajewski  
  Mrs. Jeanne Petrovich  
  Mrs. Eileen Phillips  
  Mr. Steve Romac  
  Mr. James Tunstall

Not Present:                                   Mr. Tim Gapsky

Others Present:                             Mr. Sean Aiken, Superintendent  
  Dr. Bryan O’Black, Assistant Superintendent  
  Mr. Gary Mignogna, Director of Human Resources  
  Ms. Sherri Ludwig, Director of Business Affairs  
  Ms. Kathleen Graczyk, Director of Student Services  
  Mr. Matt Hoffman, Solicitor  
  Sophia Kachur, Student Representative

Notice of this meeting was posted as required.

➤ Dr. April Kwiatkowski called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

Dr. O’Black then announced the following Educational Items:

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>SUP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
#	<u>EDUCATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	#	<u>TAKEN</u>
A.1	Approve the donation of outdated middle school Science, English, and Mathematics textbooks to the Vietnam Vets of America.	A.1	<hr/>
A.2	Approve the contract with Grade Point Resources to provide a behavior interventionist staff member at a cost of \$19.75 per hour (\$790 per week) for the 2017-18 school year.	A.2	<hr/>
A.3	Approve the agreement with Grade Point Resources for consultation and training, for functional behavior assessments as requested, and for consultation regarding individual students from September 21, 2017 - June 30, 2018. The fee for services is \$70 per hour (hours requested by the school district and upon availability of consultant). (Exception: In-service trainings are \$500 for half day and \$800 for full day and are in addition to the above.)	A.3	<hr/>

Dr. O’Black then announced the following Discussion Item:

Discussion Items:

1. Student Representative – Sophia Kachur reported on the educational opportunities students pursued over the summer including a group of students who took trips to Japan and Peru and other students started developing businesses. She also reported on homecoming preparations and announced a partnership between high school and middle school students to share social issues.
2. Shaler Area Education Foundation – Dr. Kwiatkowski provided sponsorship information. Mr. Aiken said there have been a small number of runners but the foundation is looking forward to additional registrations soon. Participants can register the morning of the race for the same price, and the cost for students has been lowered. The foundation still is looking for volunteers. All proceeds from the race will benefit the school district. Dr. Kwiatkowski thanked the people in the room who already have supported the 5K race.

Ms. Ludwig then announced the following Finance Items:

<u>ITEM #</u>	<u>FINANCE AND OPERATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	<u>SUP. #</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
C.1	<b>APPROVE FUND PROFILES:</b>		
A.	General Fund – Schedule of Bills and Addendum	C.1A	_____
B.	Cafeteria – Schedule of Bills	C.1B	_____
C.	Bond Proceeds – Schedule of Bills	C.1C	_____
D.	Year-to-Date Financial Reports	C.1D	_____
E.	Fund Profiles and Investments	C.1E	_____
C.2	Approval of additional ABC Transit, Inc. Bus Drivers for the 2017-18 school year.	C.2	_____
C.3	Approval of the resolution for the general obligation lease to finance the costs (\$67,823) of the acquisition of one new Case backhoe with PNC Capital Equipment Finance, LLC., pending final Solicitor approval.	C.3	_____
C.4	Approve the final close out change order for previous work completed with <b>TPK., Inc.</b> as follows for a total additional amount of \$66,296:	C.4	
	a. All work related to undercutting and installing new subbase below track and installation of additional stone base, binder and backfill to raise the northeast corner of the track for a satisfactory cross slope. Add \$58,866		
	b. Add track surface to the concrete between field events runways. Add \$7,430		
	c. Install 15’ high netting with removable posts between the javelin runway and discuss throwing sector. The netting shall be parallel to the javelin runway and extend the entire length of the runway. Add \$12,420		

**For Information:**

Change order SC-3 was approved at the August 31, 2016 Voting Meeting to replace the existing track asphalt base course and stone sub base under the **TPK, Inc.** Site Construction Contract for a cost of \$186,941. If additional soft soils are encountered below the new stone base they shall be removed and replaced with new stone base at a unit cost of \$27.50 square yard for 6” depths \$32.75 square yard for 8” depths.

- C.5 Approval to rescind change order to **Field Turf USA, Inc.** for the hillside turf and logo work in the amount of \$17,135. A change order was originally approved at the August 17, 2016 Voting Meeting for a deduct in the amount of \$17,135, however, this work was not included in the State Contract Proposal. Accordingly, the deduct was not necessary.
- C.6 Approval of an Addendum to the original contract with **GeoMechanics, Inc.** for consulting geotechnical inspections services at the Scott Primary School project in an amount to not exceed \$54,977.50. C.6

**For Information:**

The original contract with **GeoMechanics, Inc.** was approved at the June 15, 2016 Voting Meeting in an amount not to exceed \$99,850.

