

MUHLENBERG SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2020
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Call to Order

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District was called to order on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at 6:32 PM by Board President, Mr. S. Wayne Hardy via remote access using Zoom.

Members Present

President – Mr. S. Wayne Hardy
Vice President – Mr. J. Tony Lupia, Jr.
Secretary – Mr. Thomas W. Gross
Assistant Secretary – Mrs. Cindy L. Mengle
Treasurer - Mr. Richard E. Hoffmaster
Member – Mr. Garrett E. Hyneman
Member – Mr. Randall R. Madara
Member – Mr. Mark J. Nelson
Member – Mr. Otto W. Voit, III
Solicitor – Mr. Brian F. Boland, Esq.
Recording Secretary – Mrs. Patricia L. Law

Administration Present

Superintendent – Dr. Joseph E. Macharola
Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Alan S. Futrick
Business Manager – Mr. Shane Mathias
Supervisor of Accounts – Mr. Mark Moyer
Director of Physical Plant and Transportation – Mr. Ken Patterson
Director of Special Education – Dr. Shawn Rutt
Director of Technology – Mr. Daniel Houck
Supervisor of Language Arts and Literacy – Mrs. Cathy Shappell
Athletic Director – Dr. Tim Moyer
High School Principal – Mr. Michael Mish
High School Assistant Principal – Ms. Lori Morris
High School Assistant Principal – Mr. C. Eric Schaeffer
Middle School Principal – Mr. Jeffery Ebert
Middle School Assistant Principal – Dr. Felicia Ulsh
Intermediate School Principal – Mr. Steven Baylor
Elementary Center Principal – Mrs. Krista Venza
Elementary Center Principal – Mr. Antonio Mirabito

Visitors

Jolyn Casper
Linda Figueroa
Greg Purcell (WFMZ)

Suspension of Policy 006.1, Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications

Moved by Mr. Madara and Mr. Hoffmaster, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District authorize the suspension of Policy 006.1, *Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications*.

Yeas: Mr. Gross, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Hoffmaster, Mr. Hyneman, Mr. Lupia, Mr. Madara, Mrs. Mengle, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Voit. The motion **carried** unanimously.

Educational Presentations

A. 2020-2021 Preliminary Budget Update (Exhibit A) - Mr. Shane M. Mathias, CPA

Mr. Mathias presented a brief update on the 2020-2021 preliminary budget showing where the budget was last month and where it was this month. Mr. Mathias said this budget still included all new positions and reflected all of the revisions that were made since the last meeting. It also reflected use of the Assigned Fund Balance as requested by Mr. Nelson last month. He came up with this number by using a three-year average of what was utilized during those three years. This budget update also still included a line item of \$500,000 for a Capital Reserve transfer or budgetary reserve amount.

Comments/Questions/Concerns:

Mr. Nelson had a question about a discrepancy in the revenue numbers. Mr. Mathias said he would check the formula; although, he said there was a tax increase that may have created the discrepancy.

Mr. Mathias reviewed and explained the expenditure and revenue changes from last month to this month. He said there is a lot of uncertainty with state and local revenues for the rest of this year as well as next year due to COVID-19. He has heard that there is no way the state will be able to give districts what they said they were; and, locally the earned income tax, business privilege tax and real estate tax collection rate may have to be looked at by reducing those items by five, ten, fifteen percent. The district will get some stimulus money, but it is uncertain how much. Mr. Mathias said hopefully in the next month or two, the District will find out how much it will receive to make-up the shortfall in local and state revenues.

Mr. Mathias said page three of the presentation showed the fund balance analysis, giving a picture of where the District will be and the window of opportunity in six or seven years when the debt service is reduced significantly by using the fund balance to balance the budget or transferring it to Capital Reserve. He said to keep in mind that by not using the fund balance to balance the budget, will allow more to be transferred into Capital Reserve.

