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

June 8, 2020

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

Board members present: Amy Pearce, Susan Featheringill, Keith Johnston, Kelly Owen, Darlene Loyer Gerick, Simone Pinter and Calvin Hawkins (7:07pm). Also in attendance were: Superintendent Peter Kudlak, Jeff Moore, Director of Instruction, James Williams, Director of Plant Operations, Sara Cortese, Director of Finance, Abdul Madyun, Director of Human Resources, and Karen Johnston, Director of Student Services.

Motion by Keith Johnston, support by Kelly Owen, that the Board approves the agenda as presented. There was discussion. Motion carried with the following Roll Call vote: Featheringill – Aye, Gerick – Aye, Johnston – Aye, Owen – Aye, Pearce – Aye, and Pinter – Aye, O nays. C. Hawkins – no vote – connection issues.

Questions and comments from the audience regarding Agenda Items – None

Motion by Susan Featheringill, support by Kelly Owen, to approve the consent agenda as presented; Minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 26, 2020; Requested Changes in Instructional Staff: Elizabeth Stamper, Haggerty ECDC, 31 years of service, Retired effective 6/30/20; Requested Changes in Non-Instructional Staff: Pam Melton, BHS Secretary, 28 years of service, Retired effective 10/1/20; Deborah Evans, Administration Building, Building & Grounds secretary, 14 years of service, Elimination of Position effective 7/31/20; Jaime Nelson, Administration Building, CTE/Early College/Career Coordinator, Hired effective 8/11/20 and Check Register. There was discussion. Motion carried with the following Roll Call vote: Featheringill – Aye, Gerick – Aye, Johnston – Aye, Owen – Aye, Pearce – Aye, Hawkins – Aye, and Pinter – Aye, 0 nays.

Separate Check Approval – Motion by Susan Featheringill, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick to approve check # 150472 to Johnston Enterprises in the amount of $232.00. Motion carried with the following Roll Call vote: Featheringill – Aye, Gerick – Aye, Owen – Aye, Pearce – Aye, Hawkins – Aye, and Pinter – Aye, 0 nays. Keith Johnston abstained.

The first Administrative Item was the Building Presentations from BHS, Savage and Tyler. Stacey Buhro, Principal and Jessica Romak, teacher, presented for Belleville High School. The biggest problem that staff noticed was that 9th graders needed more support in adjusting to the high school rigor and responsibilities. Teams were created among the staff and students and the desired outcomes would be for reduced retentions for the Class of 2023, students would feel they have an adult in the building that cares for them and that behavior referrals would decrease. Using past data and new data from the first semester this year, they were able to see a decrease in the areas mentioned above. Some of the benefits to BHS 9th grade teaming was that team teachers were able to work together to check grades, focus more on college and career exploration for students and provide other support activities that could focus on organization,

curriculum and social activities. We are hoping to incorporate 10 grade teaming next year as an extension of the work done last year in 9th grade. The focus will continue on supporting the whole child both socially and emotionally. The next presentation was for Savage Elementary from Lisa Preuss, Principal and Instructional Coach, Heather Palmer. The focus this year was to improve literacy instruction. This was done by the implementation of the MAISA (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administration) Writing and Reading Curriculum. Some of the staff visited a Saline School that used this program in their science curriculum. Ms. Preuss has applied for a grant to help with the cost of the program next year. Ms. Palmer will take the lead with training and supporting staff with the implementation of MAISA in the other grades at Savage Elementary School. Mrs. Pitt, Ms. Youngs and Ms. Sullivan gave Tyler Elementary School's presentation. This past year, grades K – 2 teachers implemented project based learning to help students become the directors and managers of their learning process. With project based learning there are five learning outcomes. The main focus was on collaboration. Tyler teachers used google classroom, PBL projects, Makerspace, service projects and grade level data meetings. The successes this past year were changing teacher mindset, engaging entry events, student collaboration, community connections, student engagement and excitement for learning. Looking at next year, Tyler will be training 3rd and 4th grade teachers in PBL. Information Only.

