

Unofficial

BENTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
405 South Grant Avenue
Fowler, Indiana 47944

The Board of School Trustees of Benton Community School Corporation met in an EXECUTIVE SESSION Monday, June 15, 2020, at the Administration Building At 6:00 p.m. to discuss job performance evaluations of individual employees, and for discussion of the assessment, design, and implementation of school safety and security measures, plans, and systems. Board members present were:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Gabe Widmer	X	
Edward Schroeder	X	
Robert Sondgeroth	X	
Jennifer Barce	X	
Chad Tolen	X	

The executive session adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandie Burton, Recording Secretary

President

Member

Vice-President

Member

Secretary

Regular Meeting
 Board of School Trustees
 June 15, 2020
 Administration Building

Board members present were:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Gabe Widmer	X	
Edward Schroeder	X	
Robert Sondgeroth	X	
Jennifer Barce	X	
Chad Tolen	X	

Also present were administrators, faculty, staff, and patrons.

Call to Order, Recognize Quorum

President Edward Schroeder called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and recognized a quorum. The Board, Superintendent, administrators, faculty, staff and patrons stood for the pledge of allegiance and took a moment of silence. Mr. Hoover indicated there was one emergency addition to the agenda. He stated it would be E.8 Consider approval of the hiring of Administrator Assistance for the superintendent search. The board approved the amended agenda on a motion by Gabe Widmer and a second by Jennifer Barce. The motion carried.

Audience to Visitors

None

Routine Matters

The board approved the minutes of the Regular meeting of May 18, 2020 on a motion by Jennifer Barce and a second by Chad Tolen. The motion carried.

Mrs. Albertson presented the vouchers to the board for approval. Mrs. Albertson asked if anyone had any questions. There being no questions from the board, Mrs. Albertson asked the board to approve the vouchers as presented. Gabe Widmer moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce, to approve accounts payable vouchers totaling \$333,083.98 and payroll and benefits vouchers of \$1,528,521.98 for a grand total of \$1,861,605.96. The motion carried.

Mrs. Albertson indicated she had updated expenses and revenue on the financial reports according to the changes that have been going on. She indicated that there was approximately a \$40,000 reduction in expenses which including lower utilities, no ECA trip costs, no fuel costs, lowered insurance premium on busses not in use and no summer school expenses. Mrs. Albertson indicated that revenue was adjusted as well. She stated that this was the second month they had not made any money on their normal bank account. She reminded the board that they had decided to cash in 2 CD's for cash flow purposes.

Mrs. Albertson indicated she had provided the board with an estimate put out by the National Association of Business Officials on the average cost of reopening schools this fall with the extra expenses associated with COVID-19. She indicate they were estimating it would cost the average school size approximately 1.7 million dollars in extra expenses to reopen for the school year. She stated our school corporation is half the size of the national average so that would reduce that estimate to \$800,000 to \$900,000 for us. Mrs. Albertson indicated this was just an estimate but

wanted the board to be aware of what costs may arise in reopening school.

Communications

Mr. Robb introduced Maria Pizano as the new Spanish Teacher and Jarrett Hammel as a new Math Teacher. He indicated they were approved at the May board meeting but since it was a virtual meeting he wanted to have them here tonight for introduction. The board welcomed the new teachers and wished them a successful year.

Mr. Hoover gave the board a recap of the referendum results. He indicated it passed with a 56% to 44% yes vote. He stated there was a 2% increase in voter turnout from the 2016 primary election and that the turnout was only 1% lower than the record primary turnout which was for the 2008 primary. He indicated he was very happy that that referendum had passed and will help the school corporation keep the quality education it offers.

Mrs. Albertson indicated she had included a memo in the board packet regarding the Long Range Planning Committee and the next steps for it. She indicated she wanted the board's input on how they thought we should recruit people to serve on the committee. She also questioned if the whole board wanted to be part of the committee or just a couple board members. She indicated if the whole board was on the committee the meetings would have to take place as advertised work sessions. Mr. Schroeder inquired as to why they were even doing this committee. Mrs. Albertson indicated this is what the Financial Planning Committee recommended we start after the referendum vote to help make recommendations on places to make cuts. She indicated we had been telling the community we would be doing this in the community meetings and our other information that was sent out regarding the referendum and financial situation of the school corporation. Mr. Schroeder asked when the committee's first meeting would be. Mrs. Albertson indicated she felt September would be a good time to shoot for. She stated it would give the schools the time to focus on reopening as well as recruiting community members and employees to serve on the committee. Mrs. Albertson stated there would need to be a variety of community members on the board with interests in all different aspects of the schools. Mrs. Barce indicated she felt that this was an advisory board so that only a couple school board members should be on the committee not the entire board. Mrs. Barce stated that she felt with Ad's/emails/word of mouth we should be able to get enough interest to produce a diverse group of people. Mr. Hoover made the suggestion that it could be rotating members of the school board to attend the meetings so each member could hear what was being discussed and what was important to the group. Mr. Hoover stated we could contact the Benton Review to do an article to help draw interest in the committee. Mr. Schroeder asked how many people would be on the committee. Mr. Hoover indicated 12 - 13 people that would include employees as well as community members and board members.