- C.7 Approval of the adult meal price increase in the amount of \$.15 for a total meal price of \$4.05.

- Dr. Kwiatkowski announced the Transportation Committee meeting on September 27 at 6pm followed by a Policy Committee meeting at 7pm in the Duss Conference Room. The Transportation Committee will provide an update on transportation, one month into the school year. The Policy Committee will address the charge policy for the cafeteria and eligibility for athletes.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski then invited the public to speak on any item.
- Keely Sidick, of Wetzel Road, requested the school board make the grading scale retroactive to the freshman year for students because it would benefit the entire community.
  - Sid Reed, of Ladley Street, said the district and parents are all on the same side cheering for the students and he asked the board to revisit the discussion of making the changed grading scale retroactive.
  - Betsy Nebiolo, of Village Road, said she appreciated the fact the school board changed the grading scale in its policy. She said it looks good for the district and puts the district on equal footing with area districts.
  - Ms. Sidick said the most immediate need is for the senior class and changing the grades and making them retroactive for those fewer than 400 students.
  - Mr. Aiken said this has been an issue the district has wrestled since it started looking at the grading scale. The complexity of changing grades, while it sounds like a simple computer click is much deeper than adjusting a scale. He added that the integrity of the grade is something the district has discussed.
  - Ms. Sidick said there were about 30 students willing to come in support of retroactively applying the new grading scale but were talked out of it by their teachers.
  - Mr. Aiken said teachers grade using a rubric and teachers grade according to what a work looks like and to go back and change a grade, changes that rubric. It's easy to say we won't think about who graduated, but there is no end to the potential effects if we do make it retroactive. We looked at school districts who made changes to the grading scale and the few that did make it retroactive ran into trouble. The integrity of those grades comes into question.
  - Ms. Sidick said she would like for the board to discuss this issue because she feels the decision was made without the parents' input.
  - Mr. Aiken disagreed and said the desire for some parents to make the new grading scale retroactive was made known.
  - Mr. Tunstall added that the board and district spent plenty of time talking about it.
  - Mr. Aiken said the administrative recommendation was presented to the board and open to deliberation and still is.
  - Ms. Sidick said she believed the decision to make the grades retroactive would benefit Shaler Area.

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- Mr. Aiken said he looked at the transcripts and printed on each is two very distinct grading scales listed. There also is a trifold brochure sent to all colleges Shaler Area students apply to indicating the grading scale change.
- Jane Fisher, of Wetzel Road, asked how GPA would be calculated.
- Mr. Aiken said it would be one number using the grades as listed on the transcript.
- Lori Valentine, of Fernledge Drive, has a student in high school and said they all need to work together to come up with a compromise. She asked if it was possible to get clerical support to change the grades. She said the students are trying to be competitive and they are all trying to make the students look better but the rigor does not come from the grading scale. She asked if the district could share its research.
- Mr. Aiken thanked everyone in attendance for their concerns and said if the board wished to revisit it they could, but the administration has made its recommendation.
- Mr. Hoffman said there are ramifications to retroactively changing the grading system and his firm provided a list of concerns.
- Mrs. Donahue asked why the teachers may be persuading students not to come to the board meeting.
- Ms. Fisher said her daughter told her the teachers were telling students that was already explained why teachers can't do that.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if the issue was one the board would like to revisit formally. Mrs. Phillips and Dr. O'Black were directed to schedule an Education Committee meeting.
- Jodi Poniewaz, of Iola Street, said at a previous meeting there was one father who said a college had accepted that there was a change in the grading scale and two that didn't care. She said the kids at the lower end may not be going to college so it may only affect students at the upper end.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski said there is a misconception that everyone's grades will go up. The change really only applies to the students who received a grade on the borders.
- Karen Bottegal, of Lehr Avenue, said she doesn't agree with the new grading scale and her child is a "bubble kid."
- Dorothy Petrancosta, of Skylark Drive, said the teachers may have already made those discretionary choices for students who are on the boarder of a grade. She said teachers are people and they may respond to situations, you can't assume just because a number is given, there isn't a person involved in grading. When you are talking about rubrics, there is a person involved and you own that grade.
- Sophia Kachur said she personally hadn't thought about retroactively changing the grading scale. She said it would positively affect her, but in her opinion, she thinks it's fine that is not changed because at the time, that was the grading scale.
- Mr. Tunstall said the issue of retroactivity is one of the biggest things the board struggles with but where does it stop if they do implement it.
- Ms. Sidick suggested the board add a policy that a student must apply to have their grades changed retroactively.

After no further items were presented, final adjournment occurred at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Baker  
Assistant Board Secretary