Van Buren Board of Education
Minutes of the Board of Education
Regular Meeting

October 23, 2023

President Amy Pearce called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board members present: Susan Featheringill, Amy Pearce, Darlene Loyer Gerick, Kelly Owen, Calvin Hawkins and Dionne Falconer. Simone Pinter was absent. Also in attendance were: Julien Frazier, Director of Student Services, Priya Nayak, Director of Finance, Superintendent Pete Kudlak, John Leroy, Director of Human Resources and Jeff Moore, Director of Instruction. James Williams, Director of Plant Operations was absent.

Motion by Kelly Owen, support by Susan Featheringill that the Board approves the agenda as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Public Comments - Agenda Items - None

Motion by Kelly Owen, support by Dionne Falconer to approve the consent agenda as presented: Minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 9, 2023; Requested Changes in Instructional Staff: Courtney Morrison, Edgemont Teacher, Less than 1 year of service, Resigned effective 10/20/23; Kelli Kubrak, McBride Teacher, 5 years of service, Resigned effective 10/27/23; Requested Changes in Non-Instructional Staff: Elizabeth Charlesworth, ECC Paraprofessional, Hired effective 10/9/23; Leigh-Anne Sanders, ECC 4 yr. old teacher, Hired effective 10/9/23; Larry Francis Jr., Transportation - Driver, Hired effective 10/18/23; Serena Boykin, Student Services Practitioner - Owen, Hired effective 10/16/23; Annette Tharp, Transportation - Bus Aide, Hired effective 10/20/23; and Checks Payable. Motion carried 6-0.

Separate Check Approval: None

Administrative Items:

The first Administrative Item was the 2022-2023 Final Finance Audit Presentation and Approval presented by Laura Payne from the Taylor & Morgan Accounting Firm. Ms. Payne began by saying that our district received an unmodified audit opinion which is the highest level of assurance a district can receive. Ms. Payne continued by presenting the findings of the auditors for the 2022-2023 school year. Ms. Pearce thanked Priya Nayak and her team. She said that we have a higher fund balance because we always want to think about the future and make sure that we are able to sustain our district if something were to happen. Motion by Susan Featheringill, support by Kelly Owen that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the 2022-2023 Annual Audit Report as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

The second Administrative Item was the Food Service Presentation from Darnell Pace, Food Service Director and Head Chef Craig Ash. Mr. Pace introduced himself and his lead chef, Craig Ash. He said that they have come out trying new things right off the bat. Last year, the high school's number of lunches for September were at an average of 365 lunches per day with this year's average number of lunches served at the high school in September was around 1100. Of

course lunches were not all free like they are this year, but we still feel that this is due to the new options being offered and of course the fresh baked pizza. Mr. Pace said that they have reopened the deli station with new salad and wrap choices. They have put out a survey box and so far have gotten over 500 responses/suggestions from students. Chef Ash said that they make and serve 70 - 80 full size pizzas daily at BHS. This of course is the kids favorite. Mr. Pace said that he can't wait for the big remodel taking place at BHS over the Winter Break in December. Future plans include: parfaits for breakfast and an Apple Crisp Day at Edgemont where the students will learn about apples and get to make their own apple crisps to eat. This way they can learn and eat at the same time. Mr. Leroy said that the responsiveness and willingness to try new things has really happened throughout the district. The food service staff has really opened up to ideas and suggestions. BHS Student Natalia Payne said that it is nice to know that the food service department is open to listening to their suggestions. Information Only.

The third Administrative Item was the Building Presentations. The first presentation was from Becky Ross, Administrator at the Early Childhood Center of VBPS. Ms. Ross started by speaking on the ECC Pilot Program, Strong Beginnings PreSchool for 3 year old children. She said that research shows that two years of preschool provides greater learning and improved knowledge. Our Early Childhood Center has been chosen as one of the districts to pilot this program. The district was also able to hire Ms. English as our Family Liaison through this pilot program. Ms. Charlesworth explained how partnering with their families creates a stronger relationship between home and school. Ms. English, VBPS ECC Family Liaison, said that her goal is to keep active learning happening between the class and home. This program helps support families by understanding what their needs are. She also said that she is arranging clothing drives, transportation and delivery of food for our families. Ms. Brianna Ynclan, ECC Lead Teacher, spoke about the HighScope Curriculum Framework learning that is used at ECC. They use a child-friendly learning environment, positive adult-child interactions and consistent daily routines. Everything at the school is at child level and labeled. Ms. Pearce said that she couldn't believe all the things going on at the new building. The services available for the families are amazing. Mr. Kudlak said that we have a new building, new center opportunities and having this pilot program really opens up the doors and opportunities for our families and students. The next building presentation was from Tyler Elementary School. Principal Pitt and teachers Christine Roperti, Sarah Taylor and Alex Richardson spoke about one of the curriculum programs, Project Lead The Way (PLTW). PLTW is project based learning and all three teachers gave examples of how it is being used in their classroom. Ms. Pitt said that last year they piloted the program in one classroom and this school year Ms. Richardson and Ms. Taylor will be receiving Lead Teacher training so that they are able to train the rest of the Tyler staff this school year. Ms. Pitt said that the benefits of PLTW are Innovation, Collaboration, Ethical Reasoning and the use of Technology Skills. Ms. Pitt said that she loves this program. Ms. Pearce said that this is a great way to keep kids engaged and learning all at the same time. Information Only.

