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

June 24, 2024

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

Budget Public Hearing - Priya Nayak, Director of Finance explained that the purpose of the Budget Hearing is to comply with the uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act and to receive input from the Board of Education and the public. She said that the Board may not adopt the proposed 2024-2025 budget until after a public hearing. Ms. Nayak first reviewed the 2023-2024 Final Budget Amendment that will be voted on later in the meeting and then finished the hearing with the 2024-2025 Budget Proposal. Ms. Nayak went over each of the funds that make up the budget: General Fund (including Grant Fund), Special Ed Fund, Food Service Fund, Sinking Fund, Capital Projects, Debt Retirement Fund and the Student Activities Fund. Ms. Nayak compared the original Budget to the First Budget Amendment to the Final Amendment presented this evening. She also explained that the State recommends a fund balance of about 15% and the district shares their recommendation. When reviewing the Food Service Fund, Ms. Nayak said that last year all students received breakfast and lunch for free. She said that this would be the case for the 24-25 school year too. The Student Activity Summary for the 23-24 budget does not include the boosters or PTO groups with a 501c3 license. Questions were answered and then Ms. Nayak moved on to the 24-25 Original Budget. She said that the budgets done for the start of the school year are based on many assumptions such as; Student Count, State Aid and Staffing. Ms. Nayak went through each of the same fund categories that were discussed earlier. This year's general fund account will not consist of any more ESSER Grant money. Ms. Nayak answered questions and then said that the adoption of the 24-25 Initial Budget would take place later in this meeting. Information Only.

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

Motion by Kelly Owen, support by Simone Pinter that the Board approves the agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments (Agenda Items) - Aaron Lang, VBPS employee & VBEA President - Item# 7k. - Educational Assistance Program

Motion by Kelly Owen, support by Dionne Falconer to approve the consent agenda as presented: Minutes from the Regular Meeting of June 10, 2024; Requested Changes in Instructional Staff: April King, Tyler teacher, Hired effective 8/28/24; Matthew Mair, BHS PE teacher, Hired effective 8/28/24; Logan Carver, Tyler/Owen School Psychologist, Hired effective 8/28/24; Casi Shannon, McBride Speech Pathologist, Hired effective 8/28/24; Kyle Whitehouse, BHS English teacher, Hired effective 8/28/24; Alisha Lominac, District Wide Occupational Therapist, Hired effective 8/28/24; Jennifer Medvich, ECC GSRP Lead teacher, Hired effective 8/28/24; Julia

Pitts, Rawsonville Principal, Hired effective 8/1/24; Requested Changes in Non-Instructional Staff: Hussein Alakhrass, IT, 3.5 years of service, Resigned effective 6/22/24; Kathrine Foscolo, Transportation, Retiring effective 6/30/24; Heather Hawkes, Transportation - Driver, Hired effective 7/1/24; Lori-Ann Cooper, Transportation - Driver, Hired effective 7/1/24; William Cornell, Admin PT Tech Support, Hired effective 6/24/24; and Checks Payable. Motion carried 5-0. Mr. Kudlak introduced the new principal for Rawsonville Elementary School, Julia Pitts.

Separate Check Approval: None

Administrative Items:

The first Administrative Item was the Stepping Stones Agreement Approval presented by Julien Frazier, Director of Student Services. Mr. Frazier explained that the Stepping Stones Group is a special education services provider committed to providing comprehensive and effective educational support to students with special needs. They strive to create inclusive and empowering learning environments that foster the academic, social, and emotional development of every student. With a team of highly qualified professionals and a school-centered approach, they strive to make a positive impact on the lives of children with diverse learning challenges. Currently, SSG provides personnel in the areas of Speech-language therapy, school psychology, and occupational therapy. Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the Special Education Contractual Agreement with Stepping Stones Group for the 2024-2025 School Year as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The second Administrative Item was the VBPS Continuity of Services Plan presented by Jeff Moore, Director of Instruction. Mr. Moore explained that while the district was utilizing ESSER funds, they were required to provide a plan outlining strategies for preventing and mitigating COVID-19. He said that this plan had to be presented every six months while the district was utilizing these funds. Mr. Moore said that it is anticipated that this will be the final presentation because of the depletion of the ESSER funds. Information Only.