Comments/Questions/Concerns:

Mr. Nelson said he asked for a quick justification for the new positions. Mr. Mathias replied that with the way the economy is going he is not sure that these positions will make it into the budget therefore giving an explanation for each one of them at this point may not be necessary. Mr. Nelson said that is fine as long as that is the answer. Dr. Macharola said the local business managers in the county and state have been working very hard since the onset of COVID-19. These positions were entered into the budget prior to the pandemic. He said each position that is listed is necessary for the Muhlenberg School District in terms of operations. Dr. Macharola said things change day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute. As situations and events change, the administration's answers will change. He said the District's budget would unquestionably change. Dr. Macharola said as more data and information becomes available, this will undoubtedly shape not only the District's budget but the State's as well. He said he learned through his meetings this past week that the House and Senate are grappling with this. This is going to take time and deadlines will probably be extended. Dr. Macharola said the advice is to move cautiously. All of the positions listed in the budget are necessary for the District. He said whether or not that will be a reality is not known as these are unprecedented times.

Mr. Nelson said he was just asking for a two sentence justification as to why these positions are needed. Dr. Macharola said each one of the positions meet the students' needs. He said there are 4,080 students in the school district now – that is an increase. There are a few hundred new special education students whose needs must be addressed. Dr. Macharola said those positions are needed in the school district to successfully engage in academic programs and help the students; and, to empower them in their life's work. When looking at student to teacher ratios, the District must be sure it is operating with appropriate staff. Dr. Macharola said this is due to the increase of students moving into the District. He said the administration has always substantiated the positions. Dr. Macharola said he always appreciated the Board's support.

Mr. Nelson said he knows it is tough to predict, given what is going on, but for next month's meeting he would like to know if there will be a surplus at the end of this fiscal year and where that surplus would be coming from. He said no one wants to use one-time money to balance the budget. Mr. Nelson said the District has a contract with the BCIU for transportation, but the District will not be transporting students for a quarter of the year. Mr. Mathias said the District must continue to pay its contractors (per SB 751) – the IU, Charter Schools, etc. He said he would certainly look at the current year budget and see if he can estimate where the District will be at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Mr. Mathias said last year it changed so much the last two months that he would not want to give information that could be misleading. Mr. Nelson said he would not hold him to it, but for some of the bigger expenditures like the BCIU. He said it may not hurt to contact the BCIU to see if there would be a credit towards next year's cost. He said they are not driving, there is no wear-and-tear on the buses, and they are not paying for gas (diesel). Mr. Nelson said he felt there are things that could be explored that could roll over into next year to help with the budget.

Mr. Mathias said he does not think that the District will have the savings that the Board may expect because one of the requirements of the legislation is to continue to pay the District's bus contractor. He said it could be re-negotiated but if the District wants to keep its subsidy, the District must continue to pay since the IU is required to continue to pay their bus drivers. There are many bills that the District must continue to pay that are similar to this. Mr. Mathias said they would look into it. Dr. Macharola said under SB751 there is a provision that the District will have to look at and have a conversation. He told Mr. Nelson that administration will be able to get the information, however, it may not be in May. Mr. Nelson said he understood, but he has not seen anything from the Governor or legislature that would extend the deadline for the budget beyond June 30th. Dr. Macharola said they were working on that, but the District is proceeding as if a budget must be approved by then. Mr. Nelson said that is why he wanted to have a discussion so that the Board and administration could come up with some ideas to figure this out. Dr. Macharola said he thought the District needed to get some answers from Harrisburg and Washington. Mr. Mathias said this is one of the biggest challenges because the District does not know what its revenue stream will look like next year. Mr. Voit said he felt it was premature to talk about anything because it is unknown what the Governor and legislature will do. He said he felt the District will be scrambling at the end of May and June to put something together so the Board must be aware of that as there will be no information available until the last minute.

B. Physical Plant Update - Mr. Kenneth Patterson

Mr. Patterson reported:

- Since the Governor's mandated shut-down on March 13, 2020, the custodial staff has been focusing on deep cleaning all of the School Buildings. Deep cleaning takes the normal cleaning process to a different level. This includes disinfecting everything from the floor to the ceiling - desks, chairs, doors, indoor bleachers. Mr. Patterson said he is proud of the work that the staff has been doing.
- The building permit paperwork has been submitted and as soon as that is approved, the Admin Roof Replacement Project will be scheduled.
- The Phone and Fax Upgrade Capital project for MEC is about 80% complete.
- Preliminary work is underway to gather costs and plan for the replacement of the Middle School Chiller. The vendor has been selected through the COSTARS program.
- The Board has a copy of the proposal for consideration to replace certain lighting within all of the School Buildings with LED fixtures.