The second Administrative Item was the VBEA Economic Reductions. Mr. Madyun explained that these layoffs were necessary due to the anticipated cuts in our foundation allowance from the state. This list included one math teacher, George Devore. Motion by Amy Pearce and support by Kelly Owen that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the following staff/positions be placed on layoff effective 6/30/20 and their services discontinued for reasons as presented. There was discussion. Motion carried with the following roll call vote – Featheringill – Aye, Gerick – Aye, Johnston – Aye, Owen – Aye, Pearce – Aye, Pinter – Aye, and C. Hawkins – Aye. 0 nays.

The last Administrative Item was the Federal COVID-19 Funding Resolution Approval presented by Pete Kudlak, Superintendent. Other districts are adopting a similar resolution as in the hopes of getting our voices heard about school funding problems and the need for money. Mr. Kudlak read the full resolution. Motion by Amy Pearce, support Simone Pinter that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the Federal COVID-19 Funding Resolution as presented. There was discussion. Motion carried with the following roll call vote: Featheringill – Aye, Gerick – Aye, Owen – Aye, Pearce – Aye, Hawkins – Aye, K. Johnston – Aye and Pinter – Aye, 0 nays.

Questions & Comments from the Audience for non-Agenda items – None

Cabinet Member Reports:

Pete Kudlak – Superintendent – We have made a lot of cuts that have affected students in many ways and will affect students in the future such as the choir program. We understand that any cuts will hurt the district and our students. We need small class sizes and with these cuts that will probably not happen. The murder of George Floyd has had an effect on the whole world as we see by what has been going on in the last couple of weeks. We are working on making sure that conversations about racial injustices are taking place in our buildings, district and beyond.

Jeff Moore – Director of Instruction – I would like to comment on my feelings of what is going on in our world today and over the last couple of weeks regarding racism. It is very encouraging to see the positive protests and people speaking out on this highly sensitive topic. I encourage everyone to take a moment to read or watch a movie about racism. Also, ask yourself, how can I educate myself on these things? We all need to speak out.

Karen Johnston – Director of Student Services – I have been very fortunate to have open conversations with both Jeff and Abdul.

Sara Cortese – Director of Finance – This is the last week of food distribution. I listened to a webinar on the CARES Act Fund to get more clarification. The application is due in September. Amy Pearce asked what the money can be used for. Sara said it is used for Title 1 students and students that are at high risk but could potentially be used for other things.

Abdul Madyun – Director of Human Resources – I have been working on staffing and filling the holes left from the recent layoffs. I give Jeff kudos for speaking about this topic and how it is affecting the African American population.

Items of Business from the Members of the Board:

Calvin Hawkins – I enjoyed the presentations. This has been a very deep and emotional time for me. I have had many tough conversations with my 19 year old son as well as speaking with my 17 year old daughter. I appreciate everything that Jeff, Abdul and Pete have said tonight.

Darlene Loyer Gerick – I saw all the posts on Facebook about the Senior Day on June 4.

Susan Featheringill – Senior Awards were great. I would like them to go on Channel 19. Also, can we get the Channel 19 schedule posted? Maybe on our website? Mr. Kudlak said he would speak to Brian Rupnow.

Kelly Owen – The senior banners hanging in town have gotten great response. I would like to thank Mr. Madyun, Mr. Moore and Mr. Kudlak for speaking about the racial tensions that are still going on today.

Amy Pearce – The speaker at my event last year, spoke about inherent bias. She was a very powerful speaker. She spoke about all bias, not just race. Maybe a PDD with a speaker like her would be educational since it would relate to what is going on in our world today. I also read a book about Ghosts in the Yard. It was a great book. It was about racism in public schools. Lastly, Simone and I went to Senior Day. It was a lot of fun. The staff that were there were great. The seniors were excited. Only about 30 seniors did not make it.

Motion by Keith Johnston, support by Kelly Owen to adjourn the regular meeting with the following Roll Call vote: Featheringill – Aye, Gerick – Aye, K. Johnston – Aye, C. Hawkins – Aye, Owen – Aye, Pearce – Aye, and Pinter – Aye, 0 nays.

Regular session adjourned at 8:30p.m.

Darlene Loyer Gerick
Board of Education Secretary

Debra McWilliams
Recording Secretary