

*SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting
April 14, 2021 – Hybrid
Minutes*

The Board of School Directors of the Shaler Area School District held a Committee of the Whole Meeting on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, in a hybrid format, in person at the Shaler Area Administration Building, Glenshaw, PA, and on Zoom, a virtual meeting platform, with Mr. Jim Tunstall, School Board President, presiding. This meeting began at 7:15 p.m.

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

Others Present: Dr. Sean Aiken, Superintendent
 Dr. Bryan O’Black, Assistant Superintendent
 Ms. Sherri Ludwig, Director of Business Affairs
 Mr. Matt Hoffman, Solicitor

Notice of this meeting was posted as required.

➤ Mr. James Tunstall called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

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

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>SUP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
<u>#</u>	<u>EDUCATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>TAKEN</u>
A.1	Approve the MOU’s with the Borough of Etna Police Department, Borough of Millvale Police Department, Shaler Township Police Department, and Reserve Township Police Department to foster a relationship of cooperation and mutual support between the parties as we work together to maintain the physical security and safety of our school buildings.	A.1	<hr/>

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

Information Items:

1. Student Representatives – Zoe Babbit & Catherine Clark were not present.
2. Shaler Area Education Foundation – Mrs. Phillips said that the Foundation just met and a lot of work is going on behind the scenes. Two board members are going off the board so they are looking at the strategic plan as they move forward to fill the board seats. Dr. Aiken said that the strategic planning committee would meet the following week.

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3. Shaler Area's Kennywood Picnic date has been changed from Tuesday, June 15 to Wednesday, June 16, 2021 as Kennywood will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays in June. No ticket sales will be held in the school buildings or central office. School Ticket price will be \$29 and can be purchased at www.kennywood.com/shalerarea.
4. Spring Sports Review – Dr. Aiken said Mr. Rauscher would present later in the meeting.
5. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Aiken shared that the high school musical opens the following night. The district is in the final planning stages for prom and graduation. The graduation ceremony will allow up to four tickets per family for the 50th graduating class. Additionally, the third weekend in May has been identified for the Class of 2020 tree dedication ceremony. Dr. O'Black shared information about the state assessments, which will be given in the spring. The district was given the option to delay the state assessments to September 2021, but decided that the intent was to begin next school year in as normal a school year as possible, and two state assessments in one school year would be a burden. For the Keystone Exams, some students will be exempt from taking the tests depending on when they completed the trigger course. Each student will receive a letter listing the test they are required to take. Dr. O'Black also covered the logistics for Cohort C. He also shared that the district is in the initial phases of planning at what a virtual school would look like next year. The Shaler Area Virtual Institute (SAVI) will be introduced to families in the coming week, and they will be asked to complete an interest survey if they are considering the option for next year. The district is also finalizing a survey to staff to gauge teacher's interest in teaching the virtual courses. The district will host a Town Hall meeting to introduce SAVI to parents in April.

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

Discussion Item:

1. Possible dates for Kennywood Picnic in 2022 – Tuesday, June 7, 2022 or Tuesday, June 14, 2022. Mr. Romac, Mr. Gapsky, and Mr. Fisher all expressed a preference for the June 14 date.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if the agenda item was the standard MOU. Dr. O'Black said it is the same required document from the state Department of Safe Schools.
 - Mr. Romac asked if the district explored a district police department. Dr. O'Black said with the addition of a second SRO, the district deviated from a school police force. At the time, there were concerns with school police, so Shaler Area went down the path of SROs. Dr. Aiken said the district wanted to build better partnerships with the municipalities.
 - Mrs. Donahue asked about graduation. Dr. Aiken said the high school administration and students met and the students wanted the traditional graduation experience at Titan Stadium.
 - Mrs. Donahue asked how serious the district is about equity and diversity and why it is not changing the graduation gowns to a single color. Dr. Aiken said it is too late in the school year to make the change now. He added that he's not saying that long term that isn't the right option, it's just not the best option right now. We're not opposed to the idea but timing is critical. Dr. Kwiatkowski said COVID can't be used as an excuse for everything. Mr. Romac suggested redesigning the entire gown. Mr. Gapsky asked if someone could come up with a design to present to the board. Dr. Kwiatkowski said the first step is to reach out to the company to see what options are available. She said she doesn't understand why the class is separated by color anyway. Mr. Romac made the point of asking what students do who have parents who won't allow them to order the color they identify with.

