

Tawas Area Schools  
Regular Board of Education Meeting  
May 11, 2020

The regular meeting of the Tawas Area Board of Education was called to order by President Bacarella at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2020, through Google Meets or a teleconferencing method.

Roll Call:

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

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

**POSITIVE HIGHLIGHTS**

Mr. Klinger said picture banners of our senior class are beginning to go up around town to honor our graduates. The Iosco News Herald is running a story in the local paper on the project this week as well. He said it is nice to see our students recognized in this way during the very unusual times we are going through.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS**

Mr. Bacarella 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 the April 20, 2020 special board meeting as presented. There were no additions or corrections. Motion carried unanimously.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Motion by Klenow to approve the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$938,060.47, the sinking fund expenses in the amount of \$4,806.50 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$55,046.07. She also moved to approve payment of presented bills for the general fund in the amount of \$11,374.08, as funds become available. There was no sinking fund or lunch fund bills to be paid. Motion supported by Freel. 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 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Kim Alda. Mrs. Alda has worked in the district for the past 12 years and plans to retire at the end of the current school year. Motion by Freel, support by O'Connor to accept Kim Alda's letter of resignation, thank her for her years of service and wish her well in her retirement. Motion carried unanimously.

**RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Klinger said each year we are required to pass resolutions if we desire to continue to participate in the schools of choice program. One resolution allows us to participate in Section 105 Schools of Choice, and the other resolution permits us to participate in Section 105C Schools of Choice. Section 105 allows nonresident students who reside within the intermediate school district to attend our district while Section 105C allows nonresident students who reside outside of our ISD in a contiguous intermediate school district to attend our district. Motion by O'Connor to adopt the Resolution to opt into Section 105 Schools of Choice within ISD Boundaries and the Resolution

to opt into Section 105C Schools of Choice across ISD boundaries. Support to the motion by Klenow. Motion carried unanimously.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Committee Reports – Mr. Klinger said the policy committee met on May 4<sup>th</sup> to review new and revised bylaws and policies. Most of the changes are minor items and are required to bring us into compliance with law. Tonight's meeting should be considered a first reading. Mr. Bacarella spoke on behalf of the committee. Most of the changes are revisions to current policies including revisions to: homebound instruction, reproductive health and family planning, threatening behavior toward staff members, controlled substance and alcohol policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers and other employees who perform safety-sensitive functions, attendance, authorization to accept and distribute electronic records and to use electronic signatures, school calendar, school safety information, student abuse and neglect and transportation. Mr. Bacarella said the changes are fairly minor and many are needed to achieve consistency with federal law or with MDE's pupil accounting manual.

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

Mr. Klinger said the policy committee also discussed recommendations from administration about handbook changes for next school year. There will be a first reading of those changes later on the agenda.

Mr. Klinger said the curriculum committee also met on May 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss information collected from the Sexual Education Advisory Board. There is also an item later on the agenda to address that recommendation.

Legislative Report – Mr. Klinger said the State is working on a budget for next year with projections for State Aid; however, the current numbers are gross approximations and could vary significantly, making the budgeting process extremely difficult. State revenue shortfalls appear to be in the billions. We need to start planning now to look for areas that we can cut or absorb when necessary. The exact financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis is yet to be determined but Tawas is facing a potential reduction of state funding of \$1.2 to \$1.3 million dollars next year. The State is anticipating a potential \$1.5 billion deficit in the school aid fund. This is over \$1,000 per student cut to our foundation allowance next year and would be a significant hit to our budget. We are required to adopt a budget prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> for the 2020-21 school year and we hope to have some more updates by the end of May to help with that process, but it could be as late as August before we have more solid numbers from the state. The budget can be amended as needed and it may be necessary to do that with so many unknowns at this time. Mr. Klinger said he would like to schedule a board workshop to discuss cost saving measures prior to the June 8<sup>th</sup> board meeting which is when we plan to adopt our 2020-21 budget. We are currently preparing three different budget options including one for a best case scenario, a worst case scenario and a middle of the road scenario.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Klinger said IRESA Superintendent, Dana McGrew, shared with the local districts the IRESA proposed general fund budget for 2020-21. Local districts are asked to approve IRESA's general fund budget only. The budget includes an increase in salary of 2% for administration and the fund balance is expected to decrease in 2020-21 by \$43,200. Mr. VanderVeen asked how this budget might affect our district. Mr. Klinger said this budget should not affect us since

