

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
November 9, 2020

The regular meeting of the Tawas Area Board of Education was called to order by President Ulman at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2020 through a hybrid model including in-person, Google Meets or a teleconferencing method.

Roll Call:

Present: O'Connor, Edmonds, VanderVeen, Klenow, Bruning, and Ulman
Absent: Freel
Tardy: None

Administrators Present: Klinger, Danek, Mochty, Suttle, Bolen

POSITIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Klinger said our upcoming billboard project is tonight's positive highlight. He was working on having the billboards updated last spring when the Pandemic began and everything was put on hold at that time. Some of our students, along with Mrs. Bayn, put together the top two choices that will be used for the new billboards. Mr. Klinger displayed the top two choices to the audience. Two students are shown in one of the selected options, while five students are shown in the other selection. We hope the updated billboards will continue to promote the district and our offerings by focusing on academics, fine arts and athletics. The board thanked Mr. Klinger for the presentation and look forward to seeing the new billboards soon.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Mrs. Ulman asked if there were any comments regarding the extended learning plan. Katy Jagelewski spoke on behalf of the TAFT teacher union. She gave a brief update from the teacher's perspective in regards to the new, modified schedule, which began on October 12th. She indicated the extra time at the end of the day has been extremely helpful to the teaching staff and they feel they are able to communicate better and prepare more meaningful lessons because of the adjusted schedule. She thanked the board, Mr. Klinger and the administrative team for working with them collaboratively and said they are very appreciative of the ongoing joint effort.

Mrs. Ulman asked if there were any public comments on agenda or non-agenda items. Tracee Lentz spoke and thanked those that supported her in last week's school board election and said she looks forward to joining the board in January. Mrs. Anna Dalman spoke from the perspective of a concerned parent. She said the 4th grade has only three class sections, and each section is currently at 30 students. She would like to see the board and administration add another section of 4th grade if possible. She understands there is a lot going on this year due to the Pandemic, but is hopeful another section can be added. Mrs. Ulman thanked them both for their comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by O'Connor, support by Bruning to approve the minutes of October 12, 2020 as presented. There were no additions or corrections. Motion carried unanimously.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Motion by VanderVeen to approve the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$770,105.03, and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$69,640.34. There were no sinking fund expenses or presented monthly bills to be paid. Motion supported by Klenow. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

RECEIPT OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Klinger said he received a letter of resignation/retirement from custodian Kal Jones. Kal has worked in the district for over five years and his resignation will be effective November 30th. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to accept Kal Jones' letter of resignation, thank him for his years of service and wish him well in his retirement. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Klinger said food service director Jan Sancrant is recommending two cook's helpers for hire. Sandra Ledin is being recommended to fill one of the positions. Sandy has experience working in a school setting and also has food service experience. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to hire Sandra Ledin as a cook's helper. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Klinger said Mrs. Sancrant is also recommending Kandra Cousins for hire as a cook's helper. Kandy also has food service experience and has worked in a school environment in the past. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to hire Kandra Cousins as a cook's helper. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said former interim athletic director, Lynn Kosto, is recommending Nicole Obeada for hire by EduStaff as the varsity cheer coach. Motion by Bruning, support by Klenow to recommend Nicole Obeada for hire with EduStaff. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports – Mr. Klinger said the policy committee presented new and revised board policies at the meeting last month. The following policies were discussed at that meeting and it is the recommendation of the policy committee that we consider tonight as the second reading of these new and revised board policies: **2266** Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs and Activities (New); **5517.02** Sexual Violence (Rescind/Delete); **4362.01** Threatening Behavior Toward Staff members (Revised); **5610** Removal, Suspension, Expulsion, and Permanent Exclusion of Students (Revised); **5611** Due Process Rights (Revised); **7440** Facility Security (Revised).

