

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
October 12, 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, October 12, 2020 through a hybrid model including in-person, Google Meets or a teleconferencing method.

Roll Call:

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

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

Since Mrs. Freel has stepped down from the office of President, Mrs. Ulman has assumed that role, which leaves the Vice-President position open. Motion by Bruning, support by VanderVeen to nominate Shannon Klenow for Vice-President. There were no other nominations or discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

The Board Treasurer office is now vacant with Mrs. Klenow being elected to fill the office of Vice-President. Motion by Freel, support by O'Connor to nominate Greg VanderVeen for Treasurer. There were no other nominations or discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Mrs. Ulman said there will be an opportunity for public comment each month when we present our extended learning plan reconfirmation update, beginning tonight. She asked if there were any comments on the extended learning plan. There were no comments or questions. She then asked if there were any public comments on agenda or non-agenda items. There were no comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Klenow, support by O'Connor to approve the minutes of September 14, 2020 as presented. There were no additions or corrections. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Bruning, support by Klenow to approve the executive session minutes of September 14, 2020 as presented. There were no additions or corrections. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Freel, support by O'Connor to approve the special meeting minutes of September 28, 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 \$792,221.06, the sinking fund expenses in the amount of \$9,175.00 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$56,607.60. She also moved to approve payment of presented bills for the general fund in the amount of \$62,827.65, as funds become available. There was no sinking fund or lunch fund bills to be paid. Motion supported by O'Connor. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

RECEIPT OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Klinger said he has received two letters of resignation. First is a letter of resignation from cook's helper, Janet Macha. Janet was hired in September and has decided she would prefer to work as a substitute cook only when needed. Her resignation was effective September 18th. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to accept Janet Macha's letter of resignation. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger also received a letter of resignation from cook's helper, Tammy Jameson. Tammy has worked in the district for one year. Her resignation was effective October 9th. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to accept Tammy Jameson's letter of resignation. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Klinger said interim athletic director, Lynn Kosto, is recommending the following coaches to EduStaff for hire: Reuben Edwards – boys' JV basketball, Gordon Wallace – girls' JV basketball, Chase Blackmore – 8th grade boys' basketball, Chris Jagelewski – wrestling. Non paid positions include Todd Kaems – boys' varsity basketball, Kim Miller – girls' bowling, Allen Miller – boys' bowling and Mel Rettell – hockey. 7th grade boys' basketball and varsity cheer positions are currently vacant and the positions have been posted. Motion by Klenow, support by Bruning to recommend the named coaches for hire with EduStaff. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports – Mr. Klinger said the personnel committee met on September 17th to discuss the alternative schedule that was adopted by the board at the September 28th board meeting. That schedule change went into effect today. The committee also discussed an oversight on the superintendent's salary increase. Typically, this is addressed when the board decides to extend the contract in the spring. He said the committee is recommending that the superintendent receive the 2% increase consistent with the other employees in the district and that language be added to the superintendent contract to prevent this from happening again in the future. The committee also recommended that the superintendent's merit goal focus on technology implementation and specifically on the use of Google Classroom as we use this tool to deliver content to both face to face and virtual learners. Mrs. Freel added that Mr. Klinger was hired in September last year after other administrative contracts had been settled and the committee felt they wanted his contract to be in alignment with the other administrators. Mr. VanderVeen asked if Mr. Klinger's salary increase would be impacted if the evaluation process is moved to the end of the calendar year instead of March. Mr. Klinger said he didn't think so because contracts and salary adjustments normally occur in the late spring of the year.

Mr. Klinger said the policy committee met on September 21st to review new and revised policies. Tonight's meeting should be considered a first reading. Mrs. Freel spoke on behalf of the committee. She said many of the changes are minor and are required to bring us into compliance with law. She said there was a new policy available, 8450.01- Protective Facial Coverings During Pandemic/Epidemic Events - that the committee has decided not to take. There are so many changes occurring regarding facial coverings that they felt it was best to decline that policy for now. She said the Title IX regulations policy – 2266 - had major revisions and was a 20-page policy which has much more stringent definitions that must now be followed. It replaces policy 5517.02 which is being rescinded/deleted. The remaining policies being updated are revisions to current policies and include revisions to: threatening behavior toward staff members, removal, suspension and expulsion of students, due process rights and facility security.

It was the general consensus of the board to consider this the first reading of new and revised bylaws and policies.

