

*SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting
October 9, 2019 – Administration Building
Minutes*

The Board of School Directors of the Shaler Area School District held a Committee of the Whole Meeting on Wednesday, October 9, 2019, at the Shaler Area Administration Building, Glenshaw, PA, with Mr. James Tunstall, School Board President, presiding. This meeting began at 7:30 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:

- Mr. Sean Aiken, Superintendent
- Dr. Bryan O'Black, Assistant Superintendent
- Ms. Sherri Ludwig, Director of Business Affairs
- Mr. Matt Hoffman, Solicitor
- Gabriella Mizera, Student Representative
- Zoe Babbit, Student Representative

Notice of this meeting was posted as required.

- Mr. James Tunstall called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
- Ms. LeeAnn Guido, social worker at the high school, presented the high school's proposal to have a therapy dog placed in the school. Ms. Guido and her labradoodle, Pepper, are a certified therapy dog and handler. Ms. Guido said she is interested in having the dog come to the high school with her to help students and presented a draft therapy dog policy for the board's consideration. Ms. Guido said the dog would not come to school full-time and it would depend on her schedule. She also explained the harness system she uses as well as the additional liability insurance she has to cover the dog. Mr. Aiken said he reached out to other school districts in the state that have used therapy dogs, and they are more common in the eastern part of the state. Dr. Kwiatkowski said she liked the idea and wanted the district to confirm that it doesn't need to do anything with its insurance policy to address this program. Dr. O'Black said the draft policy was created from multiple policies. Mr. Hoffman added that he had a couple comments to add to the policy. He also recommended an administrative approval process for the dates and times the dog would be available as well as episodic notice to parents so they are aware of the program. Dr. Kwiatkowski added her desire to make sure the policy was tight because she believed it would open the door for similar programs in other buildings. Dr. O'Black said the district would embed the final recommendations from Mr. Hoffman and prepare the first reading of the policy for the following week.

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

<u>ITEM</u> #	<u>EDUCATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	<u>SUP</u> #	<u>ACTION</u> <u>TAKEN</u>
A.1	Approve the following out-of-state trips: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Middle School History Club – travel to Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, MD – November 4, 2019 to tour the Visitor Center Museum and Battlefield. Total cost per student approximately \$37. Cost to the district 4 substitute teachers for one day.b. Boys Basketball (grades 7-12) travel to Cleveland OH – December 18, 2019 to play Highlands High School on the Cleveland Cavaliers home court. Following the game, the team will go to dinner and return for the Cavaliers game. Cost per student is \$24 to be offset by district-approved fundraisers. No cost to the district.	A.1	

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

Discussion Items:

1. Student Representatives – Gabriella Mizera & Zoe Babbit – Gabriella Mizera reported on the overall success of homecoming and the start of the holiday shirt sale. She said more people attended the fall open house than the previous two curriculum nights. She also reported on plans for the Honors French Society to see Les Miserables, students in the Stand Together group to participate in training, the fall play which is currently in rehearsals, and high school students participating in the Youth Shakespeare Society. Zoe Babbit reported the Music Honor Society started its meetings and hopes to invite people to the high school in March to learn about musical theater and participate in a workshop. She also said the Titan Service Club plans to help with local fall festivals and other events throughout the year. Mr. Aiken said the Kiwanis Club is looking for volunteers for its pancake breakfast on Nov. 7. Ms. Babbit said there is also an interest from club members to look into the possibility of helping local senior citizens shop at the local Giant Eagle. Dr. O’Black also asked Ms. Babbit to formally introduce herself to the board. She said she loves Shaler Area because it has so much to offer. She is very involved in the performing arts and recently became vice president of the Titan Service Club. She said she hopes to bring many different perspectives to the board room. She said there are too many students who limit themselves because they are scared. Mrs. Donahue questioned if every high school club was listed on the high school website because she is interested in helping her student get more involved. Dr. Kwiatkowski also asked if there was a better way to get information on all of the high school clubs and activities to the students.
 2. Shaler Area Education Foundation – Dr. Kwiatkowski reported that Mr. Romac locked in a date for the Taste of Shaler Area—March 21 at Elfinwild fire hall. She reminded everyone that the foundation raises money to help fund out-of-the-box ideas within the district
 3. Shaler Area High School Therapy Dog Proposal – Dr. Royall & Mrs. Guido
- Dr. Kwiatkowski questioned the middle school trip and how many students were going, how they are selected and why the board received such short notice on the trip. She also questioned the boys basketball trip and the benefit to the team. She also said the request did not specify how many chaperones would be required. Mr. Aiken explained that they need to sell 150 tickets to make the trip work and the bus would depend on how many are going. He estimated there were about 50 players who would be going. Dr. Kwiatkowski requested that the request be resubmitted with additional information.

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. Year-to-Date Financial Reports	C.1D	_____
	E. Fund Profiles and Investments	C.1E	_____
	F. Student Activity Funds & Investments – High School, Middle School and Elementary School - April 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019	C.1F	_____
C.2	Approve additional ABC Transit, Inc. Bus Drivers for the 2019-20 school year.	C.2	_____
C.3	Approve Tri-Cog Land Bank’s Notice of Proposed Property Acquisition for Lot Block 118-R-81 address 521 North Avenue, Millvale, PA 15209.	C.3	_____
C.4	Approve a letter of intent with The Efficiency Network (TEN). (Pending solicitor approval)	C.4	_____
C.5	Approve as surplus equipment a 2005 Ford F45 Box Truck.	C.5	_____

➤ Mr. Fisher asked what the district will do with Item C.5. Ms. Ludwig said she would get clarification from Mr. John Kaib, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked for clarification on Item C.1f and class funds. She said there appears to be a deficit for the Class of 2020 and requested more information on how the Class of 2019 class funds were reconciled. Ms. Ludwig said she would follow up with Mrs. Mindy Thiel, high school activities director. Dr. Kwiatkowski also asked if the district would lose money if it does not contract with TEN in Item C.4. Ms. Ludwig said they can walk away today without any cost to the district; if the district does an investment grade audit, then it would be out money.