Motion by O'Connor, support by VanderVeen to adopt the presented changes to board policy as presented by the policy committee. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said the sinking fund committee recently met to discuss and prioritize projects for this school year. The committee is recommending the aging boiler system be addressed. There is one boiler at the middle/high school that needs upgrading and a series of seven boilers at Clara Bolen that need replacing. The committee also recommends providing radio boosters in both buildings to help improve communication for our community-wide emergency response teams. When emergency personnel enter our buildings currently, their radios don't work because the brick and mortar doesn't allow for the signal to reach their devices. The committee also would like to look at adding a secure entrance to Central Office. Mr. Klinger has been working with Dan LaPan to help support the boiler and entry project. Since the committee met, Mr. Klinger has received updated numbers from Dan LaPan on the boiler project. The project is estimated to cost over \$460,000 which is much higher than originally expected. The front entry at Central Office is estimated around \$8,000 for the least expensive option. This option would include installing access controls with 3 video stations to buzz guests in. It would also include replacing door hardware and adding a mullion. Another option would be to construct a new entry vestibule to the exterior, but that would cost close to \$38,000. The radio booster project would cost about \$22,000 at Clara Bolen and \$26,000 at the middle/high school, which includes battery backup units. There will be about \$347,000 available in the sinking fund this year which is not enough to complete all of the projects discussed. The board discussed which project(s) they should prioritize. It was decided to put off the boiler project at this time until there is enough money in the sinking fund to

do it right. Mr. Klinger said he has confirmed with Mr. Couch that the boilers are all functioning at this time and we can continue to maintain them until they can be fully replaced. Mrs. Klenow asked if we should do the middle/high school boiler now. Mr. VanderVeen said the sinking fund adds about \$250,000 each year so if we wait another year we should have around \$510,000 which would allow us to complete the entire boiler project. It would also be wise to replace all the boilers together to keep the management fee at a minimum versus paying it twice for separate projects. The other two projects could be done this year. Mrs. O'Connor asked Mr. Klinger if there was a Michigan State Police grant available that would cover the radio booster project. Mr. Klinger said he did apply for a grant last spring but once COVID hit the funds were pulled and the grant was discontinued. He said the grant would not have allowed for this type of project. The board discussed the Central Office entry options and decided it would make the most sense to go with the least expensive option which would provide 3 controls for the office to buzz guests in. Mrs. O'Connor asked if the entry doors needed to be replaced since we were told the seals were shot. Mr. Klinger said the doors were inspected and we were told it is more of a circulation issue, so we leave the doors open into the entry vestibule to allow the air to move between the areas. In regards to the radio booster project, Mr. Klinger said he has spoken to Mr. Couch and Mr. Huizar about assisting with running the cables and the roofing company would also need to be available to assist with that portion of the project, but it would help keep the cost down. We will have to put out for bids for the project. There will be some additional costs beyond what is shown to have the roofing company available to assist with running the cable through the roof which could put the total cost over \$50,000. The board decided to move forward with the Central Office entry renovation and the radio booster project. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to move forward with the radio booster project and the Central Office secure entrance project, Option 1. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Report – Mr. Klinger said the Michigan legislature recently passed Senate Bill 1108 which amended certain provisions of the Open Meetings Act. The following are some of the timelines associated with the amendments: From now through December 31, 2020 school boards can meet electronically through video conferencing. This is retroactive to March of this year to validate meetings held electronically pursuant to the governor's orders. From January through December 2021, the school board may meet electronically for three reasons, including a board member being absent due to military duty, because of a medical condition, or if a local or statewide state of emergency or disaster is declared by the governor, local official or local governing body. Finally, for calendar year 2022 and beyond, school board members will only be allowed to attend electronically because of military duty.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Klinger said we are required to revisit and reconfirm our Extended Learning plan each month. It discusses how instruction is being delivered for our K-12 students, that we are providing a free and appropriate education for our special needs students, and provides the weekly two-way communication rates. Mr. Klinger reviewed the plan and said our instructional delivery method remains the same. We are offering face to face and remote learning opportunities at each building level. Mr. Klinger said the percentage review of weekly 2-way interactions shows a low of 98.9% to a high of 100% over the four-week period. These numbers reflect all students, both face to face and virtual learners. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to approve the extended COVID-19 learning plan reconfirmation update as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said as part of the MICIP process the district team has been working to accomplish the goals set forth in the plan. The team is comprised of administrators, teachers, social workers and counselors. One of the first steps in the process is to collaborate and help create a district vision statement. The following vision statement has been endorsed by the district team and is

