

*SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 12, 2021 – Hybrid
Minutes*

The Board of School Directors of the Shaler Area School District held a Committee of the Whole Meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 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 7:44 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
- Dr. Kathleen Graczyk, Director of Student Services
- Ms. Sherri Ludwig, Director of Business Affairs
- Mr. Matt Hoffman, Solicitor
- Catherine Clark, Student Representative

Notice of this meeting was posted as required.

- Mr. James Tunstall called the meeting to order at 7:44 p.m.

- Ms. Ludwig introduced Kim Cassidy, Sue Cook, and Kim McCullough with The Nutrition Group. Ms. Cassidy presented an overview of the 2020-2021 year including the seamless summer program, serving bulk meals, and following CDC guidelines in the cafeteria. Ms. Cassidy said it was the most difficult year for projections and there are many factors that will affect next year that the state Department of Education has not yet determined such as serving weekend meals or over holidays. Next year's budget was created using the current year's participation, however, Ms. Cassidy said she hopes and expects it to be higher. Every student will be able to eat for free again next year. Catherine Clark said it is very exciting to hear that the free meals can be extended to next year. She also said that the breakfast carts are very useful and convenient, and the students would be excited to have the a la carte items back. Ms. Cassidy said they will do everything possible to be successful next year. Mr. Aiken thanked the team and said they have been a great district partner this past year. Ms. Ludwig said the team really served the Shaler Area community well and didn't miss a beat or have a missed day of serving students.

- Mr. Aiken said the district has been discussing the possible Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) in Etna and introduced The AM Group and Etna Borough Manager Mary Ellen Ramage to discuss the development. Thomas Sabol, of The AM Group, said their goal is to honor the industrial past of the building while transitioning to new industries such as robotics and artificial intelligence. He said the plan is to give the building a complete overhaul, strip it to the bones, and update it. As of today, The AM Group has started remediation of the building to address asbestos, the windows and roof. They are taking steps to clean the area to prepare the property for the next phase of construction. Additionally, the company is taking part in a community garden project that will benefit Etna, the community, the school district, and restaurants. Matthew Cypher, of The AM Group, said they are partnering with Fresh Ministries, which brings aquaponics gardens to urban areas. They recently received a small grant to get started. Ms. Ramage said they are targeting Ganster Street, an area that was cut off from the community when the bypass was built and has steadily declined over the decades. Ms. Ramage said she has made it her mission to do

something with the area and is currently in the process of writing grants. She said this project would right an injustice from a long time ago and The AM Group is coming to her community to do something that has nothing to do with their development but with care for the Etna people and community. Mr. Cypher said the project would remove as many houses as possible for 6,000 square feet of contiguous space, and Fresh Ministries would be the developer of the project. The total cost for the project is \$300,000 to \$500,000 which is not insignificant but he feels is an achievable goal. It would also provide employment to run the farm. Dr. Aiken said he also shared the information with the high school Sustainability class. Teacher Abbey Nilson was very excited because this project fits the profile of the course. Mr. Sabol said that the company made it their goal to be impactful in the community through this project. Dr. Aiken asked if The AM Group has talked to companies about coming into the Etna building. Mr. Sabol said they have hired a broker who is courting possible tenants, specifically high-tech tenants. He said the building has great bones but needs a lot of work. They are currently pursuing grants because the project isn't in an area where there is a lot of development so there needs to be cost-incentives in rent to bring people across the river. They need to make that up on expenses, which is why they are requesting a LERTA. They are hopeful for a late spring 2022 move in for tenant space. Ms. Ramage said next Wednesday, Etna will hold a meeting and public hearing for the LERTA for the borough. They plan to approve a 10 year LERTA, 100 percent abatement with a sliding 10 percent over a 10-year period. She said this LERTA and project will increase property values to all areas around it. Mr. Sabol said they are willing to work with the school district. He said that they recognized that they opened themselves up to reassessment with the sale alone. He said they will pay their share and will not fight the reassessment so the school district taxes will jump up already. Mr. Romac said they have talked about different ways of forming the LERTA and is not sure he is comfortable with a 10-year LERTA. He asked who would determine the value of the property as they go. He suggested a 5-year agreement at 100 percent with no sliding scale. He suggested it was less work for the finance department. Mr. Hoffman said the county is the entity to put assessments on improvements. When you establish a LERTA, you can't revisit it. The tax abatement would be on improvements moving forward. Mr. Romac said he feels a better option is the 5-year LERTA to give The AM Group an opportunity to make the improvements. Ms. Ludwig explained the abatement would not start until after the project is done and improvements are complete. Mr. Sabol explained the projected schedule for the 10-year LERTA using a comparable building in the Sharpsburg Business Park. He said they are open to a different structure for the LERTA but would like to think about it. Mr. Fisher suggested The AM Group look at both options and get back to the school district. Mr. Romac said he threw the idea out there because he thought it might be more beneficial for The AM Group. Dr. Aiken said the next step is for Etna to take action the following week.