Mrs. Freel said the policy committee also reviewed a resolution which would grant emergency powers to the superintendent during the 2020-21 school year. This would allow Mr. Klinger to have more flexibility to deal with issues as they arise. The committee will make a recommendation on the resolution later on the agenda.

Legislative Report – Mr. Klinger said we are currently in “legal limbo” as we await further guidance on certain issues following the Supreme Court’s ruling that the governor’s executive orders were unconstitutional. We have been advised by our legal counsel, and our local health department, to stay consistent until more clarity can be provided. MDHHS has issued an emergency order that addressed face coverings and social gatherings that were very similar to the most recent executive orders. At this time, we are following our Preparedness Plans and Extended Learning Plans as we wait to receive more information and guidance. Mr. Klinger said the State budget has been approved with some positive news. He said with the information we have received we have been able to reduce the original deficit spending amount from approximately \$900,000 to approximately \$275,000. We are still waiting to see where our final FTE numbers will come in based on our pupil accounting collection that is underway. We are also waiting on the monthly state status reports to become available, which will include the new calculation for FTE and provide us information on our categorical line items. As soon as this information becomes available, we will make our budget amendments and then look to hold a budget committee meeting before we present the information at the December Board of Education meeting. Mr. VanderVeen asked if he is accurate in stating that since our deficit has been reduced to approximately \$275,000 for this year, along with the fact that we ended last school year about \$200,000 to the good, that we are only deficit spending about \$75,000 as of now, which is about where we started the 2019-20 school year. Mr. Klinger said that would be correct.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Klinger said the fall count day was October 7th. It looks like our headcount will come in around 1165 students. That number is down 45 from last year at this time and down about 53 from the February count day. We are paid based on FTE which is always lower than the actual headcount due to shared or part-time students. Our budget is based on 1198 FTE’s. The good news is that the state will be using a blend of last year’s numbers along with this year’s numbers which will work to our advantage.

Mr. Klinger said we are required to revisit and reconfirm our Extended Learning plan that was adopted at the September board meeting. The plan 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. At this time, and since the Board of Education approved the Extended Plan, we were only able to collect three weeks’ worth of communication data. From this point forward, we will have four weeks of information to share at each monthly meeting. Mr. Klinger said the percentage review of weekly 2-way interactions shows a low of 98.5% to a high of 100% over the three-week period. These numbers reflect all students, both face to face and virtual learners. Mr. VanderVeen asked if we are continuing to reach out to the virtual students that are not responding on a regular basis. Mr. Klinger said yes we are, and although some of the students continue to be difficult to contact each week, we have identified patterns with certain students and we are attempting to reach out and support those families. Motion by Bruning, support by Klenow to approve the extended COVID-19 learning plan reconfirmation update as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that the superintendent's merit goals are usually established in July each year, but with the COVID-19 pandemic this year the process was delayed. At the September 17th personnel committee meeting the superintendent merit goal for the 2020-21 school year was discussed. The merit goal was created based on feedback from that meeting. Mrs. Klenow said she would like to see an outside learning company come in to provide the technology training for our teaching staff to help make them more successful. Mr. Klinger said our teachers are receiving ongoing training throughout the year from our own staff. One of our administrators is a certified Google trainer and has presented at the MACUL conference. Mrs. Bruning said she believes Mrs. Klenow's concern comes from teachers that have indicated they've had to spend some of their time training other teachers that need assistance. Mr. Klinger said technology professional development has been provided at each of our PD days this year, including August, October and more is scheduled for the November PD day. Mrs. Klenow said she has received feedback from teachers that they would prefer an outside source provide the professional development. Motion by Freel, support by O'Connor to approve the superintendent merit goal as presented. Yes: Bruning, Edmonds, VanderVeen, Freel, O'Connor and Ulman. No: Klenow. Motion carried.

As discussed during the committee update, the personnel committee is recommending that the superintendent receive a 2% wage increase consistent with the other employees in the district and that language be added to the contract to prevent this oversight from happening in the future. The committee is recommending that a contract addendum be implemented. Mr. Klinger said the new language is in bold in the addendum for the board to easily see. Motion by O'Connor, support by Klenow to approve the superintendent contract addendum as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said when the policy committee met last month they reviewed a resolution that would grant the superintendent emergency powers during the 2020-21 school year. The committee is recommending the resolution be adopted for this school year. Mr. VanderVeen asked for clarification – that the superintendent would still manage the district, and that the board would still govern the district. Mr. Klinger said that is correct. He will continue to have open communication with the board before any decisions are made, but it might help to avoid the need for a special board meeting by granting him these “powers.” Board secretary, Mrs. O'Connor presented the resolution in the form of a motion. Support to the motion by Freel. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to support the resolution carried unanimously.

