



Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Regular Meeting of the New Lebanon Central School Board of Education

7:00pm VIRTUAL

**Attendance: (P=Present A=Absent)**

Tim Lambert           \_\_P\_\_

Mike Bienes, Jr.       \_\_P\_\_

Mike Brutsch          \_\_P\_\_

Bill Buckenroth       \_\_P\_\_

John Kalisz           \_\_P\_\_

Rob Long              \_\_P\_\_

Richard Sime          \_\_P\_\_

Also in attendance: Leslie Whitcomb, Andrew Kourt, Matt Klafehn, Josh Noble, Kelly McGivern

Board President Lambert:

We'll start with the Pledge of Allegiance (recited).

OK, onto item two, acknowledgements and administrative comments. Superintendent update.

Superintendent Whitcomb:

The biggest update is we got information in an executive order from the governor on our vote and at this point we have been able to contact a printer who can print the ballots that we need, Kell, how many ballots is that, that we need, (Kelly McGivern: 8,000). Prior to that we are required to send out a postcard that has some basic information about the vote and that is already going in to be printed. We have been in constant contact with our attorney, the executive order is open to interpretation to some ways on the dates, you will see conflicting dates if you go through guidance documents from various organizations, so the wisdom that has come out is what we are charged with doing, is make a very good faith effort to follow the

executive order to the letter and if we're following our legal counsel, we are. So we believe we will be ready to pull this off, we're ahead of the game, in terms of getting the post card going and I'm very pleased that we were able to get those absentee ballots printed. Those will go out with an addressed envelope, this is not an inexpensive vote, so you know. As soon as those come in from the printer we'll be calling in all the clerical staff, spreading them out around the building and get going on the stamping of the internal envelope, getting everything packed together, getting to the post office, Kelly has already been in touch with the post office to handle to bulk mailing and the individual mailings of the ballots. The executive order refers to at one point we have to send them off to everyone who is an eligible voter, and then later on says a qualified voter, and you could make the legal distinction between that. Our legal advice is that we will use everyone who is on either of the county rolls and anyone who has said they will vote on our school elections. Kelly is there anyone else we include or does that pull it off?

(Kelly: I believe that pulls it off). And so those will all be labeled and be sent out first class mail. Those will go out about two weeks prior to the election. So that is my biggest update, it has been the biggest topic of discussion with interpreting the executive order and thankfully Mary Roach is available all day long and on and off on the phone and has been very helpful and has allowed us to really get to the front of the line with the printers. 'Cause keep in mind we have some districts in the area who are going to have to print 25,000 ballots and get them out so getting ahead of the line is a good thing. Do you have any questions about the upcoming vote?

Vice President Brutsch: What's the cut off date, Leslie, that June 9<sup>th</sup> they have to be received by the 9<sup>th</sup> or is there gonna be a period or do you know?

Whitcomb: We have to have them in by 5pm on the 9<sup>th</sup>. That will be the time. And so then come 5 o'clock, we will start opening and counting. One of the other changes is that to run for the board there is no requirement on a petition, you simply have to declare yourself that you want to run for the board and have to get in touch with Kelly by the 11<sup>th</sup> and say they're running for the board. And that's the threshold. And Kelly we have some running already?

(Kelly: We have one declared candidacy today). OK.

Lambert: Excellent

Kalisz: How many seats are up?

Whitcomb: Two seats are up.

Kalisz: So the election you said it's at 5 o'clock you start counting or it's not that it's post marked by a certain day?

Whitcomb: It has to come in by 5 o'clock and we will start counting right after. We'll wait til everything is in and then we will still be getting some advice on how we are going to run the actual election, there's different advice out there from different organizations and again we will run the advice by Mary Roach and she will let us know what to do to have as good a mail in election as we can.

Lambert: So who is doing the counting on these now?

Whitcomb: Kelly just raised her hand. We will see how many people we will need for the count, I don't believe everything is going to come in the day of the vote so we will have time to get other poll workers in if we need more poll workers. In other words, they're going to be coming in on the mail I assume other people who are actually going to complete one of these ballots will turn it right around in day or two so we'll have a good idea of what we're going to need for poll workers.

Lambert: Do we have to accept them as the post date by that day or how does that work?

Whitcomb: If we don't have them by 5pm they're not a vote. And that is in the executive order, so that's one clear thing.

Kalisz: Are we advising people to mail it by a certain date?