- Student Representatives – Catherine Clark then gave her student representative report. She said that a lot of the high school activities are back with the district moving to 4-day instruction. The musical was successful; sports are back, even bocce; prom and graduation are being planned. She said that there are a lot of questions about the separate virtual institute that the district plans to operate next year and what the policy will be if a student contracts COVID or needs to quarantine. She said to miss one or two days of school even at high school is very difficult. There is a lot of anxiety around how the students will be supported. Dr. Aiken said that the district wants some support for students who are sick, but the district is still working out options because there will be no Cohort C. August 25 is the first day of school next year. Ms. Clark said AP tests are going well and students have been able to stay distanced. Cohort C being in person to take the tests has caused some anxiety but everything is going well. There is one virtual AP exam next Wednesday, which may be challenging for some because the test cannot be run on an iPad or standard Chromebook. She said that moving forward she will be interested in seeing what the College Board decides for next year. Dr. O'Black said the computer labs are open in the high school for testing. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked for someone to confirm that all students have access to what they need to take the tests. Dr. Aiken thanked Ms. Clark for her service to the school board and being a representative to the high school.

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

<u>ITEM #</u>	<u>EDUCATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	<u>SUP #</u>	<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>
A.1	Approve the dates of Extended School Year (ESY) for Summer 2021: July 6 to July 29, 2021 – Monday thru Thursday 9:00 to 12:00 daily.		_____
A.2	Approve the dates of the Shaler Area Summer Literacy & Math Program for grades K-8: August 2 to August 13, 2021.		_____
A.3	Approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. from August 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 for Pre-K Counts services at Marzolf Primary School, Reserve Primary School and Scott Primary School.	A.3	_____
A.4	Approve the contract with Grade Point Resources to provide four behavior specialist consultants to service the district for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.	A.4	_____

- Dr. O’Black said item A.2 would provide students with the opportunity to be remediated in math and literacy immediately before the school year starts. The program will be a blended model of online and in person instruction. The district felt students needed a break and hosting in August would be better.
- Item A.3 includes Scott Primary School because the district continues to apply to have Scott Primary as a site.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski asked why the kick start program was not extended to grades 9-12. Dr. O’Black said at the secondary level, challenges are addressed through credit recovery summer schooling. The K-8 program is around fundamental skills, and at the middle school and high school it is more around credit recovery for specific courses. He said the district will use ESSER funds for summer school where as previously the family would have to pay. School counselors continue to review grades to see who may qualify for these courses. He said he would follow up with the school counselors to have the conversation with families, however a catch-all program at the secondary level is not practical because it is more course specific. Dr. Kwiatkowski said she thinks it’s important to let people know it’s available even if a student didn’t fail the course.

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

Information Items:

1. Student Representatives – Zoe Babbit & Catherine Clark – Presented earlier in the evening.
2. Shaler Area Education Foundation – Mrs. Phillips said the Foundation met on Monday. Two board members are transitioning off the board, so they are interviewing and reviewing applicants to fill the positions. SAEF is currently working to accept online donations and is planning something special for the Class of 2021, the 50th graduating class. Strategic planning is also being looked at and analyzed. Dr. Aiken said in the coming weeks, the Taste of Shaler Area donations will be gifted to Shaler Area staff through a special raffle. Teachers can nominate other teachers for the raffle. Additionally, a donation of Pasquale pizza gift cards will be shared with each building to be used as part of the PBIS program. Mrs. Donahue asked if donors can allocate money to go to a specific program within the Foundation. Dr. Kwiatkowski said the Foundation can’t accept designated funds

because it is not a pass-through. Mr. Romac said they also shouldn't accept funds for budgetary items because that is not the purpose of SAEF. Dr. Aiken said they wanted to make sure they didn't deviate from the mission of SAEF.