being recommended to the board for approval: “Tawas Area Schools are committed to inspiring and empowering students to become critical thinkers, engaging in evolutionary experiences, and cultivating lifelong learners.” Once the district vision statement is approved, the team will continue to shape age appropriate building level mission statements along with their guiding principles. The board felt this was a great statement and agreed it should be put in place. Motion by Klenow, support by VanderVeen to approve the district vision statement amendment as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said superintendent evaluation training provided in the past by IRESA suggested that the board should consider performing the superintendent’s evaluation in December rather than March each year. They stated that evaluations in March may exclude some newly elected board members since they have only served on the board for a few months before the process begins. Mr. Klinger said the board has discussed making this change in the past and would like the board to have conversation on how they would like to proceed. Mrs. Ulman said she sees pros and cons to changing to a December evaluation. Mrs. O’Connor said the board discussed changing the process timing about four years ago but never made the change. She does feel a December evaluation is a good idea. Mrs. Ulman agreed and said that new board members would have been in their roles for nearly a year before completing their first evaluation. Mrs. Bruning agreed and feels that December would be a good time to evaluate. Mr. Klinger was asked when test results are available so they may be used in the evaluation process. He said they are normally available in late summer or early fall but there was no testing this past spring due to COVID-19. However, NWEA testing is done in September, December and again in late spring and we also have some local data that can be used. The board agreed that the evaluation process and presentation should be moved to December. Mrs. Ulman asked if the board would like to have a board workshop ahead of the December 14th meeting when the evaluation will be presented. The board indicated they would like to have a workshop prior to that meeting. Motion by O’Connor, support by Klenow to move the superintendent’s evaluation process to December as discussed. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said there were four board member seats available at the election held last week. Julie Ulman was elected to another four-year term. Also elected to four-year terms were Ami Edmonds, Tracee Lentz and Mike Butzin. All of the terms begin in January. He congratulated all of them and welcomed the new members to the board.

INFORMATION & PROPOSALS

Administration – Mrs. Danek said the new school success teacher, Joy Garrison, started this week and is working to build relationships with staff and students. She said report cards are going out and virtual parent teacher conferences are being held this Wednesday and Thursday. There will be a family survey going out by the end of the week. Mrs. Bolen said the coffee fundraiser was successful and they made a \$5,600 profit. Several students will receive prizes for their sales efforts. She said the November students of the month have been named and recognized as well. Mrs. Mochty said staff had a successful professional development day on November 2nd. They learned more tech tips from several in-house staff members and had group guided discussions as well. Employee wellness and student surveys were also created. CPI training and recertification was provided and curriculum was readjusted for students that were in health classes last spring when school was shut down to be sure they received the instruction they missed out on. Mrs. Mochty thanked Mrs. Kosto for stepping in to fill the athletic director vacancy and for doing a great job. Mrs. Bruning asked Mrs. Mochty if she believes that staff feel confident teaching virtually if we are forced to go in that direction again. Mrs. Mochty said from what she has heard they are confident if they need to move to remote learning. A great deal of our professional development has been focused on technology and delivering remote instruction. Mrs. Jagelewski

