

Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Non-Voting Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held virtually via ZOOM on Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

- I. Call to Order: Mrs. Fischer called the meeting to order at approximately 8:26 p.m.**
The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, February 10, 2021. This meeting is being held to go over the agenda for the regular monthly Board Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. virtually.
- II. Flag Salute-Please rise: Mrs. Fischer asked all present to rise**
- 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
Mrs. Kathleen Curtis
Mrs. Denise Manganello
Mr. William Metz
Ms. Valerie Pedigo
- Others Present
Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent
Mr. Barry J. King, Assistant to the Superintendent
Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor
Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary
- V. Correspondence**
*** See Attached**
- VI. Student/Teacher Recognition**
- VII. Presentations**
- 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.

IX. Committee Reports**Education and Technology****Mrs. Manganello**1. 2021-2022 Proposed School Calendar

It is recommended the Proposed 2021-2022 School Year Calendar be approved, as presented.

2. Foster Care Youth Transportation MOU

It is recommended to hereby approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ambridge Area School District and the Beaver County Children and Youth Services to establish transportation procedures to ensure the educational stability of Foster Care Youth, as presented.

3. Foster Care Liaison

It is recommended to approve Mrs. Jo Ann Hoover, as the Foster Care Liaison for the Ambridge Area School District.

4. CCBC Community College of Beaver County Dual Enrollment/High School Academies Agreement

It is recommended to retroactively approve a Dual Enrollment/High School Academies Agreement between the Ambridge Area School District and The Community College of Beaver County. The term of this agreement is from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2023. This program will allow students to concurrently enroll in an Associate degree, Certificate or diploma programs, while completing their high school requirements, as presented.

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 \$967,714.81 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$1,280,478.32 be paid.

2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria bills in the amount of \$35,272.86 and the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$41,431.94 be paid.

3. Adoption of the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget

It is recommended that the Board adopt the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget in the amount of \$52,177,846.00, as presented, and file notice of the same with the Pennsylvania Department of Education on form PDE 2028 or other as required by Act 1, including applications for applicable Act 1 exceptions.

4. Tax Exoneration

It is recommended to approve the requested tax exoneration for Parcel 12-006-0101.012-01-1, real estate owned by Beaver County, in the amount of \$1,604.78 for tax years 2016, 2017 and 2018, as requested by the Beaver County Law Department dated January 20, 2021.

Buildings and Grounds**Mr. Angus****Athletics****Mr. Campalong****Discussion Point**

Presentations – Mrs. Addie Lucatorto

- WPIAL Playoffs – No masking required
- WPIAL Basketball Tournament

Public Relations**Mr. Metz****Steering and Rules****Mrs. Kehoe**1. Policy 103 – Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 103 - *Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students*, to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination.

2. Policy 113.1 – Discipline of Students with Disabilities – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 113.1– *Discipline of Students with Disabilities*, to develop and implement Positive Behavior Support Plans and programs for students with disabilities who require specific interventions to address behaviors that interfere with learning.

3. Policy 113.2 – Behavior Support – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading to revise School Board Policy 113.2 – *Behavior Support*, to ensure students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment in accordance with their Individualized Education Program.

4. Policy 113.4 – Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading to adopt School Board Policy 113.4 – *Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information*, to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in the education records of students with disabilities.

5. Policy 122 – Extracurricular Activities – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 122 - *Extracurricular Activities*, to recognize the educational values inherent in student participation in extracurricular activities and supports the concept of student organizations.

6. Policy 123 – Interscholastic Athletics – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 123 - *Interscholastic Athletics*, to recognize the value of a program of interscholastic athletics as an integral part of the total school experience for all district students.

7. Policy 123.2 – Sudden Cardiac Arrest – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to revise School Board Policy 123.2 - *Sudden Cardiac Arrest*, to ensure the safety of students participating in the district’s athletic program.

8. Policy 218.3

It is recommend to renumber Policy 218.3 – *Use of Metal Detectors* to Policy 709.1, to line up with the numbering of PSBA. Policy 218.3 will now become *Discipline of Student Convicted/Adjudicated of Sexual Assault*.

9. Policy 218.3 – Discipline of Student Convicted/Adjudicated of Sexual Assault – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to adopt School Board Policy 218.2 - *Discipline of Student Convicted/Adjudicated of Sexual Assault*, to recognize the importance of a safe school environment for students who are victims of sexual assault.