- Dr. Aiken then introduced Mary Ellen Ramage, Etna Borough manager, and Elaine Evosevic-Lozada, with Allegheny County Economic Development, to discuss the proposed Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) that the board will be voting on in the coming months. Ms. Evosevic-Lozada explained that the LERTA is an abatement program on the improved property value. Ms. Ramage said the property at 51 Bridge Street has been 75 percent vacant for the last 45-50 years and is in a flood plain. She explained the state of disrepair of the structure and challenges to repairing the structure. She said the cost for the borough to demolish the building would be astronomical so it is exciting to have a positive and progressive development take a leap of faith to purchase the property. The company would increase jobs, economic development, and taxes, and be transformational for the community. The borough plans to approve the LERTA at its May meeting. Dr. Aiken said the district has not engaged in a LERTA for a number of years. Ms. Evosevic-Lozada said the benefit is that the LERTA might help leverage other resources and incentivize future developments. The LERTA is meant to eliminate blight. Mrs. Donahue asked what the LERTA proposal is. Ms. Ramage said it is a 10-year LERTA with 100 percent abatement, reduced by 10 percent over a 10-year time frame on improvements to the property. She further clarified that the LERTA would be parcel by parcel because Etna feels every case could be different. Mr. Romac asked about the property next door that experienced a fire and the work being done at 51 Bridge Street. Ms. Ramage provided an update on the property that is rehabilitating after the fire, and said 51 Bridge received a selective demolition permit and is working with the code enforcement officer to address aspects of the structure that could be a liability. Mr. Romac asked if Bridge and Freeport could be a one-way street since it is a narrow roadway. Ms. Ramage said the borough tried to have a conversation with PennDOT because Freeport is a state street but they were not interested. She said if the light poles are moved, there might be an opportunity for additional on street parking on Bridge. Dr. Kwiatkowski said with the LERTA, the abatement is on improvements, so she asked how the improvements are reassessed. Ms. Evosevic-Lozada said the base value remains and explained the proves of reassessing the base value and improved value. The Office of Property Assessment determines value. Mr. Hoffman clarified that the county is not going to assess a property under construction. Mr. Romac asked what would stop the owners from selling the property for a profit and not paying taxes on it. Mr. Hoffman said the LERTA carries forward with the property and there is nothing that precludes the owners from selling the property 5 years into the LERTA. Mr. Romac asked where the district was in the appeals process. Mr. Hoffman said he would provide the information to Dr. Aiken. Dr. Aiken said the LERTA could attract other developers who see the county, borough and school district are willing to work with a LERTA. Ms. Ramage said any area that is declared blighted is eligible for a LERTA and identified other properties in the borough that could qualify. Mr. Hoffman said the first step is for the borough to hold a public hearing to declare the parcel blighted then a resolution to approve the LERTA. Dr. Aiken said the Finance Committee will hold a meeting later that month and can discuss it further.

- Clint Rauscher, athletic director, provided an update on the spring sports teams including softball, baseball, boys tennis, boys volleyball, boys and girls lacrosse, and boys and girls track. Dr. Aiken asked if there has been any discussion about fall sports. Mr. Rauscher said the hope is to be as close to normal as possible. He said the PIAA agreed to accept the normal number of competitors for spring championships if conditions allow, so everyone is hopeful. Mr. Gapsky asked for an update on the golf coach. Mr. Rauscher said the job was posted in house and within WPIAL. He hopes to have a candidate for the May meeting. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if there were any issues with spectators. Mr. Rauscher said they have had to increase enforcement especially at outdoor events, but after staff shares expectations, the spectators are compliant. At Dr. Kwiatkowski's suggestion, Mr. Rauscher said that they will look into providing reminders announced at the beginning of events. Dr. Aiken said the coaches and athletes have been doing a great job. Dr. Kwiatkowski agreed that the coaches have had to take on a lot more responsibility to keep athletes safe and they owe them gratitude.

Ms. Ludwig then announced the following Finance Items:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUP.</u>	<u>ACTION</u>										
#	#	TAKEN										
<u>FINANCE & OPERATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>												
C.1												
APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY AND MARCH 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	_____										
D. Year-to-Date Financial Reports	C.1D	_____										
E. Budget Transfers	C.1E	_____										
F. Fund Profiles and Investments	C.1F	_____										
C.2 Cafeteria Operating Statement February	C.2	_____										
C.3 Approve additional ABC Transit Personnel.	C.3	_____										
C.4 Approve the purchase of Apple I-pads in the amount of \$915,195 for further implementation of the one-to-one I-pad initiative.		_____										
C.5 Recommend the award of the following bids that were opened as listed:	C.5											
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Athletic Supplies</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Recommend as submitted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Athletic Medical Supplies</td> <td>Recommend as submitted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medical Supplies</td> <td>Recommend as submitted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trash Removal</td> <td>Recommend as submitted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Uniforms</td> <td>Recommend as submitted</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Athletic Supplies	Recommend as submitted	Athletic Medical Supplies	Recommend as submitted	Medical Supplies	Recommend as submitted	Trash Removal	Recommend as submitted	Uniforms	Recommend as submitted
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C.6 Approve the change order proposal with The Efficiency Network (TEN) for the installation of GPS units providing needlepoint bipolar ionization in district buildings. <i>(The cost is estimated at \$616,496. If additional units are determined to be needed any amounts exceeding \$700,000 will be subject to additional Board approval.)</i>	C.6	_____										

