

11/4/20 - Workshop Business Meeting

Present - Patrick D. McCabe, Roxanne Rebmann, Philip Kenline, James Grant, Jody Brege, Erik Polkowski, Deborah Forrestel, Heather Cayea

Jim - Call meeting to order. Pledge to the Flag. Item #2 Hearing of Individuals and Delegations. Mrs. Rebmann, do we have any emailed requests?

Roxanne - No, we do not.

Jim - Alright. Item #3 Committee Reports. Rec Board?

Debbie - Nothing to report at this time.

Jim - Ok. Delegate, nothing to report. Our next meeting is January, I believe. Legislative?

Erik - Legislative met on the 15th. The biggest thing that is kind of taking place out of it was in regards to trying to push to advocate for federal stimulus. The biggest thing with that though is they figured with the election coming up and happening that nothing is gonna be done until after the fact anyway, but to try and push either your state assembly and senators to push federal congressmen and senators to push for some sort of package and have schools also indicate that COVID-19 relief would be needed. They did have a round table. A lot of that had to do with most of the districts commenting on their current re-entry plans are and how things are progressing. Schools like West Seneca are closed, now have started to bring students on. Just kind of seeing where everybody stood in the same sort of roll out of school and bring in there. Two things just to tie into that. In regards to our representation, for assembly Norris and Hawley were our current assemblymen representing our district. They were both reelected. In the case of Ortt is our senator from the Niagara Region. He was unopposed, so reelected. Ranzenhofer had stepped down and Ed Rath was successful in his bid. So that's where that is. The one other point is the 63rd District for the Senate, while it's not our representation, it is Tim Kennedy, who I believe is the head of education and he is from Buffalo. I know when we were there in Albany, we did meet in his office. He was reelected as well. It's just nice to know that we have from the Erie County Association of School Boards, have relied heavily on trying to contact Kennedy because his party is in control of that house, so in the education thing he's been very good in regards to advocating. We like to at least keep him on board and touch base on a regular basis. The last thing was is next Thursday they have the Albany Update in the evening. The legislative breakfast is next Saturday. Currently, I'm signed up for that. Depending on where field hockey falls.

Jody - It's supposed to be Thursday and Saturday of next week.

Erik - I know. I'm signed up for the breakfast. We're talking about that Heather could go Saturday in my place if that's the case. She said as long as it's not soccer, and soccer might be TBA as well. So we'll try to figure it out. We do have one spot. Either one of us. We'll send out a notification if somebody else can represent. It's always a good thing. You get a meal and you end up meeting with a couple of legislatures. It's nice from a standpoint of meeting other districts and talking about what's going on. It's a nice way to mingle.

Jim - Mr. McCabe and I are going to the Albany update next Thursday. Budget and Finance?

Phil - Meeting was the 8th. We are in the process of looking at the formula that they use to compute the fees to join the School Board Association. It's been about 15 years since the formula that they currently use was developed. They haven't actually used that formula for the past 5 or 6 years. We're looking at taking a look at it. Based on our size and our operating budget, which is currently what they base the fee structure on, we would fall on the lower half in the districts in terms of fees. We're still trying to set up the sub-committee to sit down and take a look at that. No dates have been set for that, but the plan is whatever formula we are going to use we'll have a respective budget in December

with a timeframe to go forward to the Executive Committee in either early or mid-February for the School Board Association. We don't anticipate any rise or big changes in the fee structure. Given what's going on with holding funds, that was one of the big issues we talked about that night. We can't come out and say we're going to restructure, we're gonna get a 10% hit and we end up losing 20% of our budget. They are very sensitive to the budget issues. We'll keep you posted.

Jim - Alright. Thank you. Native American Committee?

Debbie - We had a meeting just a couple of hours ago. The biggest thing was Jodi and Anto have done an excellent job and Patrick will relate to that I'm sure. They reached out to many of the families and talked about the challenges. 120 kids are coming back. That's amazing. I came in on the end of that because of work. The things that they found hard was the remote and the working families because a lot of the working families are going back to work. Also, not just in Native, but it's hard for some parents to figure out how to find out what their kids are really doing and are really handing in. Those are some of the challenges, but I think those are all the way around the board here. They had done a really good job in bringing 120 kids back. We talked about the possibility, are we ready to let them go remote all the way should we be closed? Each one of the elementary, middle school, and high school, a couple surveys are still out there with a couple of them, but they're gonna send out a notice ahead of time to let the parents know that kind of information. Also, the good thing is they were getting the Wi-Fis out there for all the kids on the Reservation because they didn't have access to Wi-Fi to help them with the virtual learning. They really did a good job getting the kiddos what they needed. I was really pleased. That was it.

Jim - Thank you. Mr. McCabe, Superintendent's Report?