3. College in High School Course (Spanish) – Dr. O'Black said the request was made to move Honors Spanish 4 to be a College in High School course through the University of Pittsburgh. This will be an option for students and is in line with the World language department transition to offer CHS courses. It was not included in the annual course description review.
4. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Aiken said all of the end of the year tests (Keystones, AP, PSSA, finals) are being scheduled. The district delivered the Class of 2021 yard signs to seniors and the Senior Spotlight social media campaign will begin that week. Next Thursday is Senior Awards, Prom is May 28 at the Sheraton, and graduation is June 11. Gov. Wolf expanded the number of people permitted at outdoor events so the district is looking at increasing the number of tickets per senior from the current 4. There will also be a special guest speaker for the 50th graduating class, Mr. Jerry Dickinson, the 2020 Distinguished Alumnus. Dr. O'Black said the district has updated the billboards on Route 8 to commemorate the Class of 2021 through the end of June. Dr. Aiken said in addition to the kick start program, the Boys and Girls Club is looking to start a program at the All Saints building in Etna, there is a YMCA program at Burchfield, Scott Primary is hosting the ESY program. The district is looking to connect its students with other summer programs. The Class of 2020 tree dedication will be on May 22. The Kim Baysek-Young Memorial Trail dedication will be on June 8. Dr. Royall started to put together a team for the Melissa Ravas memorial. Finally, School Nurse Day was that day and the district held a special luncheon for them.

Ms. Ludwig then announced the following Finance Items:

<u>ITEM</u> #	<u>FINANCE & 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 Fund – Schedule of Bills	C.1C	_____
	D. Budget Transfers	C.1D	_____
	E. Year-to-Date Financial Reports	C.1E	_____
	F. Fund Profiles and Investments	C.1F	_____
C.2	Cafeteria Operating Statement	C.2	_____
C.3	Approve the proposed 2021-22 A.W. Beattie Center Budget as approved by the A.W. Beattie Center Joint Operating Committee on April 22, 2021, totaling \$10,226,710. The Shaler Area School District share is as follows:	C.3	

	2021-22 School Year	Change
Beattie Operating Budget	\$1,304,224	(\$27,023)
Debt Service	\$ 189,869	(\$309)
Total	\$1,494,093	(\$27,332)

- C.4 Recommend the award of the following bids that were opened as listed: C.4

Art Supplies	Recommend as submitted – 04/07/2021
Consumable Products	Recommend as submitted – 04/07/2021
Science Supplies	Recommend as submitted – 04/07/2021
Physical Education	Recommend as submitted – 04/07/2021
Uniforms	Recommend as submitted – 03/03/2021

- C.5 Approve the appointment of Jeanne Hohlweg as District Treasurer effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

- C.6 Approve the following insurance policies for the 2021-22 fiscal year: C.6

Type of Policy	Company	2021-222
Property	Utica	\$78,734
Liability	Utica	\$56,948
Crime/Terrorism	Utica	\$10,769
Total Package		\$146,451
Automobile	Utica	\$6,671
Package & Fire Loss, B&M		\$153,122
Flood-Butler Plank	Utica	\$3,776
Umbrella	Utica	\$10,596
Student Accident Insurance	Utica	\$28,319
Property Total		\$195,813
Worker’s Compensation	UPMC	\$204,769
Total Property & Worker’s Compensation		\$400,582

- C.7 Approve the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Division of Food and nutrition Annual Food Service Management Company (FSMC) renewal year contract with the Nutrition Group’s budget does not include a guarantee due to the decreases in meals served projected to continue into the 2021-22 school year. C.7

- C.8 Approve the proposal from Jordan Tax Service, Inc for the preparation of the 2021 school real estate tax bills for the Shaler Area School District for the Etna Borough, Millvale Borough, and Shaler Township in the amount of \$.35 per tax bill which amounts to approximately \$6,300 and \$1.75 per installment payment process. C.8

(NOTE: Additional services of stuffing envelopes will be an additional \$150 for Etna Borough and Millvale Borough and \$300 for Shaler Township.)

- Mr. Romac asked if there were any bills paid toward contractors. Ms. Ludwig said not that month.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski thanked the administration for right-sizing the bid for uniforms. She asked if moving forward into next year if the district should look at Item C.7 and consider going out to bid for a longer contract. Ms. Ludwig explained that when the district goes out to bid it is for a four-year contract, but for the PDE, the district has to file forms every year. Dr. O’Black said the following year would be year 4 of the district contract.

