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

August 28, 2023

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

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

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

Public Comments - Agenda Items - Annette Lotharp, VBPS resident - Media Center

Motion by Kelly Owen, support by Dionne Falconer to approve the consent agenda as presented: Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 14, 2023; Minutes from the Regular Meeting Closed Session of August 14, 2023; Requested Changes in Instructional Staff: Devin Girbach, McBride Teacher, 3 years of service, Resigned effective 8/22/23; Peter Cender, BHS Teacher, 1 year of service, Resigned effective 8/17/23; TaShana Rembert, BHS Teacher - CTE, Hired effective 8/23/23; Zachary Nowak, McBride Teacher - CI, Hired effective 8/23/23; Dominic Freda, BHS NJROTC Instructor, Hired effective 8/23/23; Michael Mayes, McBride Teacher - SS, Hired effective 8/23/23; Requested Changes in Non-Instructional Staff: Ashleigh Testorelli, Tyler, less than 1 year of service, Resigned effective 8/18/23; Colleen Holmes, Food Service, 24 years of service, Retiring effective 8/22/23; Kimberly Beyer, Paraprofessional, 1 year of service, Resigned effective 8/22/23; Jordan Parsons, Building & Grounds - Custodian, Hired effective 8/21/23; Devin Sharp, Building & Grounds - Custodian, Hired effective 8/21/23; Amanda Riggs, Edgemont/ECC, Social Worker, Hired effective 8/23/23; Shannon Beach, Tyler Secretary, Hired effective 8/28/23 and Checks Payable. Motion carried 6-0.

Separate Check Approval: None

Administrative Items:

The first Administrative Item was the BHS Media Center Presentation given by BHS Principal, Nicole Crockett. Before Ms. Crockett spoke, Mr. Kudlak gave a brief overview of what has happened since COVID and how we have gotten to where we are today. Ms. Crockett continued by saying that students still have access to books and the media center and they have even more access to electronic media through e-library (which is what they used during COVID). With their chromebooks, the options are endless. For this school year, we currently have a staff member that will be in the media center for the 4th hour so that students can come during their lunch period and check out books or simply look around. Teachers also know that they are able

to bring their classes to the Media Center at any time during the school day. Ms. Crockett also went through library statistics compiled since 2014 on total circulations (47,297) versus the total number of books put on hold (1,695). What is next for the BHS Media Center: we will continue with the 4th hour access; we will continue to look for someone to cover before and after school hours; we are working on building curricular/supplemental programming to create greater demand; and we will also continue to research student-centered options for utilizing the space. Mr. Kudlak interjected that we have a beautiful space that we want students to use. We just need to figure out how to make that happen while trying to utilize all of our options. We want to take a year and make sure that when we do repurpose this space, it will be the best for staff and students. Amy Pearce asked if we could market the use of the Media Center with the teachers so that they are bringing their classes into that space or even for different school clubs/groups? Mr. Kudlak said yes we will keep promoting the use of the Media Center. It is so important to keep kids interested in reading and using books. A. Mears asked if we would create a "task force" to help figure this out? Both Ms. Crockett and Mr. Kudlak said that is exactly what we are doing now. Darlene Loyer Gerick asked if the e-library was available to anyone? Ms. Crockett said yes. Ms. Pearce and Mr. Kudlak said that they would keep everyone updated on the progress. Information Only.

The second Administrative Item was the BHS Kitchen Upgrades Approval presented by James Williams, Director of Plant Operations. Mr. Williams went over what has already arrived and where we are at with installation. This packet is for the equipment needed to upgrade the main serving line at BHS. These items will allow for taco and pizza bar options. Kelly Owen asked how many pizzas will be able to be cooked at one time? Mr. Williams replied about 4 - 6. How it will work is that a staff member will cook the pizza and then the students will buy the slices. These are not individual pizzas. Amy Pearce asked what comes after this? Mr. Williams said that they will be enhancing the coffee bar area in the media center. All of this work at BHS is considered Phase 1 (even though it was broken up into two parts) with Phase 2 covering the upgrades at McBride Middle School. Mr. Kudlak wanted to acknowledge Darnell Pace who has been great through this whole process and has done a great job revamping how our serving areas work. A. Mears asked if we are planning on having additional staff working in the kitchen. Mr. Leroy answered that we are waiting to see what the numbers are and if it warrants more staff. Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the purchase of equipment for BHS from Stafford Smith Inc. for the amount of $280,516.00 as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

The last Administrative Item was the MISEC Solar Field Approval presented by Superintendent Kudlak. Mr. Kudlak presented this information at the last board meeting and also stated that he would contact Thrun Law Firm to ask the questions that came up at the meeting. Mr. Kudlak also spoke to Jesse Nelson from Baker Tilly. Mr. Nelson said that he did not know alot about solar but could not give us a good reason to not participate at 100%. Mr. Nelson also said that the energy market has a hold on our lives and he doesn't see it going down especially in the next 15 years. Amy Pearce asked where the physical field is going to be built? Mr. Kudlak said that it will be built in Genesee County. MISEC is only available to school districts and if there is enough interest, they will build a second field. Ms. Pearce also asked if Pete had spoken to other Superintendents and he said yes. Mr. Kudlak also commented that some are choosing to only do 40% - 60%. Mr. Kudlak said again that it was explained that if something happened to Northstar and we no longer had the agreement, we would just go back to normal with our regular 3 year agreement with MISEC. Mr. Hawkins said that it appears that Northstar has all the liability.

