

JOHNSBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL
Monday, August 17 2020
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MINUTES

Board Members Present: Rachel DeGroat
Tara Sears
Tom Ordway
Erwin Morris

Board Members Absent: Sarah Williams
Jake Sauer-Jones
Mike Sharp

Call to Order: Rachel DeGroat opened the meeting at 7:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes: Tara Sears made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2020 Board of Education Meeting, seconded by Erwin Morris, and carried.

Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2020, Special Board of Education Meeting, seconded by Erwin Morris, and carried.

Financial Mike Markwica reported to the Board that several items have been purchased i.e. COVID things (masks, gowns, and art supplies)

some teachers may go over their budget due to safety precautions. Larry Ringer spoke on the Smart School Application. He stated this year was a quicker approval time frame than previously. Larry Ringer reported that we have applied for a grant to cover the loss of state aid (\$148,000). Erwin Morris asked if all classrooms were equipped with Smart-boards and Mike Markwica stated they were equipped with new Promethean Boards. Heather Flanagan stated that 5 areas are in need of portable Promethean Boards. She stated that although teachers were able to use Smartboards for live streaming, Promethean Boards are better for

this. Larry Ringer stated that we are still waiting on 49 Chromebooks, these will be equipped with the capability to write/draw on them so teachers can use them in lessons more effectively. Erwin Morris asked if we received a majority of our Chromebooks back from the end of the year. Heather Flanagan and Mike Markwica reported that all Chromebooks were returned quickly.

Motions & Discussion:

Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to accept Robert Gould as our Student Resource Officer (SRO), seconded by Tara Sears, with discussion. Erwin Morris asked if we were voting on the position or the individual. Mike Markwica stated we are voting on the person, the position was approved at a previous meeting. **MOTION** was carried.

Tara Sears made a **MOTION** to approve the Johnsburg Central School 2020-2021 Tax Warrant for \$6,110,229 seconded by Erwin Morris and carried.

Tara Sears made a **MOTION** to accept the Johnsburg Central School District Student Transportation Cooperative Agreement, seconded by Erwin Morris with discussion. Mike Markwica reported this form is just a formality. Every student is covered while riding our school bus but all the local schools sign this form. **MOTION** was carried.

DISCUSSION: Mike Markwica explained the Re-Opening Plan and discussed key points with transportation, student schedules, and meals. He asked the Board to ask questions.

Tara Sears asked if children were allowed to walk home independently and both Mike Markwica and Heather Flanagan stated they could as long as parents gave written or verbal permission to the office.

Tom Ordway asked if there would be Senior Parking and Heather Flanagan stated there would be as well as student parking in the phone company lot.

Rachael DeGroat asked how the two-parent meetings went and

both Mike Markwica and Heather Flanagan stated they went very well. Parents seem to appreciate the program even if they did not like all the parts. There were many questions that were asked and answered with about two-thirds of our parents attending one of the two options. One more meeting is scheduled in two weeks.

Rachel DeGroat suggested that we offer two more meetings on the same day as we have previously, one early and one in the pm. She also reported that people may not like the plan as it is written but they do accept it and understand it.

Mike Markwica explained the concern regarding the distance of students and student desks in a classroom. He explained that the Department of Health requires a measurement of 6 feet from center of desk to center of the desk but the State Education Department of Facilities state 6 feet is from desk edge to desk edge. As of right now we are following State Ed's ruling but if class sizes change we are able to reorganize to the Department of Health's requirements. Tara Sears asked about students and the Physical Education requirement. Heather Flanagan stated that students in grades 7-12 will meet one day a week but will also be responsible for personal fitness logs. Elementary students will have P.E. twice a week.

Tara Sears also asked about music and band classes. Mike Markwica reported that elementary students will have music class but they will not be singing and music teacher, Mrs. Ashe has created music electives for high school students. He also explained the BOCES student schedule. Mike Markwica reported that Mr. Garrett will offer small group lessons remotely.