Ms. Ludwig then announced the following Discussion Items, which were presented earlier:

Discussion Items:

1. FSMC 2021-22 Budget
 2. LERTA Presentation
- Mr. Tunstall then invited the board to speak on any other business.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski commented on the hole in front of Reserve Primary and expressed her concern about it being a liability. Dr. Aiken said someone did come out to give an estimate to repair the problem, and the district is currently trying to determine where the issue is. It is a weekly conversation. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked that the principal look at the area again to see if there are any other safety measures that can be taken.
 - Mrs. Petrovich said the Boys and Girls Club is trying to start a program in Etna, but in order to do that, they need \$40,000 and are asked the district to provide \$20,000 of its ESSER funds. She said they are doing a lot with academics and with students, and therefore she would like the school board to consider giving \$20,000 to the Boys and Girls Club. Dr. Aiken asked if the board is also prepared to give money to Millvale or the YMCA program at Burchfield. All the programs have educational components in the summer, and the district has students go to all of the programs. The district also hosts its own programs. Mrs. Petrovich pointed out the cost to the students and that the program will now have to charge the regular rate starting this summer coming off of COVID. She feels it is another opportunity to get a Boys and Girls Club in the district. Students in Etna don't have the advantage of a Boys and Girls Club like in Millvale. Ms. Ludwig said of the ESSER funds, the district has spent \$800,000 already and there is \$1.5 to 2 million allocated for the 1:1 initiative in addition to the behavior specialist, ESY program, professional development, PPE, air quality improvements, addressing learning loss, building projectors, and social workers. The district has a big plan for how the funds will be spent, and the district is following the legal guidelines for how the funds should be spent. She said the district would have to look in whether a donation is allowed. Mrs. Petrovich said she is asking the school board to put the item on the agenda for next week. Ms. Ludwig said the district does have the ESSER funds designated for future budgets, and each year for the next three years the ESSER funds will be used. Dr. Aiken said there are about 48 students who expressed interest in the Etna program and the district would like to have an expressed purpose for any money they donate. He said he can share some proposals with the board. He thinks it's great that the Boys and Girls Club is looking to expand, but he questioned the obligation to the other programs. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if the Boys and Girls Club offered anything for the students. Dr. Aiken said there is a sliding scale for students in need but nothing specifically for a Shaler Area student versus a Fox Chapel Area student. Mr. Romac asked if there was any way to give the Boys and Girls Club a donation and earmark that money instead of writing a black check. Dr. Aiken said he would look at the students who couldn't participate in the program without help. There are only two other school examples in the area who are giving ESSER money to this type of program. Mr. Romac asked about the possibility of families applying to the school district for help to participate in the Boys and Girls Club. Dr. Kwiatkowski said the two school examples run the program in their building, it is beyond a before and after school program. Ms. Ludwig said there are many rules and regulations with how ESSER money can be spent. Mr. Hoffman said he can't imagine ESSER allows for a donation. Dr. O'Black said it would have to be for students who demonstrate a need and have a documented learning loss and the Boys and Girls Club could mitigate that learning loss. Mr. Fisher expressed concern about the \$20,000 covering operating costs. Dr. Aiken said there was no dollar amount shared with the district only that the money would go to help support the program. Mr. Fisher said he has no problem supporting the program however he does not want to set a precedent and also wants to make sure that it is legally allowed. Mrs. Donahue said that it sounds like the ESSER money is already earmarked so she wants to know what the district is not funding as a result of supporting the Boys and Girls Club. Dr. Aiken clarified that every penny is not earmarked in order to give

the district the flexibility to determine its future needs. He offered to share more information on the program as well as what is allowed and not allowed with ESSER money.

- Mr. Tunstall then recognized the public to speak on any other items:
 - Jodi Poniewaz, of Iola Street, said there are a number of new candidates running for the school board and wanted to know why there wasn't an opportunity for a debate night within the district. She requested a town hall event in which every member of the school board and candidate is invited to attend. Mr. Tunstall said the district can support a town hall event but the district cannot be involved in politics. Mr. Hoffman said there is no prohibition in the district hosting an event. In terms of running it, he would not recommend that. Mr. Tunstall said the district can provide the facility through the district permitting process but another organization or group would have to organize and facilitate the event.

After no further items were presented, final adjournment occurred at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Baker
Assistant Board Secretary