INFORMATION & PROPOSALS

Administration – Mrs. Danek said count day was last Wednesday and Mrs. Bingle confirmed that all 77 virtual learners were active that day. Mrs. Danek said she sat in on interviews to fill the vacant school success worker teacher position and NEMCSA is hoping to have the position filled by November 2nd. Mrs. Danek and Mrs. Peach, school social worker, attended trauma training recently and Clara Bolen staff will receive training in the near future. Mrs. Bolen announced the students of the month and said they will name a “virtual student of the month” this year as well. She said NWEA testing wrapped up last week and Mrs. Paulson is busy reviewing those results. Ms. Lizotte has introduced a 3-week empathy program to be taught in the academic seminar classes on Fridays and Mr. Livingston's health class students are creating “kindness posters” to be displayed in the building. Mrs. Mochty said the teachers learned “tech tips” during their professional development training on October 2nd and also spent time in grade and department meetings. She said the Education Foundation provided every teacher in the district with a monetary grant that day and it is greatly appreciated by everyone. She said the first marking period ends on October 30th and the next PD day will be held November 2nd. Homecoming was celebrated last week with Spirit Week and the selection of homecoming court. Friday afternoon the seniors attended the “live” introduction of the court and the underclassmen had it live-streamed into their

classrooms. Mrs. Mochty thanked Mrs. Kosto for the great job she has done as the interim athletic director and said her organization, communication and support have been appreciated. Mr. Suttle said virtual parent/teacher conferences will be held Tuesday and Wednesday from 4:00-7:00. Juniors will participate in PSAT testing this Wednesday and there will be a FAFSA meeting Wednesday night at 6:00 for parents of seniors. Mr. Klinger said Senate Bill 1108 has moved on to the House for approval which would potentially allow board meetings to be held virtually again. He said MDHHS has provided a template and is requiring that schools post information in a visible location indicating the number of possible and probable cases tied to the district, if and when a situation arises.

From the Board – Mr. VanderVeen congratulated the students of the month and thanked Mrs. Kosto for the great job she has done. He also thanked the Education Foundation for their generous contribution to the teachers. He said the board's focus is educating students, and that will remain their top priority. Mrs. Bruning thanked Mrs. Kosto and thanked the Education Foundation as well. She said she would like to see more mental health education awareness training for our students. There has been a huge increase in mental issues with kids and she feels students could benefit from some training. Mrs. Freel agreed with the prior comments. Mrs. Klenow was happy to hear all of the Clara Bolen virtual learners were active on count day and thanked Mr. Livingston for the kindness poster idea. She also thanked the Education Foundation for their grant to teachers and was happy that the high school students had some type of homecoming activities to participate in. She will be anxious to hear how the new daily schedule works out and hopes it will provide the teachers with some relief with the added minutes at the end of the day, because they are valued. She agrees that it would be helpful to provide more student mental health awareness training. Mrs. Edmonds agreed with the earlier comments and was happy to hear there will be a virtual student of the month. She said it's nice to see administrators and staff come up with creative ideas like that. Mrs. O'Connor congratulated students and teachers on all their efforts to be successful. She thanked the Education Foundation for their grants to the teachers and also thanked all of the donors that have contributed to the Education Foundation over the years making those funds available. She encouraged anyone to donate to the Education Foundation's Tree of Learning that will be coming up in a little over a month. She said the community will vote to fill the vacant board seats in November and said being a board member is a "job" and one that requires some dedication. She has been on the board for almost 17 years and said educating our students is the most important job of the board. She encouraged new board members to become educated and learn what their role is and suggested taking some training through MASB to expand their knowledge about the board's role. She thanked everyone for all they do on a daily basis. Mrs. Ulman thanked administrators, teachers and staff for working to create the best environment for our students and for making adjustments as new things come up. She hopes the new schedule will help provide some extra time for the teachers to spend working with the students.

ADVANCE PLANNING

Mr. Klinger said he would like to meet with the sinking fund committee to discuss some proposed projects and which direction they would like to go. The members discussed a date and the meeting was scheduled for October 26th at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Klenow, support by VanderVeen to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.