

**Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Non-Voting Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held virtually via ZOOM on Wednesday, December 9, 2020.**

- I. Call to Order: Mrs. Fischer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:20 p.m.**  
The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020. This meeting is being held to go over the agenda for the regular monthly Board Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. virtually.
- II. Flag Salute-Please rise: Mrs. Fischer asked all present to rise for the flag salute.**
- III. Notice. Mrs. Fischer read the following:** This meeting is being recorded for District purposes. It is or may be published in part or in its entirety on the District’s website without the express permission of meeting participants.
- IV. Roll Call**  
Mrs. Cathy Fischer, President  
Mr. Scott Angus, Vice President  
Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe, Treasurer  
Mr. Chuck Campalong  
Mrs. Kathleen Curtis  
Mrs. Denise Manganello  
Mr. William Metz  
Ms. Valerie Pedigo  
Ms. Valerie Young

Others President  
 Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent  
 Mr. Barry J. King, Assistant to the Superintendent  
 Mr. Keith Bielby, Director of Business and Operations  
 Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor  
 Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

- V. Correspondence**
- VI. Student/Teacher Recognition**
- VII. Presentations**

**Dr. Pasquerilla - Update on Re-Opening Committee**

**VIII. Public Comment (Regarding Agenda Items Only).**  
 In light of the state declared disaster emergency, the Board has adopted modified public meeting and public comment processes, consistent with the Sunshine Law. These modified rules have been published in a newspaper of general circulation and on the District’s website. Public comment will only be taken in written formats via email in advance of the meeting. Public comments received in advance will be circulated to the Board. All public comments regarding agenda items will be read during the meeting. All other comments will be summarized during the meeting. All comments must include the resident/property owner’s name and address.

\*See Attachment

## **IX. Committee Reports**

### **Education and Technology**

**Mrs. Manganello**

### **Finance and Budget**

**Ms. Pedigo**

#### 1. School District Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly school district bills in the amount of \$630,640.64 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$1,329,690.31 be paid.

#### 2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria bills in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ and the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$46,815.96 be paid.

#### 3. Grant Acceptance

It is recommended to accept the Safe Schools Targeted Two Year School Resource Officer Grant in the amount of \$60,000.00 that will be used to offset the cost of the School Resource Officer at the Middle School. Mr. Barry King and Mrs. Rebecca DeMase were instrumental in securing this grant.

#### 4. Grant Acceptance

It is recommended to accept the Safe Schools Initiative Competitive Targeted Equipment Grant in the amount of \$24,960.00 to be used to purchase and install cameras at Highland Elementary School. Mrs. Lori Heim was instrumental in securing this grant.

#### 5. Repository

It is recommended the Board approve the Sale of Property from the Beaver County Repository of Unsold Property for the following properties:

- a) Lot Anthony Wayne Drive, Harmony Twp., PA Tax Parcel 64-010-0620.000, for the bid amount of \$1,808.00 to Susan Palladino.
- a) Lot Anthony Wayne Drive, Harmony Twp. PA Tax Parcel 64-010-0621.000, for the bid amount of \$1,808.00 to Susan Palladino.
- b) Lot Anthony Wayne Drive, Harmony Twp. PA Tax Parcel 64-010-0623.000, for the bid amount of \$1,808.00 to Susan Palladino.

Dr. Pasquerilla thank Mr. King, Mrs. DeMase, and Mrs. Heim for securing the Grants.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

**Mr. Angus**

### **Athletics**

**Mr. Campalong**

There was a discussion the reopening of athletics. Mrs. Addie Lucatorto gave an update on the Athletic Directors meeting. Mr. Campalong moved to add the reopening of athletics to the December 16<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

**Public Relations****Mr. Metz****Steering and Rules****Mrs. Kehoe**1. **Policy 247 – Hazing – First Reading**

It is recommended, as a first reading, to update School Board Policy 247 – *Hazing*, to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing.

2. **Policy 249 – Bullying/Cyberbullying – First Reading**

It is recommended, as a first reading, to update School Board Policy 249 – *Bullying/Cyberbullying* – to provide a safe, positive learning environment for district students.

3. **Policy 318 – Attendance and Tardiness – First Reading**

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 318 – *Attendance and Tardiness* – to establish processes for staff to report unexpected absences, which shall be addressed in accordance with Board Policy and an applicable individual contract, collective agreement or Board resolution.

4. **Policy 332 – Working Periods – First Reading**

It is recommended, as a first reading, to adopt School Board Policy 332 – *Working Periods* – to make modifications to the school calendar and the school schedule as necessary to meet the instructional and health and safety needs of students and staff.

5. **Policy 335 – Family and Medical Leave – First Reading**

It is recommended, as a first reading, to adopt School Board Policy 335 - *Family and Medical Leave* – to provide eligible administrative, professional and support employees with unpaid leaves of absence in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

6. **Policy 907 – School Visitors – First Reading**

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 907 – *School Visitors* - to ensure order in the schools and to protect students and employees.

**Legislative****Ms. Young****Salary Schedule and Labor Relations****Mrs. Curtis****X. Sunshine Law**

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 to discuss:

- Personnel matter(s)
- Matters subject to attorney client privilege and other confidentiality laws

**XI. Motion to Adjourn**

At 7:58 p.m. Mr. Angus moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Young. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. June Mueller  
Board Secretary

## \*ATTACHMENT

Justin Buchanan  
Economy Borough

A summary of Mr. Buchanan public comment

- Reaching out to express his concerns over the decision to cancel winter sports.
- Concerned about the wellbeing and mental state of kids that play these sports
- Was advised that only Ambridge, Beaver and Hopewell were considering the cancellation of their winter sports.
- Feels that kids can play safe without an audience
- Feels if indoor fall sports were played successfully the same procedures and safety protocols can be applied to winter sports

Good Afternoon Ambridge School Board,

> Reaching out to express my concern over the pending decision to cancel winter sports for the Ambridge district. I'm concerned for the well being and mental state of the kids that play these sports especially those kids that have been working hard thru quarantine to stay in shape. Sports are an escape for these kids. An escape they need now more than ever. For some kids sports are the only motivation to keep their grade up.

