

*SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting
March 8, 2017 – Administration Building
Minutes*

The Board of School Directors of the Shaler Area School District held a Committee of the Whole Meeting on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at the Shaler Area Administration Building, Glenshaw, PA, with Dr. April Kwiatkowski, School Board President, presiding. This meeting began at 7:14 p.m.

Board Members Present: Mrs. Suzanna Donahue
Mr. James Fisher
Mr. Tim Gapsky
Dr. April Kwiatkowski
Mrs. Eileen Phillips
Mr. Steve Romac
Mr. James Tunstall

Not Present: Mr. Jason Machajewski
Mrs. Jeanne Petrovich

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
Ms. Sage Wilson, Student Representative

Notice of this meeting was posted as required.

- Dr. April Kwiatkowski called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.
- Greer Hayden, with HHSDR Architects/Engineers, and Dan Kiefer, with Massaro Construction Management Services, provided an update on the new primary school construction on Scott Avenue including the floor plans, layout and color palette of the building interior. Ms. Cindy Foht, principal of Rogers Primary School, expressed her approval of the color scheme and design. Mr. Hayden said the project is behind schedule due to the wet weather but is hopeful work will pick up as the ground dries out. Mr. Kiefer said the delay is in excess of 40 days but isn’t convinced it’s that long and is meeting with the subcontractors to determine a schedule and have a better idea of how far behind the project is.

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

<u>Item</u>	<u>SUP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
#	#	<u>TAKEN</u>
<u>EDUCATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>		
A.1	Board Only	_____
A.2	A.2	_____
A.3	A.3	_____

- A.4 Approve the first reading of the following revised policies: A.4
- a. Policy No. 005 – Organization
 - b. Policy No. 404 – Employment of Supplemental Contract Employees
 - c. Policy No. 701.1 – Naming/Renaming District Facilities
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- Mr. Romac pointed out an inconsistency in Policy No. 005 and asked for it to be corrected before the following week’s voting meeting.
- Mrs. Donahue asked what Python was. Mr. Stadelman said it is a new language popular in introductory programming classes and is being infused in the University of Pittsburgh’s curriculum, reflecting switch from Visual Basic to Python. Mr. Stadelman also said that the department changed its courses into four semester courses instead of full year courses and added an AP computer science course at the end of the sequence to encourage students to take the courses. Two of the semester classes are College in High School courses, he added.

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

Discussion Items:

- 1. Student Representatives – Sage Wilson said the high school musical opened the previous weekend with two more shows coming up. The high school also announced a new cell phone initiative “Off, Off & Away” to reduce cell phone distractions and adhere to the policy in place. Ms. Wilson also announced the music trips in April and the success of the cheerleading quad at Nationals and Worlds.
- 2. Shaler Area Education Foundation – Dr. Kwiatkowski reminded all of the Taste of Shaler Area event on March 25 and recognized all of the vendors who had committed to the event. Mr. Aiken also announced the ongoing alumni directory project being conducted by the District and Foundation.
- Dr. O’Black announced the STEAM Competition that was held at the high school on March 3. The event is organized by high school staff and demonstrates the District’s commitment to STEAM.

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

Information Item:

- 1. Update on New Primary School Construction – Mr. Greer Hayden presented at the beginning of the meeting
- 2. Title I and Literacy Presentation – April 19, 2107

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</u> <u>TAKEN</u>
C.1	APPROVE FUND PROFILES:		
	A. General Fund – Schedule of Bills and Addendum	C.1A	_____
	B. Cafeteria Fund – Schedule of Bills	C.1B	_____
	C. Bond Proceeds – Schedule of Bills	C.1C	_____

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D. Construction, Repair & Renovation – Schedule of Bills	C.1D	_____
E. Fund Profiles and Investments	C.1E	_____
F. Budget Transfers	C.1F	_____
G. Year-to-Date Financial Reports	C.1G	_____
C.2 Cafeteria Operating Statement	C.2	_____
C.3 Approval of the proposed 2017/2018 Allegheny Intermediate Unit Program of Services Budget as presented. The Budget totals \$2,034,004. The Shaler Area School District’s expected contribution to the AIU Program of Services budget is \$61,835.	C.3	_____
C.4 Approval to participate in the NSLP Summer Food Service Program.		
C.5 The administration recommends that the Board authorize continued participation of the Shaler Area School District in the Western Pennsylvania Electricity Consortium for the purchase of electricity from Direct Energy only if the price is at or below our current price. This extension to the original agreement will begin on the meter read date in January 2019 for a period of twenty-four (24) months and the price will include all costs except distribution, and other related delivery utility charges as contained in the original agreement.		

➤ Ms. Ludwig said for Item C.4, there were 3,310 students served in 2015 and 3,745 students served in 2016. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if there was a plan in increase the number of sites. Mr. Aiken said the Millvale Library is interested in being a site.

Discussion Item:

- Transportation Contract – Mr. Aiken said the District has an important decision to make as its transportation contract comes to an end. While the District has had a longstanding with First Student, the contracted transportation company, it also is looking at every expenditure carefully. The District released a Request for Proposals, which provides an opportunity to look at current rates and buses to find efficiency. The District has improved its relationship with First Student by meeting on a monthly basis. Mr. Aiken said moving forward that will be the expectation to ensure student safety and fiscal responsibility. Ms. Ludwig said of the bids received, there were two lowest bidders and a couple who didn’t meet the District’s full request. Mr. Gapsky said he looked at the RFPs from First Student and ABC Transit. Considering that the District has been with First Student, though through different companies, and out of the same garage, he would prefer to maintain the District’s relationship with that company. Mr. Aiken said the item would be voted on the following week.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski invited the public to speak.
 - Mike Ceoffe, of Butler Street, is president of the Teamsters Local 249, which represents First Student’s bus drivers. He said there were a number of bus drivers from First Student present to show that the drivers are committed to the District, with many of them living in the community or having children or grandchildren on their routes. He argued that First Student follows strict safety guidelines and argued the importance of having consistency between the drivers and students.
 - Jeff Coleman, of Governor Drive, said working for First Student is a retirement job for many drivers and they would like the District to maintain its relationship with First Student. He also pointed out First Student’s good safety record.
 - Joe Popinski, business agent and recording secretary for the bus drivers union, said the bus drivers were willing to meet with the District at the beginning of the school year and help with the routes.