spoke up and added that all of the professional development has been very helpful to staff and even though each person is at a different comfort level and has different abilities, she believes they are at a point that the majority of staff would be comfortable moving to that delivery method. Mr. Suttle said two cross country student athletes were sent off by the students and staff on October 30th to compete at the state level. One of the students received All-State honors. He said a virtual Veteran's Day Assembly is planned for this Wednesday and he thanked Mrs. Gronda for her work on that. Mr. Klinger said Tom Mynseberg provided safety training to staff at the professional development day and then followed up by meeting with administrators to provide the newest updates to the safety plan. Mr. Klinger plans to bring the updated safety plan to the board in January. He said local Farm Bureau agent Kevin Smith applied for and was awarded a \$2,500 grant that he would like to go to our food service department to help provide meals to families during the holiday break periods and possibly to help pay off some student accounts. Mr. Klinger will be meeting with Kevin and Jan again this Thursday to further discuss the plan. He thanked Kevin for his efforts and generosity. The local district health department has asked the local districts to endorse a holiday letter sharing information on how to stay safe during the upcoming holiday season. They are encouraging everyone to wear their masks, practice social distancing and wash their hands frequently. Mr. Klinger said we have been working collaboratively with District Health Department No. 2 and so far they feel keeping students in school is the safest option since there hasn't been any school-wide spread of the virus. It has been coming in from the outside so far. Mr. Klinger said if that changes he will share that information with the board. Mrs. Klenow asked if we could send home a flyer for parents with information on symptoms of the virus because some parents don't seem to be aware of what they are. Mr. Klinger said we could do that, and they could also be reiterated in the next all-call that goes out. He said the letters that go out do have the symptoms listed.

From the Board – Mrs. Bruning congratulated the new board members and encouraged them to take some of the courses offered through MASB. She was excited to hear that the billboards will be up soon, congratulated Kal on his retirement and welcomed the new hires. She thanked Kevin Smith for working with us to share his grant and said he does a lot for the community. She asked how the middle/high school virtual parent-teacher conferences went. Mr. Suttle said the turnout was a little lower than in past years but that data still needs to be compiled. He said the teachers liked the format since there were no distractions and they could focus on each student individually. Mrs. Edmonds was happy to hear that the modified schedule has been helpful to the teachers. She is pleased to hear about the Veteran's Day assembly and thanked all the veterans out there for their service. She welcomed the new board members and said the board needs to keep class sizes in mind as we move forward. She congratulated the soccer and volleyball teams for their successful seasons and thanked Mr. Klinger for his efforts to keep our kids safe. Mrs. O'Connor is also happy to hear the billboards are ready to go and she thanked Kal for his service and welcomed the new hires. She also thanked all of the candidates that ran for the board for their interest in the district. It is an important job and she congratulated the new members. She encouraged everyone to continue to do their part in helping reduce the spread of the virus. Adults need to wear masks and be good examples to our children and students. We need to keep our kids in school and keep the economy going. It starts with the adults practicing safe behavior. Mr. VanderVeen extended congratulations to all, and was pleased to see the 2-way interaction rates continue to be so high. He thanked the district MICIP team for working to implement the plan and presenting the district vision statement. He agreed that we need to look at adding a section in 4th grade and asked how many of those students are face to face versus virtual learners. Mrs. Danek said there are 26 face to face students in each section, and 4 virtual students in each section. He said the budget is in better shape than we expected at this point and we need to have the number of class sections at the forefront of our minds. Mrs. Klenow thanked Mrs. Jagelewski for the update. She is happy with the new vision statement and said it is important that the teachers were included in creating that.

She welcomed the new board members and thanked Kevin Smith for securing the grant money. Mrs. Ulman thanked Mr. Huizar for his efforts so far and moving forward. She was happy to hear from Mrs. Jagelewski and said we all need to work together for the best of the district. She thanked Kal for his years of service and welcomed the new hires. She is pleased with the new vision statement as well. She thanked Mrs. Dalman for her remarks and said her comments are not falling on deaf ears.

ADVANCE PLANNING

Mr. Klinger said he would like to schedule some committee meetings. He would like to schedule a curriculum committee meeting to discuss a long-term yearbook solution. That meeting was scheduled for Monday, November 23rd at 5:00 p.m. He also scheduled a personnel committee meeting for the 23rd at 6:00 p.m. to discuss substitute shortages and class sizes. A board workshop to discuss the superintendent evaluation was scheduled for December 7th at 6:00 p.m. and a budget committee meeting was scheduled for December 10th at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Klinger said he will try to schedule superintendent evaluation training for Mrs. Edmonds with IRESA in the very near future and possibly also invite the two new board members to be trained at the same time.

Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to adjourn at 8:47 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.