> I was advised that only Ambridge, Beaver, and Hopewell are considering the cancellation of their winter sports seasons. Given that this is currently a school decision as a parent I would like you all to consider letting these kids play.

> I feel that the kids can play safely without an audience. My son played AAU basketball all fall with no issues. Statistics have proven that the spread of covid between kids under the age of 18 is very minimal. Most reported cases in the district have been with in the district staff.

> Finally, Indoor Fall sports were played successfully without issue, I feel those same procedures and safety protocols can be applied to winter sports

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Eric Astorino  
Ambridge

To Summarize Mr. Astorino's comment, here are some of the points made

- These last few weeks have been extremely tough on some of our boys. By not having the stability of daily basketball practice has caused situations in some of their homes to be more difficult during this time.
- While I understood the reasoning for the postponement of winter sports, I feel our team needs to be back together on the court. As the COVID numbers continue to fluctuate, student-athletes continue to be one of the least likely groups to contract the virus.
- Also, if we continue with the postponement of our season, two of our seniors have the chance to miss out on a variety of college opportunities.
- As for the current season, our first opportunity to play a game will be after Christmas. We need 15 practices before the possibility of a "real game" as per the WPIAL.
- In our 4A Section of eight teams, only Ambridge and have winter athletics shut-down.
- We had 60 open gym/practices and not one case of COVID.

As you meet this week to discuss winter sports I would like to provide some information as a coach, parent, community member, and former Ambridge HS Basketball player. These last few weeks have been extremely tough on some of our boys. By not having the stability of daily basketball practice has caused situations in some of their homes to be more difficult during this time. As coaches, we have integrated a mindset within our boys that our gym is a safe place and we are all a family inside those doors. Personally, I have missed the time spent with our players, many of whom I have known since their elementary days. The positive relationships we have established together have been shown by constant messages inquiring when our gym will be open for practice.

While I understood the reasoning for the postponement of winter sports, I feel our team needs to be back together on the court. As the COVID numbers continue to fluctuate, student-athletes continue to be one of the least likely groups to contract the virus. The concern for our teachers, staff, and community is one-hundred percent warranted, but as some parents grow increasingly upset with their children not being in the school is a cause for concern as the head coach of the high school basketball team.

As a resident of the school district, I have had conversations with some of these parents who ask me, "How can you practice if the school is on remote learning?" My answer is quite simple, you are comparing apples and oranges. I agree that education is more important than sports, but the students are still getting an education, just not the way some people want at this time. Our boys and other winter sports teams are not getting their opportunity to participate in something they care about, so education is still functioning making it the number one priority, not sports. When I mentioned these things to the disgruntled parents they really had no comment. Ambridge has its own Cyber program, even before COVID, so the point of attending a brick and mortar school to play sports makes no sense because those students have always been allowed to participate in athletics and school activities.

Also, if we continue with the postponement of our season, two of our seniors have the chance to miss out on a variety of college opportunities. Seniors Enire Bowens and Vozzy Steals are currently being recruited by division 2, division 3, NAIA, USCAA, and JUCO institutions. While junior D'Saun Harmon and sophomore Damon Astorino have been on the radar of colleges as well, with a few other underclassmen garnering interest recently. As a high school coach, I have developed quality relationships with many college coaches who are interested in HUDL video from our boys this season.

As for the current season, our first opportunity to play a game will be after Christmas. We need 15 practices before the possibility of a "real game" as per the WPIAL. If another postponement were to occur, our season would be in jeopardy. In our 4A Section of eight teams, only Ambridge and Hopewell (they open back up this week) have winter athletics shut-down. Lincoln Park, Quaker Valley, Blackhawk, Montour, Central Valley, and Beaver are practicing/scrimmaging and looking to begin games while having remote learning as well. Again, I am not making light of the current COVID situation that has plagued our county and surrounding counties, but our section teams are spread out throughout Beaver/Allegheny county and are making the process work. All of our coaches in the section have kept in touch with each other and understand this is a crazy time, but all our kids need the opportunity to be active and compete against one another safely.

We had 60 open gym/practices and not one case of COVID. Essentially we are in our own "bubble" at the Fieldhouse, which makes it more difficult for our kids to be infected with the illness. Our coaching staff and players have followed every protocol and will look to continue to be vigilant if given the opportunity to open back up. In addition to the custodial staff cleaning, we as a team make sure we clean, sanitize, and empty garbage as necessary to create a safe and healthy environment.

All of us have been affected in some fashion by this horrible virus. It has taken lives, instilled fear within our country, and caused panic throughout the world. There are hundreds of diseases in the world and you never know when you may be infected with one of them, but if we go through life scared and intimidated it weakens not only your immune system but all of us as individuals. It might be the competitor in me, but in my opinion, I say fight this virus by following proper guidelines and continuing to let our kids/youth enjoy a part of their teenage and childhood years.

How many of you in the last two months have went to work, eaten in a restaurant or gotten take out, went grocery shopping, attended an event, went to an appointment of some kind, visited a friend/relative, etc? I certainly have...so if we as adults who have a higher chance of getting COVID are doing these things how come our kids (the least likely group to get COVID) can't play a sport for a few months with precautions and guidelines?