

Board of Education
Worth School District 127
Dr. Rosemary Lucas Administrative Center

Zoom Video Conference

Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
January 13, 2021

1. MEETING OPENING

A. CALL TO ORDER

President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Members Present on Zoom: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Dave Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Danette Keeler, Stephanie Peltzer

Administrators:

Dr. Mark Fleming, Superintendent
Cindy Dykas, Business Manager/CSBO
Linda Esposito, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Ashley Toms, Assistant Principal, Worth Elementary/Worthwoods
Jason Tooth, Assistant Principal, Worth Junior High
Maureen Eichstaedt, Worth Elementary Principal
JoAnne Albrecht, WEA President
JoAnne Tyree, WEST President
Robert Jeffers, Director of Technology

Others Present

Jill Moore, Board Recording Secretary

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Drew Sernus read the guidelines for the Covid-19 restrictions and the purpose of offering a remote meeting.

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. WORTH ELEMENTARY RENOVATION UPDATE

Dr. Fleming opened by stating that the construction documents for bidding were released on January 13 and we will be receiving bids on February 3. The plan is for the Board to take action at the February Board Meeting. Construction is scheduled to start on March 1 with a schedule as follows for completion: Phase I - October 1; Phase II - tentatively October 1 (bidding will go out in March; bids received April); Phase III - Summer 2022; Phase IV - Summer 2023. DLA is finishing the final touches on the 3-D walk through and will be posted on the webpage.

B. CCDPH COVID VACCINE SURVEY

Dr. Fleming stated the district completed the CCDPH vaccine survey. The survey requested the number of staff in the district as well as the number of nurses that would be eligible to administer the vaccine. We put in a call to them today for an update on the timeline, but unfortunately with the high volume of calls they are getting, we have not heard back from them. Dr. Fleming will update the Board when we hear back from them.

C. PRESS PLUS POLICY/UPDATE

Dr. Fleming stated that policy updates have been on hold since the pandemic, but would like to move forward and get a date on the calendar. Each Board Member received a draft copy of the manual and we are working with Ken Carter from IASB to schedule the first meeting. The first initial meeting can be scheduled on March 16 or 18 and would be approximately 4 hours. Dr. Fleming is hoping at that time we could do in-person or we could combine to do virtual as well. The goal is to update all policy by June and once the foundation is set, we can bring changes to the board as 1st reads and then 2nd read, we would take action. All Board Members agreed to meet March 18 at 5:30 p.m.

D. BUILDING UPDATE/REPORT

Maureen Eichstaedt gave an update regarding the online assembly conducted by Mark Anderson. Mark conducts online assemblies with cartoon drawings: grade 2 alphabet and animals; grade 3-5 robots verses dinosaurs. We decided to pursue it for the kids and the cost was reasonable. We had a strong attendance and he showed the kids how to draw and the feedback was positive.

Board Members commented that their kids really enjoyed the drawings and appreciated the principals taking time to do that for the kids. It was fun for them and educational at the same time.

Dr. Zampillo stated that WJH has engaged in an all school book read "Restart" by Gordon Korman. The book is about a young man that is a middle school bully and suffered from amnesia after falling off the roof of his house. As a result of the amnesia and coming back to school, he's changed from being the top bully in his school to being a positive impact in his school. Dr. Zampillo stated the kids loved the book, were really engaged, and participated in some activities that went along with the book. Thank you to Natalie Valenti and the Encore teachers for organizing in getting this book to all students in the school. The author is producing a follow-up book called "Gifted" and were excited about our school participating in this next read.

Board Member asked if they've considered reaching out to the author to possibly do a Zoom call. Dr. Zampillo stated that Natalie Valenti had drawn up a proposal to see if they could bring him in towards the end of the year.