Motion by Darlene Loyer Gerick, support by Calvin Hawkins that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education enter into a 15 year Power Purchase Agreement for 100% of the districts annual electricity usage with NorthStar Clean Energy at a fixed rate not to exceed $0.075/kWh for the generation and delivery of solar electricity, with commercial operation expected to begin in June, 2025 as presented. Motion carried 6-0.

Public Comments - Non-Agenda items - A. Mears, BHS Parent - Fundraiser for Football team & SBA processing fees.

Cabinet Member Reports:

Pete Kudlak, Superintendent – Payschools has changed to SBA. We are currently looking at ACH options. As far as the fees associated with SBA, these are the fees that the District was paying in the past and now we have shifted the costs to the users. To offset these fees for parents, we will be offering a cash option as well. Amy Pearce commented that she did not realize that the District was absorbing the fees associated with Payschools. I went to Band Camp two weeks ago and the volunteers are amazing. It is wonderful to see all of the alumni that return each year to help. Today was the first day of the 23-24 school year. All of the buildings looked great. The custodians and Building and Grounds employees did a great job getting them ready for school. One last thing, the touchdown pass from last Friday's football game was all over social media and the news.

John Leroy, Director of Human Resources - I have been onboarding staff trying to get them ready to start as soon as possible. The staff "Welcome Back" was last week which started with a breakfast put on by Darnell Pace and Chartwells. SetSeg joined us and had a table setup for information about the clinic and also answered any insurance questions for the staff. We are getting back to our Wellness focus and have renewed our contract with Pryde Athletics. We have amped up the availability, times and locations that employees are able to use. We are excited for this change. Edward Jones is also partnering with VBPS and will be offering wellness workshops for our staff.

James Williams, Director of Plant Operations - We just wrapped up the summer Sinking Fund projects and I will do a walk through the buildings to make sure all the punch list items were completed. Sean Garland has spent a lot of time working out bugs with the new card access program. We are working on deploying the new ID Access Cards to all staff. Regarding the Bond work - Cameras are installed at Edgemont and the new infrastructure is going in at Rawsonville next week. The plan is to have all the schools completed by October or November. Amy Pearce asked if all the cameras were installed at the high school? Mr. Williams said that they are waiting for the rest of the materials to come in but hope to have the cameras all working by mid-September. The approval for the furniture information given at the last meeting was moved to the next meeting in September. I am working on the construction documents for the Summer 2024 renovations at Tyler, Savage and McBride. I am still trying to reduce the budgets as well.

Jeff Moore, Director of Instruction - We had alot of Professional Development last week. All of it went well. Today I was at buildings for arrivals and dismissals. Parent Square, the district's new communication tool, is fully live now. Jason Strzalkowski has been a big help rolling this out. A. Mears asked if parents can still email teachers? Mr. Moore said yes. She also asked if

you can "cc" people in Parent Square? Mr. Moore said that he would have to check on that and would get back to her.

Julien Frazier, Director of Student Services - It has been a busy last couple of weeks for my department with staff training and professional learning opportunities. The sensory room at the high school for students to unwind and de-escalate.

Priya Nayak, Director of Finance - My department is in the middle of the audit with the auditors returning this week. The final report will be brought to the board at an upcoming meeting.

Ivana Goff, BHS Student - This morning was the Class of 2024 Senior Sunrise at 6:00am on the football field. This was hosted by the PTO and parent volunteers to celebrate the Senior's final year. August 30 is the BHS Open House. Powderpuff football tryouts are September 5 with the game being played on September 27, 2023. Homecoming Court applications will be available soon. There are guidelines and qualifications to this process. The Homecoming game will be Friday, September 29 and the dance will be Saturday, September 30, 2023.

Items of Business from the Members of the Board:

Dionne Falconer - There is a football fundraiser on Wednesday at the Bayou Grill. 10% of your purchase goes back to the football team. The Freshman team won their first game, however, the JV lost. Friday night's game was amazing. Senior students really showed love to the younger ones.

Calvin Hawkins - Looking to see what we do for our Media Center moving forward. It is a good asset for the building.

Darlene Loyer Gerick - The whole month of August I was on vacation mode. I went to the game on Friday and I can't wait to see the Marching Band at Thursday night's game since I missed the after camp performance.

Susan Featheringill - I went to the "after band camp" presentation. It was great.

Amy Pearce - Todd Mears, one of our amazing volunteers, comes back every year. Thank you. I make a video of the whole week at band camp and then show it to the kids. I am more than happy to share it with others as well. Mr. Taylor said that this group is the best musically to ever leave band camp. There are so many athletic events happening. Remember tickets can be purchased at gofan.co.

Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick for the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education to enter into Closed Session pursuant to Open Meetings Act Section 8(1)(b) Student Discipline. Motion carried with the following roll call vote - S. Featheringill - Aye, C. Hawkins - Aye, D. Falconer - Aye, K. Owen - Aye, Amy Pearce - Aye and Darlene Loyer Gerick - Aye. Simone Pinter was absent.

Amy Pearce declared they would come back to open session at 9:05 pm.

The next Administrative Item was the Potential Action on Student Discipline - Reinstatement Request. Motion by Darlene Loyer Gerick, support by Calvin Hawkins that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education reinstate Student 21-22-012 with conditions. Motion carried

6-0 with the following vote; Susan Featheringill - aye, Calvin Hawkins - aye, Dionne Falconer - aye, Amy Pearce - aye, Darlene Loyer Gerick - aye and Kelly Owen - aye.

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

Regular session adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Darlene Loyer Gerick
Board of Education Secretary

Debra McWilliams
Recording Secretary