Discussion Item:

1. LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance)

- Mr. Romac asked if the district received a bid for an ultraviolet option for Item C.6. Dr. Aiken said the district met with the company that approached the Buildings and Grounds Committee and reviewed the UV product. They provided a unit cost of what would be installed but did not provide a labor cost. Then the district scheduled a meeting with HHSDR and discussed the information with HHSDR as well as internally. In the process of discussing bipolar ionization versus UV, it was decided that bipolar ionization was the right way to go for the district. Additionally, based on the unit cost, it would be more expensive. Mr. Romac said the district makes its department heads get three quotes for anything over \$15,000 and doesn't understand the logic to at least get a bid for both projects and compare apples to apples. Dr. Aiken said they spoke to an engineer with HHSDR about what would work best with the district's systems. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if there was any way to negotiate a longer warranty than 12 months. Ms. Ludwig said they will only guarantee 12 months. Dr. Kwiatkowski expressed concern.

- Dr. Kwiatkowski also expressed concern over the cafeteria operating deficit and asked about any reimbursement from the state. Ms. Ludwig said there was no additional reimbursement but the district could designate some funding from the federal government. Currently, The Nutrition Group is estimating a \$130,000 loss by the end of the year. Ms. Ludwig said there is no guarantee in this school year because it is based on the number of serving days, which had been altered.
 - Mr. Romac said that it seemed the equipment warranty changed in Item C.6 from what was previously presented. Ms. Ludwig said that there was a mistake in the original proposal agreement, and it is a three-year equipment warranty. Additional discussion of the costs and warranty length occurred.
 - Dr. Kwiatkowski asked about exclusions in the contract. Ms. Ludwig said the UV option could not be installed in buildings with unit ventilators, so the district would have to purchase another piece of equipment. Mr. Fisher said UV is a better way of going but it doesn't work in all of the district buildings so bipolar ionization is next best.
 - Dr. Kwiatkowski asked about the uniform bids and if it was per the collective bargaining agreement. Dr. O'Black said the district provides custodians and maintenance employees with uniforms. Dr. Kwiatkowski said it seems like a lot of money to spend every year. There are 52 employees in the department.
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- Mr. Tunstall then invited the board to speak on any other business.
 - Mr. Gapsky asked if the district could open the track during the day on Wednesdays until 3 p.m. when athletic practices start. Dr. Aiken said the district can look into doing that on Wednesdays.
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- Mr. Tunstall then recognized the public to speak on any other items:
 - Jodi Poniewaz, of Iola Street, said she has lived in the district since 2008 with children from 4th grade to 11th grade. She applauds the district's efforts to create a virtual institute and said most families choose a cyber option because of the flexibility. Most cyber options allow for more flexibility than a cyber option that operates within a traditional school schedule. She pointed out that the district does not do enough for students with dyslexia, families choose private or parochial school because of their dissatisfaction with the Shaler Area curriculum, the physical education and health requirements are above and beyond, there was never a resolution to provide recess at the Elementary School, and the block periods of math and English are too long for many students to sit through. She suggested a survey to ask families and students for feedback. Dr. Aiken thanked her for her thoughts and said the district has heard many of these concerns previously. The district was in the process of addressing the inclusion of recess at the Elementary School and the health and physical education concerns prior to COVID. He said the district is working toward a solution for some of the concerns expressed.
 - Aidan Brophy, a junior at Shaler Area High School, said a group of juniors would like to propose purchasing a new scoreboard for the swim team and prominently displaying high school teacher Melissa Ravas' name on it. Mrs. Ravas passed away earlier in the year and the students would like to honor her in recognition of her many positive contributions. The students have received the family's blessing to proceed with the proposal, the group engaged in preliminary discussions with the athletic director, and they are now looking for the board's approval and direction. Dr. Aiken explained that there is a process for legacy projects and the district will convene a committee to discuss the idea and possibly other ideas to adequately honor her legacy. Dr. Kwiatkowski added that Board Policy 701.1 outlines how to rename a district facility or property. Mr. Brophy thanked the district and board for the information and direction.

After no further items were presented, final adjournment occurred at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Baker
Assistant Board Secretary