10. Policy 252 – Dating Violence – First Reading

It is recommended, as a first reading, to adopt School Board Policy 252 – *Dating Violence*, to maintain a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from dating violence.

Legislative

Ms. Young

Salary, Schedule and Labor Relations

Mrs. Curtis

X. Sunshine Law: Mrs. Mueller read the following:

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 to discuss:

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

XI. Motion to Adjourn

At 8:45 p.m. Mr. Angus moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Curtis. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. June Mueller
Board Secretary

ATTACHMENT

Shannon Simms, Harmony Twp.

Dear School Board Members,

I would like to express my concerns and formally request that our district return to in person instruction for every child that would like to attend.

It is my understanding that nearly every single district surrounding Ambridge is currently providing in person instruction to some degree. Attached is information obtained from many of the district websites to support my claim.

Additionally according to the attached NPR article dated January 26, 2021 our children are suffering an emotional, social and academic toll. While little evidence of schools contributing to significant spread of the virus. There are many articles and studies to support this position this is just one.

Personally my 9th grade child has checked out of the educational process. He does not do well in a virtual setting and needs to be back to in person instruction. He has always been a good student with great grades. This year he has his first ever D letter grade on his report card. He cannot muster the discipline required to wake up at 730 and login to first period wood shop and do 3-5 worksheets daily about wood and tools. My job is to raise my child to think objectively and become a responsible adult. This experience has brought out the worst in him and myself. Our daily battles over sitting at the kitchen table and logging into each class to take attendance and be assigned busy work is not the quality of education he deserves.

My 11th grader is facing the most important academic year of his schooling this year. He is in several AP CLASSES, physics without a lab and athletic conditioning “virtually” it’s almost comedic if it weren’t so tragic as to the reality of the situation.

There are many teachers that have provided outstanding instruction given the circumstances. Many have failed to rise to the challenge. In my opinion most are doing their best in this new world of learning. It is unfair to expect a gym teacher to teach phys Ed, a physics teacher to teach without a lab, a AP teacher to engage on complex materials virtually. Beyond this the social and emotional development and engagement that occurs in a classroom cannot be duplicated virtually.

I am pleading with each and every one of you to correct this situation. Bring our children back to school. Please do not allow this to become our new normal. For those who have concerns and don’t want in person they could remain virtual. Why should the folks who need in person instruction be denied?

For those who argue the risk posed to teachers please consider that the rest of the world is carrying on. Grocery store workers, trash collectors, nurses, delivery drivers all show up everyday to do their part and we should expect nothing less from our educators.

Beyond all of this we now face a tax hike? We built new schools to have them sit empty?

Our children deserve better and we must do better.

Stacey Chalupiak, Economy Boro

Dear Members of the school board,

I am writing this email to let you know I am fed up with not getting any answers. I am fed up with not knowing what the plan is for 6-12th grade to return to classes. It is no longer acceptable when many of neighboring schools have returned and have been in class for quite some time. I have a friend whose kids go to West Allegheny, and they have been in school all year!

Online schooling is not working. So many kids are falling behind, and you are failing them!! I watched the last 2 school board meetings, and all those emails that you read aloud from all those concerned parents. Basically at the end you answered NOTHING!! You kept on saying you were following guidelines, so you really didn't care what anyone had to say, you just kept on defending your point!

I know that this has been a very hard year to navigate, and by no means do I think your job is an easy one, but it is time to step up and move on. Kids want to go back to school, they are not afraid to be back. I don't understand for the life of me, how we can have school sports, and not be in class!! This is something other parents have stressed. I think we deserve an answer!! We cannot go on like this, it's not healthy or wise.

I mean the last time I checked we pay some of the highest taxes in the county, and you still want more!! With no one in the buildings, and no buses running, we should have a surplus of money. Our kids haven't even been in the building full time for almost a year!! How convenient that Beaver Co. is getting reassessed so you can take even more from us!!

If teachers are afraid to go back, then find teachers that want to work. I know there are people out there that would gladly work!! Everyone else has had to keep on working to make a paycheck so they could live. What about the guy working down at Sheetz for \$13 an hour for instance, he probably comes in contact with more people than a school teacher in a day. Is his life worth less? Is he immune from fear? NO, but our society won't coddle him! I could say so much more.

Get our kids back in school!! FIVE DAYS A WEEK! You are the ones holding us back. You make the decisions. If you are too afraid to do your job, then we will find someone else. Someone who will work for us, because at the end of the day, you work for us!!