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- Mr. Ceoffe said the drivers were present as a sign of support. Bus drivers are hard to come by, but First Student drivers are dedicated people who are part of the community and want the job.
- Ray Cunningham, of Mt. Royal Blvd., said he worked for First Student but moved to ABC Transit when North Hills School District changed its transportation provider. He said he was unhappy despite being paid more and returned to First Student.
- Vince Bencivenga, of McElheny Road, said he has worked in Shaler all of his life and has worked for several trucking companies. He said it's not nice when someone comes in and says you don't have a job, especially when those people are District taxpayers.
- Beatrice Grenda, of Pica Street, in Reserve, said she has been with Schmitt, Laidlaw and now First Student for 36 years and has been paying District taxes for 53 years. She said she doesn't want to move and is happy with the company.
- David Sins, of Camby Drive, started driving after he retired. He said there were some of the drivers who do it because they like it. He said if they lose the contract there are 12 of them who aren't going to ABC because they heard too many bad things. He said some of the First Student drivers may go to ABC Transit, but not all of them.
- Mr. Ceoffe said if ABC is promising consistency with the drivers, they don't have it and argued that the decision is more than a dollars and cents item.
- Mrs. Donahue asked for the difference between the two proposals. Ms. Ludwig said in one proposal the fleet would remain the same with a few new buses. The other proposal would provide all new vehicles of different sizes and different rates. The District receives a state subsidy for transportation and as the buses get older, the subsidy is less.
- Mr. Gapsky asked if ABC guarantees the buses are within the district. Ms. Ludwig said it's within the RFP that the District approves the garage location.
- Dr. O'Black said there has been a decline in enrollment and currently the District does not have different rates for the 72 and 84 passenger vehicles. Dr. O'Black said the District is looking to reduce costs by reducing the size of the vehicles needed, but that only is effective if the vehicles are cost at different rates. Dr. O'Black said they are looking at creative ways to roster a bus and filling them to reasonable levels. Ms. Ludwig added that the cost for activity transportation is 4 percent of the total cost.
- Mr. Ceoffe said bus companies do have separate, independent charters and 84 passenger vehicles are the most utilized. An 84 passenger bus is something one would rather have when transporting athletes or cheerleaders, he added.
- Mr. Gapsky said he knows the District has good drivers now and is concerned with the quality next year if the District chooses a different contracted company.
- Kenny Michel, of Potomic Street in Oakmont, who works on the buses, asked for clarification on where the District got its information regarding the current age of the buses. Ms. Ludwig said the information came from First Student. Mr. Michel said all of the work on the buses is done on site.
- Mr. Hoffman said the District has done its due diligence in researching the financial stability of all potential bus companies in response from a comment from someone in attendance.
- Mr. Gapsky asked if the District tried to secure an early bird contract before going to RFP. Mr. Aiken and Dr. O'Black said the District tried to secure an extension with the current provider but it didn't work out.
- Sage Wilson said she remembers her bus driver from elementary school fondly, but she drives to school now.
- Jim Beachem, of Valley High Drive, said he has been with First Student for seven years after retiring. His son also drove with Laidlaw and now for the Port Authority. He said First Student does have a lot of good drivers and that it took a long time to get the drivers. The drivers know the routes and if a bus breaks down someone can cover the students because the drivers know the area and roads. First Student has been operating in the same location for decades and ABC doesn't have a location in Shaler Area, Mr. Beachem argued.
- Mr. Tunstall said most RFPs are financially based. He asked if the District looked at the safety records and driver standards of the transit companies. Dr. O'Black said the RFP included safety certification and training requirements. In both cases, First Student and ABC Transit provided safety manuals and they seem to be a fair comparison. The District looked at reference checks with large school districts that contracted with ABC

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and the District knows First Student first hand. Dr. O'Black said he and Ms. Ludwig also visited two ABC locations in Cheswick and Etna.

- Mr. Ceoffe said when ABC took over for the City of Pittsburgh, they were 25 drivers short and routes were not covered. He said he believes the same thing would happen to Shaler Area if it decides to change providers.
- Dr. O'Black said during reference conversations they asked about driver shortages and it was not an area of concern for Fox Chapel, North Hills or Seneca Valley.
- Mrs. Donahue asked if the District talked to any ABC employees. Ms. Ludwig said they spoke with employees but not bus drivers.
- Pat Jankowski, of Princeton Ave., said she is a monitor on the bus and First Student brought in people to talk to them during their monthly safety meetings to address students with special needs. She said that North Hills had trouble when they switched to ABC Transit and she didn't believe there was the same familiarity or dedication with the drivers.
- Gareth Warren, of Jones Street, in Etna, suggested rerouting some bus routes to get students on the buses sooner in the run.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski thanked Mr. Ceoffe and the drivers for attending the meeting.

After no further items were presented, final adjournment occurred at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Baker
Assistant Board Secretary