



Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Regular Meeting of the New Lebanon Central School Board of Education
Regular meeting 7:00pm –JSHS Cafeteria

Attendance: (P=Present A=Absent)

Tim Lambert	<u>A</u>
Mike Brutsch	<u>P</u>
Bill Buckenroth	<u>P</u>
John Kalisz	<u>P</u>
Rob Long	<u>A</u>
Sharon Putnam	<u>P</u>
Richard Sime	<u>A</u>

Also in attendance:

Andrew Kourt	<u>P</u>
Matt Klafehn	<u>P</u>
Josh Noble	<u>P</u>
Francis Rielly	<u>P</u>

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by Board President Putnam at 7:03pm and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS

A. Technology/Library update-Britt Buckenroth and David Hawkins presented on Chromebook rollouts.

B. WBH update- Josh Noble presented on uptick in covid cases, covid machines and tests, holiday activities and positive citizenship.

C. JSHS/Athletic update- Matt Klafehn presented on covid, community thanksgiving, fall festival, college club, concerts, regents, assessments, sport spectator passes, live streaming sports.

D. Business Office/Facilities and Grounds update- Francis Rielly presented on phase 2, food service numbers, supply chain delays and the facility committee meeting.

E. Superintendent update- Superintendent Kourt presented on covid numbers, testing, thanked school nurses, tutoring mandates, business office changes, concerts and common thread.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Public Comment - The Board may be addressed on matters concerning programs and/or operations of the district, other than matters involving personnel and comments that constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person. Members of the Board do not directly respond to citizen concerns during Public

Comment. While the Board does not wish to infringe upon free speech protections, it must be stressed that Public Comment is not deemed to be an open forum. In addition, any remarks which may be considered defamatory or stigmatizing are prohibited and will be declared out of order.

Dennis Burek asked for an update on the Veteran's exemption so he could update the public.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board Vice President Brutsch made the motion to approve item 4A. Board President Putnam seconded. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained.

A. Motion to approve the November 10, 2021 Board of Education Meeting minutes

5. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Board Vice President Brutsch made the motion to approve item 5A. Board President Putnam seconded. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained.

A. Motion to approve CSE recommendations of programs and placements

6. FINANCIAL

Board Vice President Brutsch made the motion to approve items 6A-B. Board member Buckenroth seconded. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained. Item C tabled until the January meeting.

A. Motion to approve the October 2021 Treasurer's Report

B. Motion to approve the 2022-23 Budget Calendar

C. Motion to accept a grant-TABLED UNTIL JANUARY 2022- To accept a grant from College Club Educational Awards in the amount of \$500 for the Makerspace Club.

7. PERSONNEL

Board President Putnam made the motion to approve items 7A-D. Board member Kalisz seconded. Item A- Britt Buckenroth tabled until January 2022. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained.

A. Motion to appoint tutors- To appoint, upon the recommendation of Superintendent Kourt, Courtney Wheat, Melissa Stevens, Molly Schroeder, ~~Britt Buckenroth~~ and Justine Metzler as tutors, effective December 9, 2021, at a rate of \$30 per hour.

B. Motion to accept a resignation from Francis Rielly effective January 14, 2022.

C. Motion to appoint substitutes-To appoint, upon the recommendation of Superintendent Kourt, the following substitutes:

Kirk Dobert	Substitute Cleaner	\$13.38 per hour
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D. Motion to amend an appointment-To appoint, upon the recommendation of Superintendent Kourt, Courtney Wheat as a Minecraft Club co-advisor with David Hawkins.

8. BOARD OPEN DISCUSSION

A. Next Board of Education Meeting January 13, 2021

Board President Putnam read a statement regarding the veteran's exemption request:

Over the years, the New Lebanon Board of Education has addressed whether to grant a Veterans tax exemption. We previously declined to do so in March, 2019, in response to a voter petition which was not authorized by law.

This fall, we have again received correspondence from the public and local government officials asking us to adopt a Veterans tax exemption. At our meeting on November 12, 2021, following a discussion in public session, the Board decided not to hold any further public hearing or add any other action item regarding the Veterans tax exemption to a future agenda, for the following reasons:

1. A Veterans tax exemption does nothing to reduce taxes or save money for the taxpayers of the School District as a whole. In order for one person or group to get a tax break, the remaining residents must make up the difference by paying higher property taxes; and
2. The Board is committed to spreading the tax burden as equitably as possible among the taxpayers.

The Board's longstanding position does not imply any disrespect to Veterans in our community. We have the utmost respect for all Veterans and thank them for their service. A Veterans tax exemption would be welcome if the cost of the exemption was borne not by our neighbors, but by the State – similar to the STAR or Enhanced STAR exemptions. The STAR exemptions do not shift additional financial burden from one class of residents to another within the community.

The Board and Administration struggle every year to maintain the highest quality of education for our students, those currently in our schools and those yet to enter, while being ever mindful of the annual tax burden this places upon all New Lebanon residents. While we are careful in developing fiscal strategy and monitoring our budgets, we recognize that no matter how prudent we are, over time, increasing costs will require some increase in taxes and difficult choices. We understand and share the pain every resident experiences when they get their tax bills each year. A status-based tax exemption, such as the Veterans tax exemption, while well-intentioned and beneficial to some, over time, merely compounds property tax increases for everyone else.

The board also discussed their recent facility committee meeting and placement of the weight room.

9. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Board Vice President Brutsch made the motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the employment history of a particular person at 8:20pm. Board member Kalisz seconded. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained. Board Vice President Brutsch made the motion to appoint Superintendent Kourt as Clerk Pro-Tem. Board member Kalisz seconded. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Putnam made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50pm. Board Vice President Brutsch seconded. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstained.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly McGivern

Kelly McGivern, District Clerk