Ms. Ludwig then announced the following Discussion Items:

Discussion Items:

1. High School Fitness Center & Community Swim Program — Mr. Gapsky said the swim program is not losing a bundle of money but the fitness center is and the district has to come up with a solution. He said he would like the fitness center only to be for students. He feels the public would understand. Ms. Ludwig said most of the expenditures are for salaries and maintaining the equipment. She added that there are 30 to 50 paying members per quarter. Mr. Gapsky said he doesn’t believe the district can take that hit. Mr. Aiken clarified that Mr. Gapsky is proposing that the fitness center be closed to the public starting in June 2020. Mr. Gapsky added that he would prefer to end public memberships at the end of the quarter and take a closer look at staffing. Mr. Aiken said he does believe that the fitness center should be for the students and that the district can decrease staffing. Every athletic team is using the facility and that wasn’t the case 20 years ago. Mr. Romac said he feels ending it at the

end of the calendar year is fine because every gym holds January specials. Mr. Aiken said the fitness center manager Mr. Ed DiPofi works with the athletes and some teams do bring in outside trainers so the staffing model could be a hybrid. Mrs. Donahue said she recognizes the district would still lose money because it now wouldn't receive memberships. After a straw poll, most school board members agreed to close the fitness center to the public. Mr. Aiken said he met with Mr. Kaib regarding the swim program and how the facility is used. Mr. Aiken said he plans to reach out to Suzanna Fries, director of the swim program, to get a breakdown of the number of parties and how the program is funded. Additional discussion occurred regarding areas the district can look at for both programs.

- Mr. Tunstall then invited the board to speak on any other business.
 - Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if there were a significant number of cameras not working in the district. Dr. O'Black said there was an issue and a service company has been in the district addressing the equipment. Dr. Kwiatkowski asked if it was an equipment or software problem. Dr. O'Black said they don't know until the camera is serviced. He said usually the high school security office will notify buildings and grounds department which will notify the technology department to determine what the issue is then contact LTECH if service is needed. The notification is prompt but the repair varies based on the issue. He said there is one camera out of 62 that is out at the middle school and the high school has more than 100 cameras in the building and on the exterior. Dr. O'Black explained where many of the cameras are located and said while there is not an employee who monitors the cameras 24 hours, all of the footage is kept on file. He said as the district upgrades its technology, advancements to the cameras change. The district continues to work with its consultant and building administration to maintain the system.

- Mr. Tunstall then recognized the public to speak on any other items:
 - Keeley Sidick, of Wetzel Road, addressed the board regarding recess at the elementary school. She said she has a fifth-grader who is not eating lunch on the days he has recess because he doesn't have time. She outlined the CDC's recommendation for recess and spells out the benefits. She also went through the history of recess in that building which included an activities period in place of recess when it was made into a grades 4-6 building followed by half of a year in which there was no activities period or recess. A plan was created for the second half of the year to split the lunch period to give students some recess. A plan which is still in place today. Ms. Sidick outlined what neighboring school districts do to provide recess. She said she spoke on behalf of parents in the audience who would also like a recess period put into place for fifth-graders within two weeks. Secondly, she said they would like the district to look at a policy for 4th to 6th graders to have 20 minutes of recess each day for the upcoming school year.
 - Colter Sidick, of Wetzel Road, said he would like to have recess every day to move around and see friends
 - Nick Mukerin, of Founder Street, said recess provides a huge social aspect, especially seeing friends who are not on his team.
 - Emma Cochran, of Woodhaven Court, said when she was at Marzolf they would have 30 minutes of lunch and recess and now she doesn't get a chance to talk to her friends or get fresh air. She said having recess would mean a lot to the 6th-graders.
 - Zoe Babbit said she agreed and said not having a recess is detrimental to students' mental health especially when they have friends on different teams.
 - Kara Colter, of Parker Street, said her son has a health issue that means it takes him longer to eat than other students, and he doesn't eat on the days he has recess because he would rather go outside for recess than have no ability to socialize. She said recess is important because it gives a child's brain time to rest.
 - Mr. Aiken said he spoke to one parent about setting up a meeting regarding this issue but never heard back. He said he would like the opportunity to discuss the issue. He said physical education is offered every day, though he understands that it is different from recess. He said he is available to meet and discuss, and that he would also like

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to talk to SAES principal Mr. Ian Miller to understand the issue better. He said he knows supervision is an issue for recess, so he'd like to brainstorm some solutions.

- Ms. Sidick asked if the district can start by offering recess every day for 5th graders. She said she does not want to delay the decision while there is good weather for outdoor recess.
- Mr. Tunstall said he'd like to understand all of the sides before making a change.
- Mr. Aiken said the building's physical education department does a great job of getting the students active so he doesn't want to discredit what they are doing. But he said he will reach out to Mr. Miller to see what the options are.
- Mrs. Phillips said part of the issue is that the building wasn't designed as a building to have recess. There are physical aspects of the building and logistic issues to overcome.
- Mr. Aiken said it also will be a financial commitment from the district to have more teachers on duty for recess. He said he would check on the details of the recess issue at the school.

After no further items were presented, final adjournment occurred at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Baker
Assistant Board Secretary