Comments/Questions/Concerns:

Dr. Macharola commended Mr. Patterson and the Physical Plant staff for meticulously cleaning all of the buildings and working without any questions.

Hearing of Visitors - Muhlenberg School District taxpayers and residents have an opportunity, at this time, to comment on matters of concern, official action, or deliberation which are or may be before the Muhlenberg School Board. The Board retains the option to accept all public comment at this time. Presentations should be limited to two minutes per person. In the event that the Board determines that there is not sufficient time for residents or taxpayers of the School District to comment, the Board may defer the comment period to the next regular meeting.

There were none.

Board Business

Personnel

1. Acceptance of Resignations

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District accept the following resignations:

- a. Ms. Eileen Musselman, STEM/Engineering Teacher, Muhlenberg Middle School, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective April 15, 2020.
- b. Ms. Lisa A. Ermler, Cafeteria Clerical Assistant, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective May 15, 2020.

2. Classified Appointment

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following classified appointment:

- a. Ms. Monica H. Brock, 4.5 Hour Cafeteria Worker (S. Kelly), Muhlenberg Middle School, effective upon opening of schools by Governor Wolf, at a pay rate of \$14.83 per hour.

3. Termination of Varsity Track Assistant Coach

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the termination of Mr. Jared White, Varsity Track Assistant Coach, effective April 1, 2020.

4. Authorization of Payment to Employees

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District authorizes the payment of all Muhlenberg School District employees at their regular rate of pay for the time period of March 16, 2020 through April 8, 2020 in compliance with any applicable laws; and to further continue payment to all Muhlenberg School employees at their regular rate of pay as per Senate Bill 751.

Management

No items at this time.

Physical Plant and Transportation

1. LED Light Fixtures

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the purchase of LED light fixtures for Muhlenberg Elementary Center, C. E. Cole Intermediate School, Muhlenberg Middle School and Muhlenberg High School at a total cost of \$55,000 as presented (funded by Capital Projects and Capital Reserve).

Budget and Finance

1. Approval of Financial Reports

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following financial reports and that they become part of the permanent record of the meeting:

Fund	Treasurer's Report	Financial Report	Bills Paid Month	Investments	Budget Transfers
General	Feb 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020 Ck#47560-47719 V#26282-26309	Feb 2020	
Cafeteria	Feb 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020 Ck#6740-6788 V#2810-2815	Feb 2020	
Capital Reserve (Fund 32)	Mar 2020	Mar 2020	Mar 2020 Ck#888-889		
Capital Projects Fund (Fund 39)	Mar 2020	Mar 2020			
Activity	Feb 2020	Feb 2020			

2. Extension of Deadline for Filing/Payment of Business Privilege Tax

A RESOLUTION TEMPORARILY EXTENDING THE PAYMENT DEADLINE FOR THE MUHLENBERG SCHOOL DISTRICT 2019 FINAL/2020 ESTIMATED BUSINESS TAX RETURNS FROM APRIL 15, 2020 TO JULY 15, 2020 CONSISTENT WITH THE EXTENSION GRANTED BY THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE TO FEDERAL TAXPAYERS IN RESPONSE TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY CURRENTLY IN EFFECT.