Tom Ordway asked about "shop" class. Mike Markwica explained we did not receive any applications for the position so for the first semester at least, "shop" will not be offered. The administration will re-evaluate the situation closer to the second semester.

Erwin Morris asked if we set a time frame for distance learners to change their minds and become in-person learners. Heather Flanagan stated they have to commit to a five-week plan. Mike Markwica stated it is very easy for children who want to opt-out

of in-person learning to virtual learning but there are many factors to consider if a student wants to come back into the building. Erwin Morris asked about class length. Heather Flanagan stated that class periods will run thirty-five minutes. The schedule is made up of seven thirty-five minute classes and two thirty-minute remote classes in the afternoon per day.

Rachel DeGroat asked about ways we are planning to support our children emotionally. Mike Markwica stated that all students will need encouragement and staff will offer positive reinforcement. Heather Flanagan stated teachers were instructed to allow for social times and stretching/movement throughout the day.

Heather Flanagan did state that she will not be flexible with the new COVID rules that are set in place. The strict guidelines will be followed. The staff was instructed to show the importance of safety precautions.

Erwin Morris asked if there were guidelines from the Department of Health and Mrs. Flanagan stated that all the rules implemented are from the state not from our administration.

Erwin Morris stated that he liked the idea of the two remote classes from home and the scheduled overall, allowing students to share in the responsibility of learning.

Tom Ordway asked if the administration has found helpers for Fred Morse (bus garage) and Frank Morehouse (custodian) yet. Mike Markwica said they have not but they are working out a plan that will help in the interim.

Update Reports:

Mike Markwica spoke about the Professional Development Plan and remote teacher training.

Heather Flanagan spoke of student schedules and there will be a mass mailing which will include updates.

Rachel DeGroat asked about fall sports and Mike Markwica said we will not know anything until August 21st. Rachel DeGroat also asked if some schools were delaying opening and Mike

Markwica stated that some were delayed for a week. He then went on to say that we were lucky being a small district and we had a high percentage of faculty involvement.

Tara Sears asked about the status of extra-curricular activities. Mike Markwica said he has received seven responses so far and most advisors are working on safe plans for meetings.

Mike Markwica reported that Fred Morse purchased a disinfecting mist that will be applied nightly to all of our buses. Wipe downs will be performed after each run but the mist will be an added precaution.

Other Business:

Tom Ordway: Thanked the whole staff for everything they have done, are doing, and will be doing.

Rachel DeGroat: Stated how pleased she was with the amount of time that was spent on each student and we should be proud of our employees for their dedication.

Visitor Comments:

Kim McKenna asked a few questions:

What was our back-up plan if we get more students than anticipated? Mike Markwica stated we will change from State Education guidelines to the Department of Health's.

At what point do you think our school can not follow social distancing?

Mike Markwica stated we were not at that point yet and he does not foresee us going all remote unless the Governor requires us to.

What are we doing about ventilation for the cafetorium and the gym?

Mike Markwica said we will open the air handlers in both spaces and that allows for good ventilation.

What are our plans to get our students back to school for practice and games once we can have fall sports?

Mike Markwica stated he has not given this much thought yet. There are too many variables involved before we even know if we can have sports again.

Kim McKenna stated that she wanted the Board to understand that teachers were also stressed and anxious. She stated that we need to make sure our staff is uplifting and positive to one another. She also stated that we need an outlet for teachers to receive help with coping with the additional stress factors. She stated that additional training would be helpful.

Mike Markwica stated that he agreed and he is grateful for Mrs. McKenna and he knows she will keep him informed.

Tom Ordway asked if BOCES had a person who could come in and help teachers deal with the added stress. Mike Markwica said he will check on that idea.

Adjournment:

Tara Sears made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:16 seconded by Tom Ordway and carried.

District Clerk: Cindy Homer

Date: _____