The last Administrative Item was the Fund Balance Goal Statement Approval presented by Priya Nayak, Director of Finance and Superintendent Pete Kudlak. Policy 3202 states that we keep a minimum of a 5% fund balance. We have operated all knowing that this is a bare minimum and that it is not an ideal percent to function as a school district. We do not increase this number in our policy because we do not ever want to find ourselves in violation of a board policy. We have had the conversation at board meetings that we want to keep about a 15% fund balance as a goal and then just spend what we take in each year. This is with the understanding that in any given year we might dip a little below the 15% line and in other years we will be a little higher. This resolution and vote memorializes this concept and direction for the district. Motion by Amy

Pearce, support by Dionne Falconer that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve our goal to keep a 15% overall fund balance each year as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Public Comments - Non-Agenda items - T. Charlesworth, ECC Employee - Parking lot at ECC

Cabinet Member Reports:

Pete Kudlak, Superintendent - Mr. Kudlak said that Laura Payne, District Auditor, is very complimentary of the Finance Dept. Friday, October 28 the football team plays at home at 7:00pm. The light tower at the football field is not working. We are getting temporary lights for Friday night's game. These lights were new with the new building and are still under warranty and will be getting fixed. Mr. Kudlak also read an email that was posted on Facebook from a Northville parent after the last game with the BHS football team.

John Leroy, Director of Human Resources - Open enrollment for insurance is upon us. There is a virtual sign up for employees that need help with signing up for their benefits. The district hosted flu shots last week. Thank you to Darnell and Chef Ash for giving us an update on the Food Service world. There is a lot of excitement for the new renovations in the BHS kitchen over winter break.

Priya Nayak, Director of Finance - The audit is finally over and now my time is being focused on grant work with Mr. Moore.

Jeff Moore, Director of Instruction - October 31 is a half day PD. November 1 is an early release day. I am currently working on the Robotics Grant. It is becoming more and more detailed. We had conferences for McBride and BHS and we tried something different this year.

Julien Frazier, Director of Student Services - We are in the midst of budget planning and tweaking accounts for this school year. Our office has to do a budget amendment to allocate funds. We just hired a CI teacher for McBride Middle School and a Resource Teacher for Owen Intermediate School. We have an upcoming CPI Refresher Training for staff.

Natalia Payne, BHS Student - Last Friday, October 20, we had a senior bake sale. We make around $1600.00 to go towards the senior class. Friday night was also Senior Night at the football game. This week, the Student Council is hosting a trunk or treat for everyone. We are looking for volunteers and donations. The week of November 6 - 10, we will be having a canned food drive. The Student Council is also putting together Thanksgiving baskets for families that need them. On November 18, BHS will be having their annual craft show. Lastly, on November 21, 2023, BHS will be having a staff Thanksgiving Dinner. We are still in need of volunteers and donations.

Items of Business from the Members of the Board:

Calvin Hawkins - I always get a kick out of Tyler Elementary School's presentation. They put a lot of time into their presentation. I went to the volleyball game at McBride. I was really impressed with the team and what the coaches are teaching them. We need to finish changing the colors at McBride from Red and White to all Orange and Black.

Darlene Loyer Gerick - I am glad we are offering help to employees when filling out their insurance and benefit paperwork. It is UofM's open enrollment too where I work. Can Fundraisers have a generic tiger shirt (not one specific to a school)?

Dionne Falconer - As a suggestion, could students/kids not wear skull caps and hoodies. I was not able to go to the football game. I was out of town. The Freshman team was undefeated.

Kelly Owen - Symphony Band concert is tomorrow night. I went to the game on Friday.

Amy Pearce - The McBride 8th grade and Symphony Band Concert is tomorrow night. Congrats to all the seniors that were honored on Friday.

Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick for the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education to enter into Closed Session at 8:49 pm pursuant to Open Meetings Act Section 8(1)(c) - For strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement if either negotiating party requests a closed hearing. Motion carried 6-0 with the following roll call vote - S. Featheringill - Aye, C. Hawkins - Aye, K. Owen - Aye, D. Falconer - Aye, Amy Pearce - Aye and Darlene Loyer Gerick - Aye. S. Pinter was absent.

President Amy Pearce declared they would come back to open session at 9:33 pm.

Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Calvin Hawkins to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion carried 6-0.

Regular session adjourned at 9:34 pm.

Darlene Loyer Gerick
Board of Education Secretary

Debra McWilliams
Recording Secretary