WHEREAS, there currently exists a state of emergency occasioned by the proliferation of the COVID-19 virus;

WHEREAS, many businesses are not currently in operation or are operating with limited staffing as a result of the state of emergency;

WHEREAS, in response to the state of emergency on March 17, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service issued a statement extending its payment deadline for the 2019 Federal Tax Returns for all taxpayers owing less than One Million Dollars in taxes from April 15, 2020 to July 15, 2020 including the waiver of all penalty and interest for properly filed and paid taxes and returns by July 15, 2020;

WHEREAS, as of March 18, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service has not issued formal regulations regarding the time to file returns; however, it has announced the extension of time for payment of taxes outstanding;

WHEREAS, Muhlenberg School District Resolution No. 82 of March 12, 1982 requires that all business tax returns be filed on or before April 15 consistent with the filing of federal tax returns;

WHEREAS, the Muhlenberg School District recognizes the hardship currently placed on many of its businesses by the current state of emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Muhlenberg School District, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, that temporary deadlines for the filing of Final 2019/Estimated 2020 Business Tax Returns be established as follows:

1. The payment deadline for Final 2019/Estimated 2020 Business Privilege and Mercantile License Taxes under the School District are to be consistent with the temporary payment deadlines established by the Internal Revenue Service and will be July 15, 2020;
2. Any payment made for the Final 2019/Estimated 2020 Business Privilege and Mercantile License Taxes consistent with the newly established Internal Revenue Service deadline of July 15, 2020 will not accrue penalty and interest. Taxpayers shall be liable for penalty and interest for incorrect returns consistent with past practices of the School District.
3. The extended payment deadline will not apply to delinquent taxes or delinquent returns for years prior to 2019.
4. The School District may adjust its filing and payment deadlines without further resolution should the Internal Revenue Service make further adjustments, consistent with past practices. Said adjustments will be posted on the Business Office's Section of the School District's website.

Approved by the Board of Directors of the Muhlenberg School District on the 8th day of April, 2020.

Education

1. Muhlenberg High School Summer School

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the 2020 Summer School Program at Muhlenberg High School, beginning Monday, June 15, 2020 through Thursday, July 16, 2020, at the tuition cost of \$150.00 per course.

2. Dual Enrollment Agreement with Reading Area Community College

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the Dual Enrollment Agreement with Reading Area Community College for the 2020-2021 Academic Year at a student tuition rate of \$99.00 per credit.

Comments/Questions/Concerns:

Mr. Hoffmaster asked if money will be collected for summer school or if the District will wait to see what happens (whether summer school can be held). Dr. Macharola said there is a little bit of time yet, but the money would be collected (sign-up is done online).

Minutes

Review minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 4, 2020 and the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2020.

Old Business

No items at this time.

New Business

1. Memoriam of Mr. Richard Jarvis

Resolved, that we remember the passing of Mr. Richard Jarvis who served in the Muhlenberg School District for twenty-nine (29) years (1967-1996) as an elementary teacher. We honor his memory for his dedicated service to the school district and community.

Be it further resolved that we convey through this resolution our deepest sympathy to his family, and that this resolution be made part of the permanent record in the minutes of the Muhlenberg School District.

2. Memoriam of Mr. Donald N. Delp

Resolved, that we remember the passing of Mr. Donald N. Delp who served in the Muhlenberg School District for thirty-two (32) years (1952-1984) as a physical education teacher, driver education teacher and athletic director. We honor his memory for his dedicated service to the school district and community.

Be it further resolved that we convey through this resolution our deepest sympathy to his family, and that this resolution be made part of the permanent record in the minutes of the Muhlenberg School District.

Hearing of Visitors

Presentation is limited to approximately two minutes per person. Should any citizen require more than the two minutes allocated, please contact the Superintendent prior to the meeting. He will coordinate such requests for the Board. Citizens addressing the Board should be aware that the meeting is being taped.

There were none.

MSD/RMCTC Board Visitor of Month

April	Mrs. Cindy Mengle
May	Mr. Richard E. Hoffmaster

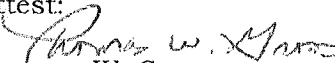
Review of Board Meetings and Calendar of Events

April 8	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole and Regular Board Meeting
April 13	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
May 6	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 11	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
May 13	7:00 PM	Regular Board Meeting
June 8	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
June 10	6:30 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting; Regular Board Mtg.

Adjourn Meeting

Moved by Mr. Hoffmaster and Mr. Madara, that there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Attest:


Thomas W. Gross
Secretary