The third Administrative Item was the Construction Manager for Savage/Tyler Office Renovation Approval presented by James Williams, Director of Plant Operations. Mr. Williams began by saying that this project is to relocate these offices so that both schools will have a secure entry. At a previous meeting, IDS was hired as the architect for this project and at the last meeting Mr. Kakoczki went step by step through the project packet. He said that this project is slated to start in the Spring of 2025 and possibly be completed by the Fall of 2025. This project will be funded through the bond. Motion by Dionne Falconer, support by Kelly Owen that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve Davenport Brothers Construction Company for $28,000.00 in pre-construction fees, a construction management fee of 6.0%, bonding rate of 1.15% and insurance rate of 1.0% as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Administrative Item was the McBride Serving Line Equipment Upgrade Approval presented by James Williams, Director of Plant Operations. Rob Kakoczki, Plante Moran Realpoint, presented the information for this item at the last board meeting. Mr. Williams said that the upgrades would be similar to the upgrades that were done at the high school last year only on a smaller scale. This will make the flow easier for the staff and students. We are hoping to finish this during the summer or by fall of 2024. Mr. Williams did not get any questions. Motion by Simone Pinter, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick that the Van Buren Public Schools

Board of Education approve the serving line equipment from Stafford-Smith Inc. in the amount of $298,747.00 as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The fifth Administrative Item was the Regional Enhancement Renewal Millage Approval presented by Superintendent Kudlak. Mr. Kudlak said that this will be going to the voters in November 2024. Wayne County has had this Enhancement Millage for 7 years. Each district and charter school receives the same amount of money per pupil. This school year, we were allocated $337.00 per student. Our district uses these funds for enhancement programs such as JROTC, eSports and one to one computers. This renewal goes to all Wayne County Districts to put on their November ballot. This millage has to pass county wide. Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Dionne Falconer that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the Resolution Requesting Renewal of the Regional Enhancement Millage as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The sixth Administrative Item was the Chartwells Food Service Agreement Approval presented by Priya Nayak, Director of Finance. Ms. Nayak explained that we have to approve this renewal every year and receive approval from the Michigan Department of Education which we have already received. Ms. Pearce said that this is for food service management only which only includes Darnell Pace and Chef Craig Ash. Motion by Simone Pinter, support by Kelly Owen that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the renewal of the contract with Chartwells as the Food Service Management Company for the next fiscal year period beginning the 2024-25 school year with an option of renewing each year for the next three years as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Administrative Item was the Clean Bus Energy Grant Information presented by Priya Nayak, Director of Finance. Ms. Nayak explained that this grant needs to be acknowledged by the board members that the district is looking into this option and gathering information pertaining to Clean Bus Energy. She said that James Williams is working with Transportation Supervisor Elizabeth Banks to get all the facts behind the grant so we have all the information before we actually go through with completing the process. Information Only.

The next Administrative Item was the 23-24 Final Budget Amendment Approval presented by Priya Nayak, Director of Finance. This information was presented at the beginning of this Regular Board Meeting at the Budget Public Hearing. Ms. Nayak had no other questions. Motion by Dionne Falconer, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approves the 2023 - 2024 Final Budget Amendment as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The ninth Administrative Item was the 24-25 Original Budget Resolution Approval presented by Priya Nayak, Director of Finance. This information was presented at the beginning of this Regular Board Meeting at the Budget Public Hearing. Ms. Nayak had no other questions. Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Simone Pinter that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approves the 2024-2025 Original Budget as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The tenth Administrative Item was the 24-25 L-4029 Resolution Approval presented by Priya Nayak, Director of Finance. Ms. Nayak explained that approval is needed every year for the Tax Rate Request, Form L-4029. The approval for this form goes along with the budget approvals. It is an acknowledgement that these are the millage rates that will be turned into the State.