Dr Fleming stated that before Mrs. Esposito gives an update regarding remote instruction learning, the tentative date for in-person hybrid learning is tentatively scheduled for January 21. I will have a parent update that will go out on Friday, January 15 with further updates.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Mrs. Esposito stated that we've been in full remote learning since around Thanksgiving and right before winter break we put a survey out to the teachers. We asked teachers to give comments regarding the different instructional styles we've used and if they have any parent feedback. The feedback was very positive relative to the remote learning last spring and the improvements that have been made. So far they stated this remote experience has been very successful and teachers and parents feel confident with a better routine.

Board Member asked that since remote learning is going so well, do we have something in place for next year in place of snow days. Mrs. Esposito stated that we do and when used next year, it will be a much smoother process and can continue instruction without extending the school year. There is so much that we've learned in such a short amount of time.

Dr. Fleming added that we do have to get those days approved through the Intermediate Service Center 4 and we will be looking into that process for next year when we have a snow day/emergency day.

Mrs. Esposito stated that we have brought in four student teachers this semester from Trinity College; 3 at WE and 1 at WW. Two of the student teachers are Bilingual Arabic and one is Polish speaking.

BUSINESS MANAGER

Cindy Dykas opened by stating that the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and we have a tentative allocation of \$1.215M. This is brand new for our district and just came out: funds must be used by September, 2022 and the purpose of the funds is to address learning loss. The allocation for these funds is somewhat broad but essentially can be used for: summer school, tutoring, instruction, improved school ventilation, PPE/Cleaning. We may even be able to use some of the funds for HVAC and ventilation for the new project. Dr. Fleming will update the Board when we have the final numbers.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Dr. Chambers opened by stating that we are continually finding ways to support the Special Ed students and recently we added the program DocuSign. The majority of our IEP Meetings are done by Zoom or Google Meets and we needed a program to support digital documents and signatures. We are still utilizing Accutrans (a translation company) that is based out of Hickory Hills and is going great.

Great feedback from the parents and its so very helpful to have an outside translator. They have recently introduced video conferencing translating and our district is grateful for the support that offers it 24/7- 365 days a year.

Access testing has now been pushed back to March 15 - May 25. Access testing is required by the state for all K-8 multilingual students and tests their proficiency in English. Screening for the Pre-K Program will be pushed back to April/May due to Covid.

4. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jill Moore read the following e-mails from the school board email:

From Jolanta Zieba:

As a parent of two children in Worth District 127, I'm wondering when you are planning to bring back the students to school? Many of the private schools as well as public schools are back and been back since beginning of school year.!!!

From Jolanta Sikora

Just wanted to ask few questions and get some updates please:

1. What are the plans for school reopening?
Why we can't go back to full in person learning?
2. What needs to happen to fully reopen our school?
I got an answer that Worth village has too many Covid cases and that is the reason... Really shady answer...having 462 cases out of more than 10,000 residents is not big number.
3. When teachers will start receiving their vaccine and what is the number of teachers not agreeing to take vaccine?

And if they're refusing what actions are being taken to fix that problem? Or why they are not in school already if vaccine is not the solution for them?

From Adam Bednarz:

We have a few questions regarding our children's education.

Will remote learning resume on January 21st?

What are the plans for students to return to school full time? I understand that some parents wish to keep their children at home, but we have to take into consideration the parents that would like to have their children in a physical classroom environment.

I understand that one of the reasons that Worth Schools were not resuming classes was due to physical school building size, but what about options for families that would like in person learning versus families that would like remote learning only?

How are the school / building sizes at Worth compared to other surrounding school districts that are resuming classes?

What will be the districts vaccination policy for faculty and students?

How is the student body performing academically this year versus prior years? What is being done to ensure that our students do not fall behind in their education.

From Wojciech Duda:

Why are other districts fully open ours are not at all? Do you understand that kids from Worth schools will be behind? Do you care about mental health of our kid? They are frustrated with ELearning! If you don't know when kids will be able to be back to school why are some teachers saying that remote will be till June?

Board Member thanked parents for their e-mails and comments and stated there will receive a response. Dr. Fleming commented that many of those questions will be answered this Friday, January 15 when he sends out the parent letter.