## **NEW BUSINESS**

IRESA now has a millage for their tech programs. Mrs. O'Connor made a motion to approve the Resolution to Support the IRESA General Fund Budget for the 2020-21 school year. Motion supported by Freel. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said the building principals have submitted changes to their student handbooks for next year and will present them at this time. Mrs. Danek began with the elementary handbook and said the only change is to update the new dates and change the Homeless Liaison contact from Mr. Suttle to Mrs. Bolen. Mrs. Bolen reviewed the middle school handbook changes. She said new language was added regarding the Procedural Safeguards Manual for Special Education Services; new language was added under lunchroom procedures regarding charges on student accounts and updated language regarding lunch times and the removal of wording regarding recess held during lunch. Wording was changed from marking period to semester to line up with the high school and reduce excessive excused tardies. Under classroom rules, the word Chromebooks has been added as an item that students must bring to class. New language from MHSAA was added under sportsmanship/behavior regarding ejections and suspensions from athletic contests based on the specific sport the student is participating in. Mrs. Mochty reviewed the high school handbook changes. She said new wording has been added regarding confiscated materials. It states that items will be returned to the parent or guardian of a student when the investigation has been completed, unless it is an item that needs to be turned over to law enforcement or the item will be destroyed after 10 school days' notice. New wording has also been added under lunchroom procedures regarding charges on a student's account. Students will be allowed to charge up to five lunches and then the account must be paid in full, and ala carte items cannot be purchased if a student account has insufficient funds. New language was added regarding the Procedural Safeguards Manual for Special Education Services. New language was added under sportsmanship/behavior from MHSAA regarding ejections and suspensions from athletic contests based on the specific sport they are participating in. New wording has also been added from MHSAA regarding transfers and when student athletes are eligible to participate in sports when transferring to a new school. Wording has been revised to state that students may not receive any award or merchandise exceeding \$40 in value for athletic participation. A new item was added under the Student Driving Policies section that states that driving carelessly and endangering oneself and/or others shall follow the steps of the discipline and driving policies. A new item was added under expulsion and appeal procedures that states that the decision of the Board of Education cannot be appealed by a parent/guardian or student as the decision of the Board is final.

It was the general consensus of the board that this be considered the first reading of the 2020-21 student school handbooks.

Mr. Klinger said in the past, the approval of the school calendar was handled when the student handbooks were approved. Upon the recommendation of our pupil accounting auditor, the board will now approve the yearly calendar separately. The calendar for next school year has been completed and is very similar to this past year's calendar. The first day of school for students will be August 31<sup>st</sup> and their last scheduled day will be June 10, 2021. Motion by Ulman, support by Freel to approve the 2020-21 school year calendar as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said that REVTrak is our online payment portal that communicates with Skyward. Currently, when using this portal, a 3.49% service fee is applied. With the current school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the inability for families to make in-person payments and as a way to reduce payments made with cash, Mr. Klinger is recommending that the service fee be eliminated to help promote families paying fines and fees through REVTrak. Motion by Freel,

support by O'Connor to eliminate the 3.49% service fee currently applied to purchases made through REVTrak as discussed. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Klinger said the Sexual Education Advisory Board (SEAB) committee, which was represented by district health teachers, administrators, parents, health care officials, clergy and students, has met to review our current health curriculum, and specifically, the curriculum used to educate our students on sexual education. Mr. Jagelewski presented the committee's support of the current curriculum, the State required HIV/AIDS information, the videos used to help deliver content and the idea of doing a three-day refresher course for our juniors. The curriculum committee also supported the information presented and is recommending the board support the information presented by the SEAB committee. Mrs. Mochty said we use the Michigan Model of Health which promotes abstinence, along with the use of condoms and contraceptives. By law, we are required to provide age appropriate information on HIV/AIDS at every building level. She said the idea of a refresher course as a junior seems like a good idea since most students take health as freshman. Motion by O'Connor, support by Freel to approve the recommendations of the Sexual Education Advisory Board committee as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **INFORMATION & PROPOSALS**