Whitcomb: That hasn't been put in there but it has the date we have to receive it by. That's a question we'll run past Mary once we're getting closer and closer more questions like that will come up. We will continue to put out information on the web page and facebook. We have a pretty deep reach from facebook. When something is very popular we've had a reach of over 9,000.

Lambert: It will be interesting to see how many people vote this year. Item B, graduation update.

Klafehn: Hi everybody first of all I want to state that it is incredibly disheartening for us to not be able to provide a typical graduation as we know it for our seniors. Everybody's wracking their brains in every single school district to find out how to do this I'm very happy to say I have a network of principal colleagues both at cap region boces also at questar 3 that I've heard a number of ideas I've also got a great administrative team and outstanding faculty who wants to do right by these kids. So with that in mind what we are planning as of now is looking to host a graduation on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June it will be at WBH so we can make full use of the bus circle the plan is to encourage students to dress up their cars in the manner they would their cap with black and orange and any kind of personal flare that they would to celebrate . we will ultimately arrange for graduates vehicles in the parking lot facing the circle our graduates will be called one vehicle at a time in front of the bus loop to receive their diploma and scholarships. Our present plan is our valedictorian, salutatorian and our class speaking will deliver their addresses at the podium under the booster club tent equipped with a sound system The messages will either be live streamed or facebook live or possibly via a radio station if we can gain access to that technology. Our band director is going to be plugged in on his guitar for music before and after. At the completion of the ceremony the graduate recessional will consist of either a new lebanon valley protective association vehicle or a police escort from WBH to the JSBS to symbolize their educational journey in our district. I know community members are going to be encouraged to park their cars along route 20. At both buildings we hope to have teachers planted and socially distanced with signs congratulating the seniors on their accomplishments. That is our plan we are hoping that it will do our kids some justice.

Lambert: Do you expect to get any feedback from people or have you gotten anything?

Klafehn: There are people who would like to have a traditional ceremony, it's not possible per the executive order, we've to follow the governors orders, and it's not going to happen. School has been closed and we need to look at other options. What can we do? This is what we have come up with. Are there going to be people wishing for the traditional ceremony? Absolutely. Are there going to be people wishing for us to do this at a later date? Possibly. But there are reasons why that's not such a hot idea among them is that we have kids that are looking to go to work and not necessarily in the town of new lebanon or the state of NY. They're going to be long gone after graduation. Our goal is to have as many people present at that ceremony as possible to celebrate the class as a whole. In order to do that we need to do it at the close of school.

Lambert: Did we post anything on line or on facebook?

Klafehn: Just that the information is forthcoming, I will be working on putting everything I said tonight together for our senior families. It will eventually get posted on facebook . There is still

a lot of planning that has to happen but we were in limbo until we had the governors directive on Friday

Lambert: I'd like to get the state directives out there so the people know what we have to work with. Onto item C, food delivery update

Kourt: Frozen food- we've had a partnership with the food bank of northeastern ny. In the past 6 weeks we've done every 2 weeks and been able to give thousands of pounds of food to our local community and it has been just tremendous. We invited the Berlin school district because we're always trying to partner with them so many of their community members have come too. We start it at 11:15 but there is usually people waiting at 10am to collect the food and it has just been phenomenal. The food is gone every time. It's a testament to the entire community.

The town of NL comes, our Supervisor Tistrya Houghtling comes and she is passing out face masks and hand sanitizer and we actually had a family member donate 150 half gallons of milk.

It has been a tremendous outpouring of community support. It puts things into perspective for all of us so thank you to the entire community for making that happen.

Lambert: That sounds great

Noble: Our food delivery team has been doing a great job, we've developed a really nice system of delivery where we have TA's riding on buses delivering food on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays we deliver food that covers breakfast and lunch for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Thursdays we're delivering breakfast and lunch for Fridays Saturdays, Sundays and Monday so we're covering all days of the week with breakfast and lunch. We've delivered to almost 50 families reaching approximately 120 kids. We've delivered over 4,400 total meals to this point. I want to publicly thank transportation department, food services and our TA's for their hard work. Pat Metzler and Chris Howe have been well organized, thoughtful and awesome to work with.

Lambert: OK, sounds good. Thank you very much. We're going to move on to item 3 approval of minutes. I make a motion to approve action item A as written.

Brutsch: I'll second.

Lambert: Any questions or concerns?

Brutsch: We do have to at next month's meeting, we don't have the approval for the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting on here.

McGivern: No, believe it or not, I'm still working on it. It's huge.