Pat - Sure. A few things to share this evening. I just want to congratulate again all the athletic teams had an incredibly successful fall season. I sent a letter out to the community and was able to include a little something on each team. I know it wasn't too long ago we were contemplating whether or not we could even do this from a state, a regional, and obviously a local and district level. I'm so pleased it's November and we were able to have a season to have the kids participate. The other thing I just want to state for the record is how proud I was of our student athletes and their parents and the fans. I wasn't able to get to athletic competitions, quite frankly, but the reports I received after every single one was no issues with social distancing, great fan participation, enjoyment of our student athletes, not just from Akron but all the teams across all the sports throughout the league. Terrific. Winter sports are scheduled to begin on November 30, 2020. For us here at Akron, that includes swimming, wrestling, basketball, and cheerleading. We need to break that down a little bit. Swimming is considered a low-risk sport and will proceed as far as we know. However, the league is looking at essentially doing virtual meets because of the capacity, the number of kids with social distancing that you can have in the pool. That might look like our kids swimming in our pool while virtually another school district and their kids are swimming in their pool, and there's a timer and it's live yet virtual.

Jody - How is Alden doing it?

Erik - How is Alden doing it? Currently, they've had two meets because I work the time clock. They've had two meets and both of the meets they had no fans, but they had both schools. But you have to keep in mind that it's only the girls' season right now. It's probably half the team that we would be looking at for N-O because it's boys and girls combined. For boys it's a winter sport. Girls is actually a fall sport, but because the way our N-O is operated and number, we end up running them consecutively in the same meet. I know there was some discussion in regards to maybe switching the meets around, in some way breaking them up so boys and girls might be separate. There are a lot of variations that have been done.

Pat - The ADs are all working on that. A lot of it depends on student participation and the number of student-athletes per swim team, boys and girls.

Erik - Right.

Pat - They're examining all of that.

Erik - I know that the other aspect there with swim too is that the capacities of the pools vary widely. Our pool has 8 lanes and has quite a capacity. Newfane does. Barker is very tight. Albion has 5 lanes and is very tight. There's going to be a lot of variables on there they're going to have to go through and do. Likewise, the other thing too that we saw with swim as well was in one meet they ran it the same way where it was alternating swimmers. This last meet they swam one school on one half of the pool, one school on the other half of the pool, and the teams kept apart. Used masked until they actually got to the block to swim. It works well, there's a lot of areas there.

Jody - I just think it would be silly for our kids to be swimming in our pool and Newfane in their pool. How will the kids, how do you push when you don't know what your competitors are doing?

Erik - That's what this last one was. Originally, it was supposed to be a virtual meet where they were doing it. The one thing that would be good in regards to, I know that Hurdle is something that we're supposed to be setting up in regards to live streaming. I know some of the other schools that was the thing because you don't have the capacity to have spectators, especially for swimming or if you're going to get into some of these interior sports. Whether there's some sort of a live streaming that's available, whether it be through Zoom or WebEx or Facebook or whatever else, it's something that they're setting up. That has to be taken into account and if there's something we can do to help that out, that's great.

Pat - We purchased it. We purchased it through a cross-contract because Erie 1 BOCES was not supporting it, so we purchased it through Niagara-Orleans BOCES. I don't know that we have the equipment in yet or installed yet, but we're intending to use it for all of our sports.

Erik - I know that a question was brought up by a parent to me, and I had spoken I think with JJ and it was in the process. It was left with the technology department to finish because the same system was to be utilized on the exterior fields as well. It's all sports.

Pat - In regards to our other sports, wrestling, basketball, and cheerleading. Those are all considered high-risk and at this point we are awaiting guidance from the governor to determine whether or not student athletes will be allowed to compete in those sports. We do know those sports can take place in regards to the student athletes engaging in practicing and conditioning. My thought is keeping the kids engaged is important. There's lots of things that you can do even inner squad, particularly with basketball and even with cheer. The conditioning for the wrestling, obviously, would be a part of that. I talked to someone from section, from ECIC today and someone from Section 6 today to see if they had any updates. They're all still waiting for a determination on that. Likewise, there's no information on spectators yet from the governor's office. Taking a few brief additional comments to what Mrs. Forrestel already shared in regards to preparations to the second marking period. We had sent out a survey to families soliciting input, to see if they would be interested and willing to send their kids back to us. Mrs. Forrestel eluded to the fact that our Native American counselors made personal phone calls and communications and approximately 120. The number I reported to the board more recently was around 80 and it just keeps growing. There were 4 more contacts today. Right now it's looking like 29 at the high school, 28 at the middle, and 43 at the elementary. In addition to that, our students with disabilities who receive special education services, were in a hybrid model two days a week are now going four days a week. The governor and SED have been very clear that we have to maximize services to kids with disabilities. I think the biggest thing that I'd like to add beyond the numbers is how pleased we are to have the kids back in the classroom and we have spent a great deal of time, additional time, ensuring we have the proper social distancing and arrangements to have them back in classrooms, buses, cafeterias. A lot of work had to be done, not just on the space within the classroom, but also on the bus. We're getting to that point, particularly in the high school and some middle school classes where we're at capacity. If more kids want to come back, we may need to significantly modify our schedule. I'm hoping that