Administration – Mrs. Danek said Clara Bolen students are offered both digital resources or paper packets through the Continuity Plan. A large number of families seems to prefer paper packets even if they have access to technology. Only three families were not able to be reached last week and as of today only one family had not been in touch. The School Success and social work team have been reaching out to students and families and have been supporting them with food, hygiene items, gas cards, transportation options, etc. They have also reached out through Google classroom through groups to work on social skill practices. Mrs. Frank and the teacher cadet students had planned to participate at the Art and Science Fair by working in the STEM activity stations but that will need to be rescheduled for a future date. Mrs. Bolen said about 20 students at the middle school prefer paper packets but the majority are using digital resources. She said the middle school social worker has also reached out to students through the use of Google classroom to have discussions. Six families at the middle school were not able to be contacted last week, but Ms. Lizotte was able to reach 4 of the 6 families today. Mrs. Mochty said high school staff have been in contact with students and there are 18 families without internet and 5 families that have spotty connectivity. She said our students have done a great job and many reach out to all of their teachers, and others have been in touch with most of their teachers. AP testing is still on with tests scheduled for this week and next. Mrs. Studley has been working to sign students up for dual enrollment and AP classes next year. Mr. Suttle said the graduation committee continues to meet digitally to devise a plan that will allow our seniors to have some sort of graduation experience. Last week was teacher appreciation week and staff was recognized in a variety of ways including door to door visits by administration with proper social distancing rules followed. The U.S. News and World National Report has recognized the high school as being in the top 40% of high schools across the nation. He said WKJC will be recognizing seniors twice a day through May 29<sup>th</sup> with radio spots. The seniors will also be recognized on the district Facebook page and on picture banners that are being displayed through town and down US-23. The Iosco News Herald is printing a story in the local paper as well. Mr. Klinger said Mrs. Sancrant has advised him that the food grant for the Meet Up to Eat Up program has been extended into June. We would like to continue the program if we can; we need to be sure we have staff available to continue volunteering. We will need to monitor the number of families over the next few weeks to be sure there would be enough interest to continue the program. Mrs. Sancrant is working with her vendors to make sure we would still be able to get the items we would need. She estimates we would need to provide food to about 250 students to break even.

From the Board – Mrs. Ulman thanked everyone for their efforts and said they are greatly appreciated. She thanked Mrs. Alda for her service and said the senior banners look great. Mr. VanderVeen congratulated Mrs. Alda on her retirement and is pleased to hear the meal program may be extended. He said it sounds like the teacher cadet program with Mrs. Frank has been a success. He also commented that the banners look great and he said it sounds like the budget could be a serious challenge based on the information the state has shared. He said our first priority is to educate children and we will need to keep many factors in mind when making budget decisions. Mrs. Klenow thanked the administration for their hard work and said everyone has gone above and beyond to help others. Mrs. Bruning wished Mrs. Alda the best in her retirement and said everyone has done a great job keeping everything running smoothly. She is happy to see the various ways our seniors are being recognized and hopes that recognition will continue in future years as well. Mrs. Freel thanked everyone for their efforts in these uncertain times and thanked everyone for reaching out to the families. Mrs. O'Connor thanked the teachers and administration for all they have done to reach out to families, to provide food and to check on their well-being. This has been a learning experience for everyone. Mr. Bacarella said he is proud of the high level of participation on the part of our students. He said the relationships that staff and administration has built with students and their families is impressive. He said the talk of a \$1,000 per pupil cut is like a slap in the face; it's harsh and sobering and it's affecting districts across the state and probably across the country. He appreciates the extra work going into the budgeting process to give the board multiple options to consider as they plan for next year. He said we will work through it and we have really good people. We will take what we get and work with it. He thanked Mr. Klinger, the teachers and administration and said we will be ready for what needs to be done.

#### **ADVANCE PLANNING**

Mr. Klinger said a special board meeting/workshop will be held next Monday to go over the superintendent's evaluation and he will be scheduling a board budget workshop sometime prior to June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Motion by O'Connor, support by Ulman to adjourn at 8:01 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.