Motion by Simone Pinter, support by Kelly Owen that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the 24-25 L-4029 Resolution as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Administrative Item was the Educational Assistance Program Section 127 Internal Revenue Code Approval presented by John Leroy, Director of Human Resources. Mr. Leroy explained that Section 127 provides an exemption from gross income of up to $5250.00 of educational assistance per calendar year, including employer-paid student loan payments through December 31, 2025. Once the receipt of benefits of $5250.00 is exceeded in a calendar year, or if an educational assistance benefit is not eligible, or is no longer exempt from gross income under the Internal Revenue Code, the employee is responsible for any resulting tax consequences. Amy Pearce asked what the board is exactly voting on this evening? The board is voting on giving permission to not tax the employees for the grant money they receive. Motion by Kelly Owen, support by Darlene Loyer Gerick that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the Educational Assistance Program Section 127 Internal Revenue Code as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The next Administrative Item was the Cooperative Education Program Agreement between Wayne Westland Community Schools (WWCS) & VBPS presented by Superintendent Kudlak. This cooperative education program agreement between WWCS and VBPS permits certain VBPS students to receive vocational education services provided by and through WWCS in accordance with the terms of the agreement. The term of this agreement shall be from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. Motion by Darlene Loyer Gerick, support by Dionne Falconer that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve the Cooperative Education Program Agreement between Wayne Westland Community Schools and Van Buren Public Schools for the 2024-2025 school year as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

The last Administrative Item was the BHS Gym Refinishing Approval presented by James Williams, Director of Plant Operations. Mr. Williams said that the gym floor is about 12 years old and we maintain it every year. The recommendation for gym floors like ours is to have a complete refinish around the 12 year period. After much discussion, it was decided to try to complete the work this summer and have it paid through the Sinking Fund. Dionne Falconer asked if this work would be complete before school starts? Mr. Williams said yes. Motion by Amy Pearce, support by Dionne Falconer that the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education approve Kuhn Specialty Flooring in the amount of $55,770.00, which includes a contract amount of $50,700.00 along with a project contingency of $5,070.00 as presented.

Public Comments (Non-Agenda items) - April Turnbull, VBPS employee - VBEST contract and Tonya Charlesworth, VBPS employee - Food/snacks for Special Education classes at ECC building

Cabinet Member Reports:

Pete Kudlak, Superintendent – Welcome to our new Rawsonville Principal, Julia Pitts. We have the Owen A.P. left to hire. Owen Principal, Nadine Dufrane, has been busy doing phone screenings now and then will do first round interviews at the end of this week. I attended Lakefest this past weekend and it was great.

Jeff Moore, Director of Instruction - My department is working on closing out our budgets this week. My assistant is in the process of ordering curriculum supplies for the Fall. We are also trying to streamline some systems that have not been efficient.

John Leroy, Director of Human Resources - We have been lucky to fill some tough positions with great hires. I think that the financial stability of the district is attracting great people.

Julien Frazier, Director of Student Services - It has been a busy couple of weeks with wrapping up our budgets, especially the ACT 18 budget which is huge. We have also been finalizing IEP's, McKinney Vento budgets, PBIS budgets and the ESY Program which usually goes to another district over the summer. This is the first time we are doing this summer school for special education students. It is going to be held at Rawsonville Elementary School.

James Williams, Director of Plant Operations - Construction at our buildings is progressing well so far this summer. The demolition has wrapped up in the buildings and the HVAC equipment was flown in to get ready for installation. The transportation department is setting up training for the new software program, Transfinder. Amy Pearce asked if this will include an App for parents? Mr. Williams said yes.

Priya Nayak, Director of Finance - The budget is done and now the auditors will be here this week to go through all of our information. I am looking at presenting the final audit on the 23-24 budget at the first meeting in October.

Items of Business from the Members of the Board:

Darlene Loyer Gerick - I am exhausted from just getting back from a 10 day trip. I will be loading up the last of the plastic caps and wrapping up that project.

Kelly Owen - My daughter just got married last Saturday.

Simone Pinter - I went to Lakefest. It was great.

Dionne Falconer - The football athletes have been busy in tournaments and camps.

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)(h) - To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute. Motion carried 5-0 with the following roll call vote - Simone Pinter - Aye, Amy Pearce - Aye, Dionne Falconer - Aye, Darlene Loyer Gerick - Aye and Kelly Owen - Aye. The board entered Closed Session at 8:37pm.

President Amy Pearce declared they would come back to open session at 9:35pm.

Motion by Darlene Loyer Gerick, support by Dionne Falconer to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

Regular session adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Darlene Loyer Gerick
Board of Education Secretary

Debra McWilliams
Recording Secretary