Brutsch: Ok, that was it.

Lambert: Ok, as long as you're working on it, that's good. All in favor? Anyone oppose or abstain? Motion carries 7-0-0. Onto item number 4. I make a motion to accept action items A-C as written.

Brutsch: I'll second.

Lambert: Any questions or concerns? All in favor? (Ayes) Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries 7-0-0. Item 5. A Internal claims audit report. That's for review, I take it. Anybody have any questions on that one? Alright, then I make a motion to accept action items B-F.

Brutsch: I'll second.

Lambert: Any questions or concerns? All in favor? (Ayes) Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries 7-0-0. Onto item 6, personnel. I make a motion to accept action items A-P as written.

Bienes: I'll second.

Lambert: Any questions or concerns?

Brutsch: Are the actions to reappoint the part time teachers a carry over from last year?

Whitcomb: That's the yearly appointment, yes it is. And those are the same positions we had last year except with the one that's been reduced, we reduced the position and then appointed and that's the new reduction. The other ones are as they have been in previous years. Does that answer your question?

Brutsch: Yes

Lambert: Ok. Everybody in favor? (Ayes) Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries 7-0-0. Onto item 7, board open discussion. Next board of ed meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Which didn't we change that? It is on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

McGivern: We had an action item to move it from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> to comply with the executive order.

Lambert: Ok. Got it.

Brutsch: That's a Tuesday, right?

Lambert: I would think so.

Bienes: Yeah

Lambert: Ok, any body have a problem with that? Ok, does anybody have any other board open discussion items?

Long: Yeah, was there an update on the elementary school

Whitcomb: What are you looking for for an update?

Lambert: Just the monthly update?

Long: Yeah, that and is there any talks of having the 6<sup>th</sup> graders do sort of a graduation like they're doing for the high school?

Whitcomb: Yes, I think Andrew can talk about what they're planning and what they're sequence of planning is. Andrew, go ahead.

Kourt: We've talked a lot about this as a district. We really want to make sure that the senior class and Matt and the high school has an opportunity to plan the senior class graduation because that is a huge deal. These kids are never coming back together and they have worked so hard to get to where they are and everything that we do is all about senior graduation. So we are waiting to fine tun our plans and really start planning it until after the senior graduation planning is done and that's out. We don't want to take anything away from that, from those seniors graduation so it is going to be a different type of graduation then what they are doing. We are looking at maybe doing a virtual experience for graduation.

Whitcomb: And you've already said some conversations with your 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers correct?

Kourt: Correct, we're starting preliminary conversations and planning with our 6<sup>th</sup> grade class advisers, so they are in the process of starting to plan it but as soon as the senior graduation is planned and ready, we'll really start doing that. There will be some sort of graduation for 6<sup>th</sup> grade for sure.

Lambert: Ok, does that answer your questions?

Long: Yep

Lambert: Ok, anybody else?

Kalisz: Just curious about if some sort of on line instruction will continue throughout this school year, is that correct?

Whitcomb: Yes, you're correct. And the end of the school year is going to be June 18<sup>th</sup>, that information has gone out on facebook and the principals, we came to that date by simply subtracting from our school year the 6 vacation days that people worked through. It put us between the 180 required days by state ed and the 185 maximum days our teachers can work by contract. We're fine for state aid. Most of, us have been waiting to decide when our school year ended seeing if the governor was going to give some direction, nothing has come except for reiteration of 180 days. We have provided instruction straight through so our last day of instruction is the 18<sup>th</sup> and again graduation is now the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Lambert: What does that look like for the high school? I know that the high school usually has testing periods and are usually out a week before the younger kids.



Whitcomb: Everybody is going to the 18<sup>th</sup> because there are no regents and we are not having final exams.

Lambert: Ok

Kalisz: And what about kids who need summer instruction? What's going to happen there?

Whitcomb: Our usual summer program is an elementary program, we're still going to have that, we have posted the positions, it is most likely going to be a virtual program, but we're going to wait to hear on that. Because of the governors decision on the regents exams, and that was there are no regents, however, students that are enrolled that is ending with a regents, will be given the regents credit if they continue and pass their work for the teacher. This is going to be a benefit to students who perhaps had needed summer schooling in years past in order to prepare to retake the regents. Our students who are passing their classes will also receive regents credit.

Kalisz: I want to make sure I understand the grading for the high school too, Matt. I think what I understand is that if a kid was failing, prior to the isolation orders, they have a chance to redeem themselves

Klafehn: Yeah, they've had this whole period to credit recover.