5. CLOSED SESSION

A. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees and security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Drew Sernus.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

B. RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education upon completion of it's discussions in closed session reconvene in public session."

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Meghan Sisk.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Action (Consent): A. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

Action (Consent): B. BOARD BILLS PAYABLE

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Accounts Payable for \$581,170.47 (EDUCATIONAL); \$331,493.47 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); and \$8,805.57 (TRANSPORTATION) for a total of \$921,469.51."

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

Action (Consent): C. PAYROLL SUMMARY

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Payroll Summary for the Education Fund in the amount of \$897,565.31, the Building Fund in the amount of \$55,879.41, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of \$69,831.43."

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

Action (Consent): D. EMPLOYMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF - ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - MELISSA WILLS - EFFECTIVE 2021-2022

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

Action (Consent): E. EMPLOYMENT OF CERTIFIED STAFF - KRISTOPHER MARTIN - PT ART TEACHER - WW/WE - EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2021

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

Action (Consent): F. EMPLOYMENT OF CERTIFIED STAFF - DARIELA SOSA - 7TH GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - WJH - EFFECTIVE JANUARY 4, 2021

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as listed below in 6b - 6f."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

7. MOTIONS

Action: A. REGULAR BOARD MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the December 9, 2020 Board of Education meeting."

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Meghan Sisk.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

Action: B. CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the December 9, 2020 Board of Education closed session minutes."

Motion by Vince Flores, second by Stephanie Peltzer.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

8. BOARD DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

Board Member gave an update regarding the virtual convention. ChromeBook and Remote Learning: Cicero SD #99: their entire school district is 100% Chromebook and came into a partnership with T-Mobile. T-Mobile offered a grant and gave out hotspots to students. They additionally offered classes to get them certified. SD #21 Strategic Plan: They talked about their strategic plan and that each school should have one in place.

Dr. Fleming stated that is a good idea and appreciated the feedback.

Board Member asked for clarification regarding Encore teachers and if they are still following the same format with class time and instruction. Dr. Zampillo stated that teachers are still meeting with students every Wednesday as well as assigning two assignments a week. P.E. is taking place on Wednesday as well.

Board Member thanked Cindy Dykas and everyone involved with the lunch and breakfast distribution. This program does not take place in every district even when there is a need and it's very appreciated. Mrs. Dykas stated that we are up to 460. Board Member asked if everyone comes out to pick up their meals or do we have many leftover. Mrs. Dykas stated that we have been running out and we've been slowly increasing our weekly amounts so that we don't have any excess. If we do have any excess, one of our lunch Moms takes them over to St. Marks shelter. The gallon milk has an extended lead time so we can use them the following week since they don't expire quickly. The once a week pick-up time seems to be working out very well during remote learning.

9. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND REQUESTS

Board Member asked for clarification regarding the 3-D video and if that will be posted. Dr. Fleming stated that DLA is finalizing some finishing touches and will be coming out very soon.

Board Member commented that teachers have done exceptionally well during this remote learning time. They are doing a great job and should be commended.

10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS

Jill Moore read the parent comment from Kasia Sroka:

This is our first and last year in Worth school district . You don't do anything for our kids . They will be so behind. The rating for elementary school is 4/10 - why I am not surprised.

Board Member commented that she appreciates every administrator, every teacher, our superintendent, board members and custodial staff in our district. We are an amazing group of people and so is this town. I chose to move back to Worth and raise my kids here and I've got nothing but love for Worth. I truly wanted to end this meeting on a positive note.

11. CLOSED SESSION

A. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees and security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property."

Motion by Vince Flores, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

B. RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education upon completion of it's discussions in closed session reconvene in public session at 9:30 p.m."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Stephanie Peltzer

12. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 p.m."

Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,

2/3/2021

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Meghan Sisk
Secretary, Board of Education



Drew Sernus
President, Board of Education