Thank you,

Stacey Chalupiak

Nicole Pucci, Economy Boro

Good evening,

Is there a planned return date for the middle and high school students? I really feel that the option to at least return to hybrid should be given to these students. It's very difficult for some of the academically as well as

mentally being remote for so long. I hope the board is considering sending them back to school this month as many other districts in our immediate area already have.

Meghan Irlbeck, Baden

What is the plan for returning to in-person instruction for students that are not currently in the group that are attending in person?

Brandy Kumer, Ambridge

To the members of the Ambridge Area School Board:

Good afternoon, I am writing in regards to opening back up the Ambridge Area school district. In March 2020, our country was plagued with Covid-19. No one knew what chaos that Covid-19 would cause and how it would literally turn our country upside down. The regulations changed one day to the next. Businesses closed, schools shut down, and we found ourselves quarantining to our home. What remained consistent, even up to this day is the long-term effect our children are facing with a lack of education, socialization, and what the long-term effects on our children's mental health will be. With this being said, I would like to know how the Ambridge Area School District is going to help support these serious needs of our children. Our children should be the first priority, in which you should all recognize the URGENT need of opening back our school to all grades. I have a daughter currently in high school, who is struggling in general with receiving an education. I will walk into the room and she will be signed on and at times there is no teacher present for the class. She will have teachers that take attendance and then mute for the class period, or instruct the class to complete their on-line packets. One teacher, stopped class in the middle of teaching, when the teachers where home, to take care of their own children. **IS THIS WHAT MY SCHOOL TAXES ARE PAYING FOR? IS THIS REALLY AN EDUCATION!** Over 75% of Beaver County schools have opened back up even for 2 days a week, Rochester is back to 5 days a week full time. How is Ambridge not opened back up for middle school and high school? What was the reasoning behind not opening up all the schools in the Ambridge School District? Then on top of this, you want to raise our taxes? Can I just say both my husband and I work full time jobs, and my husband works a second part time job and the additional expenses that we have concurred over the schools being hybrid and then closed down are burdensome. I have had to increase my internet capabilities 3 times since March 2020 and my bill is now currently doubled. And again, I ask you are raising school taxes why? Was the school district not given financial aid during COVID-19 just like every other school and business in the area? I ask, can you let the parents of Ambridge know where that money went for our children and their education. The computers that were given to our children work 50% of the time, don't hold a battery charge, and will probably need replaced by next year. If the funds were given to help support the children to return to school why are the middle school and high school not back in session. **WHERE DID THAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT GO!!!** Let the parents have a choice on what they feel is best for their child. I will gladly sign a waiver for both of my kids to return 5 days a week. We can not run and hide from COVID-19. As a healthcare worker I have been working on the frontlines since the beginning. It will be here for years to come. However, the lack of education that my child is receiving is going to affect her in the years to follow, well into her college career. The mental health issues of these children dealing with isolation, depression, anxiety, etc. will be ongoing. Are you ready to support these mental health issues in the years to come? What are you the Ambridge Area School District going to do to help support these children? I ask all of you sitting on the school board with children, do they go to Ambridge? Or are they in another school district or private school? Would you want this for your children? Open back up all the schools. Let our children have a small sense of a new

normalcy while using the proper guidelines set by the state. I can tell the teachers and staff at Economy have been wonderful. I wish I could say the same about the high school. I am even now looking at sending my daughter else where to get the education not only she needs but also deserves. I have tried to be supportive and these changes emerge as we all work through Covid-19. I am now at the point of no longer being able to sit back and watch this continued downward spiral. Not for my children and I would hope you all would feel the same. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Brandy Kumer

Denise Green, Economy

my son, Spencer Green, is a senior this year. He has just about "checked out". He has lost motivation, he no longer feels engaged, and his grades are poor. He is truly struggling and appears to be depressed. These kids need to be in school 5 days a week - not just for education purposes, but also for physical activity, social connection, and an environment with peers. Other schools in the area are at 5 days and have had no issues, or very few issues. It is time to get back to some normalcy. Viruses have been around forever, and this virus does not severely affect kids like adults with comorbidities. This is not LIFE! We need to be living it and not living in fear! Please seriously consider getting them back into the classroom ASAP. More than likely some parents will still not want their kids in school 5 days. That is fine. If there are parents and kids that prefer virtual learning, and they are doing well, let them stay home. The other kids that want to be back in the classroom should be able to do so. Take a survey, and/or get a count of how many want 5 days in person again. Make this fair. The board should be working for the parents and kids.

Thank you