Kalisz: And if a kid was doing ok but hasn't really participated during the isolation, they're going to pass?

Klafehn: So yeah, they are going to be graded basically on that which they have done. They were present for approximately 2 and 1/2 quarters. If they have not engaged since then, we are going to have to look at the grades that we have collected up until the point of closure. The biggest thing is we want to reward those who have been actively involved and the grades that have been earned since march 19 will serve to boost anyone's grade. SO yes, no one is harmed in the process but those who are actively engaged are going to reap the benefits of being engaged.

Kalisz: Excellent. And I just want to make one final comment, I've been super impressed both with the elementary and high school teachers for reaching out. Both my kids, they get their

work done quickly but they have been engaged we've been getting, I know Matt you have called us, Alex Chandler calling us I'm really really impressed with what the district is doing. We actually had Grace's birthday last night and we were talking to our cousins who live in an extremely extremely wealthy school district in the Boston area who are getting zero education during this time, so I'm really impressed with our tiny little district in the middle of no where was able to pull this off because a really wealthy district cant seem to do this. I think a lot of it has to do with the teachers, the unions are not allowing the teachers to teach. But I'm really glad we're able to carry things on in this district I'm really impressed.

Whitcomb: And as long as we're throwing compliments around, I've got to do a shout out to our teaching assistants as well. We have many students who have a TA in their IEP who typically helps them during the school day. They are doing more 1 to 1 phone calls and from what we have heard from parents who have struggled to help their kids who struggle with school, it's been a Godsend. They've been working in the evening, they have very fluid school days

Kalisz: Also I know Chris Howe and his crew have been running stuff around but the 8<sup>th</sup> graders did a project with they built bridges at home and then they watched them get destroyed by Ms. Dano which was a lot of fun but I thought it was great that Chris joined in because he had to transport all their bridges he joined in on the demonstration and was cheering kids on so a special thanks to Chris hes a great guy

Whitcomb: Yeah he dropped off the packets they built them from and then the actual bridges

Kalisz: The feedback I've been getting is those kinds of activities are great because both my kids they get up first thing and are like dad we're done and they occupy themselves during the day but those projects ms chandler had them do Gabriel had the bridge but those kinds of thing are keeping them very occupied during the day so the feedback to teachers is more of those types of projects because the paperwork I'm finding is done very quickly Grace will usually be done, she gets up at 7 and she's usually done by 9 I've kind of given the feedback to teachers if you can give them projects that will keep them occupied during the day, keep doing it. They're having a lot of fun with it

Whitcomb: Matt, Andrew share that out with your folks. It's really nice to hear the feedback we really appreciate it.

Kourt: Just to add to that, I am incredibly impressed with the teachers and the staff, everybody they've done something very difficult that we've never imagined can happen and they've made the best of it. They are such gifted educators this just showed how special they are .

Lambert: That's great, sounds like everything is working. I know my only child left here is doing very good and seems to be enjoying it. Does anybody else have anything?

Brutsch: Are the students who are doing advanced placement and the college level courses are they doing the same thing, if they are passing all their work they are going to get their credits?

Klafehn: So that's really contingent upon the university by which the course is associated with. People are doing thins a little bit differently. Basically, they're dual credit courses. So the HS courses can adapt the same grading policy that we've adapted for every other course . When it comes to the college credit, it's really contingent upon what the advice is by the corresponding university

Brutsch: Ok

Kalisz: I guess the other question I have is assuming the worst and this continues into the fall or we have a resurgence in the fall that puts us back into the situation , are we doing anything to kind of get prepared for that in advance?

Whitcomb: There's a lot of discussion on what might it look like the other big piece is state ed is putting together a task force that will give us some guidance on exactly that and the other thing that we're looking at is really bumping up our purchases of the chromebooks to get close to a 1 to 1 at least for grades 4-12. I've started on the smart schools bond act application, received the financial information that I need on that and the numbers to get to where we want to be and I'll be doing my public hearing on that at the next meeting so we can get that out as soon as possible which means we will not have the machines for the start of the school year but we would have them soon afterwards. We will never get to 100% because of connectivity issues.

Lambert: Anybody else? I'll make a motion to adjourn this meeting

Brutsch: I'll second.

Lambert: All in favor (ayes) Opposed? Abstain? Motion carries 7-0-0.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly McGivern

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Kelly McGivern, District Clerk