we don't have to do that mid-marking period, but obviously, we want our kids back. We may not be able to do the current schedule that we have. A great deal more work would go into that in planning and preparation for our teachers because it would ultimately change their class loads. Just wanted to share that. Parent-teacher conferences are on November 24 and 25. On the evening of the 24th, during the day in the morning on the 25th. Again, in an effort to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, those conferences will be virtual, and the building teams are working on their plans for those now and anticipate sending out a letter to families. Probably a joint letter, so if you have children in multiple buildings, you're getting information all at once. I know we had an informal discussion about COVID-19 testing, so I will be brief. Just an update that Erie County is at 2.5% positivity rate. If that were to be sustained over a 7-day rolling average in a 10-day period, it's conceivable that there could be a zip code within Erie County that would be entering the yellow zone. I had not seen, because when the numbers are low they don't always report the zip code, I haven't seen any recent information to suggest 14001 is close, but we're monitoring that of course. Quite frankly, one of my big concerns is if we or a neighboring zip code is in orange and we become yellow, our capacity to do the 20% testing. It's a conversation that is being held within Erie County, knowing that there's a need for the County Department of Health to step in and support schools. I understand from a conversation today that the county is going to get a preparation checklist for schools on things that we can do in advance should the numbers rise to such a level that we need to employ a yellow zone testing protocol. We've been awaiting that for a little over a week now. Haven't received it, but we're hopeful to get it so we can start our planning. One of the things in that plan that I have been thinking about doing is again, yet another survey because you can't force a person to take a COVID-19 test, seeing students or staff members or families that want to get tested so we have a sense. You cannot test the same 20% week after week. You have to have somebody new every week. The last thing for the board this evening is there was a recent announcement that in order to further inform family members and community members of how schools are performing under the ESSA Legislation, that there had to be a parent dashboard on every district website. This is really not new information that you couldn't find in the NYS School Report Card, but it's going to be directly on the district website. Ours is already up and available to parents. I decided to wait, we have until the end of November to send a letter out to families. I decided to wait till a little bit closer to the parent-teacher conferences. If they're getting information on student performance, they can see just generally how the district is doing right around the time of their parent-teacher conferences. I thought if I put it out too early, they might forget. That will be forthcoming. That's it.

Jim - Thank you. Item #5 Personnel Instructional. Our recommendation action is to approve the MOU between the District and the Akron Faculty Association regarding the sharing of the Band Director duties for 2020-2021.

Phil - Moved.

Jody - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments on this MOU?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Item #6 Personnel Non-Instructional. Our recommended action is that the Akron Central School Board of Education upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, does hereby approve the following Non-Instructional items, consent #6A & 6B.

Heather - Moved.

Jody - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments on these items?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #7 Special Education. Our recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, does hereby approve Special Education items, consent #7A & 7B.

Erik - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments on Special Education?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #8 School Board Correspondence. As you already mentioned, Thursday, November 12, 2020 is the Albany Update with David Little at Erie 1 BOCES from 6:30-8:30pm. Mr. McCabe and I will attend. Saturday, November 14th, 2020 is the Legislative Breakfast at Erie 1 BOCES from 8-11:30am. We will have a representative yet to be determined to attend. Thursday, November 19, 2020 is the Legislative Team at Erie 1 BOCES from 6:30-8:30pm. Upcoming dates. Wednesday, November 11, 2020 is Veterans' Day. There is no school that day. Wednesday, November 18, 2020 is our Board of Education Regular Business Meeting held here at 7pm streamed via Zoom for the public. Item #10 Hearing of Individuals and Delegations of Non-Agenda Items. No one from the public is here, anything from the board members for additional discussion?

Jody - I would like to thank Pat for getting that Frontline Health app fixed and less complicated, so we have more parents using it on the days that kids aren't in school. A lot of redundancies in what it was asking. It was super quick on Monday when I was able to do it, so I appreciate that.

Pat - I appreciate you telling me because I had no idea.

Jim - Anything else from anyone? Item #11 is Executive Session. We do have a need to go in to Executive Session tonight for negotiations and employment history of a particular person.

Phil - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Alright. We are in Executive Session at 7:25pm. We do not anticipate conducting any business after we come out of Executive Session. I would like to thank the members of the public who joined us tonight for doing so. Thank you very much.