Mrs. Albertson presented the board with the revised Capital Projects Plan. She indicated she and Mr. Hoover had met with the capital projects committee consisting of Mr. Tolen and Mr. Sondgeroth in February where they had cut projects from the plan. She indicated they had decided to proceed with the roofing project at Benton Central and the air handler at Otterbein as these were projects that were deemed to be necessary at that time. They had decided to wait on the decision of the other projects until after the vote on the referendum to see if other projects needed to be cut from the list in efforts to save more money. She stated the committee, Mr. Hoover and she then met again on June 8th and toured each school at the request of the capital projects committee so that they could

see what the projects were that were on the plan. Upon the completion of the tour she indicated they once again sat down and determined which projects should move forward and which projects could be cut for the year. She stated the only thing on the plan that the committee could not agree/decide on was the \$20,000.00 that is given to the athletic program each year for miscellaneous equipment and expenses. She stated the committee decided to bring this matter to the board for their input and decision. At this point Mr. Schroeder indicated he wanted the plan and projects to be approved by all the board. Mrs. Albertson indicated that when the capital projects plan was approved with the budget that was them approving the plan/projects. She indicated the board had requested a committee be formed to oversee the plan and that is when Mr. Tolen and Mr. Sondgeroth were selected for the committee. Mr. Schroeder indicated that was not his understanding that he thought all board would still determine each project. Mr. Sondgeroth then started talking about projects that he had seen on the tour since he is a member of the capital projects committee. He first started questioning the need for the air handler replacement at Otterbein and why this was necessary. Mrs. Albertson stated that they had taken him there and had showed him exactly why it was necessary, that the system was broken and was not pushing air through the building for heat or air conditioning. Mr. Sondgeroth continued to question the project. Mrs. Albertson then asked for the help of Mr. Tolen to explain to Mr. Sondgeroth about the need and the fact that they had went and were shown why it was necessary. Mr. Tolen tried to refresh Mr. Sondgeroth's memory by explaining what exactly they had seen when they toured Otterbein. Mr. Sondgeroth then started questioning and commenting on several other projects that were on the original plan. Mrs. Albertson indicated that each of the projects he was referring to were projects that they had decided not to do. She reiterated the need for Mr. Sondgeroth to look at the updated capital projects plan to see that those were projects that had been marked as not taking place. Mr. Sondgeroth stated that he had driven his car from the front of Boswell Elementary school to Otterbein Elementary school and it was 19 miles and took almost 27 minutes to get there and this was not taking into account picking up or dropping off of children. Mr. Schroeder stated again he did not like how this was taking place and that the board should be voting on each project and the spending of the money. Mrs. Barce interjected that the board did approve the budget which included the original capital projects plan and that it was upon the request of board members that the capital projects committee was formed to oversee the projects and make a decision on them. She indicated she was confident in the abilities of committee to make the decision for the entire board. Mr. Sondgeroth again started mentioning various projects he felt did not need to be done. Mr. Sondgeroth stated he would not approve any projects that did not meet the emergency standard during this time. Mrs. Albertson once again pointed out that each of the projects Mr. Sondgeroth was referring to were projects the committee had decided not to proceed with. At this point Mr. Hoover stated that the board had hired himself and Mrs. Albertson to do the job of overseeing the running of the school corporation which included the overseeing of the capital projects plan and spending of those funds. Mr. Hoover indicated that if the board did not trust them with these capabilities he was not sure why they were even there. There were several other comments made by board members regarding the plan and the committee and the approval of the projects. In the end of the conversation Mr. Schroeder indicated for the projects to proceed as determined by the board. Mrs. Albertson indicated the committee could not agree on the athletics department money and needed the board to make a decision on those funds. Mr. Tolen indicated he felt the money for the athletic department could be reduced in efforts to save money. Mr. Tolen indicated he would be agreeable to giving the athletic department \$15,000.00. Mr. Sondgeroth stated he wanted a roll call on

this vote. Chad Tolen moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce to approve the monies for the athletic department in the sum of \$15,000.00. Mr. Schroeder roll called for the aye's and nay's. Mr. Sondgeroth voted nay, Mr. Widmer voted aye, Mr. Tolen voted aye, Mrs. Barce voted aye and Mr. Schroeder voted nay. Motion carried.

Mr. Hoover informed the board that the State had issued school reopening guidelines. Mr. Hoover gave a brief overview of some of the guidelines. He indicated that had formed a committee to devise a reopening plan. He indicated they were having meeting via zoom. Mr. Hoover stated each school corporation will have different plans to address the specific needs of that corporation. Mr. Hoover indicated once the plan is formed it will have to be approved by the county health department. Mr. Hoover indicated they were sending out surveys to parents and staff to get feedback on what they would like to see happening with the reopening. Mr. Hoover indicated he would keep the school board informed as the plans progressed and would hopefully have a plan for approval at July's board meeting.

Mr. Hoover informed the board that the Boswell Elementary Library had received a monetary donation from the Jeff Brooks estate. He stated this was a very generous gift and that Mr. Brooks had been a beloved teacher for many years at Boswell and is missed.

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Hoover presented the staff report to the board. Jennifer Barce moved, seconded by Robert Sondgeroth to approve the following staff report as presented:

Retirements

- Stephanie Deckard as an aide at Prairie Crossing Elementary effective June 1, 2020;
- Pam Brooks as an Elementary Music Teacher at Prairie Crossing Elementary effective July 1, 2020;
- Eric Wiley as an Industrial Arts Teacher at Benton Central Jr./Sr. High School effective June 3, 2020;
- Donna Wiley as a Guidance Secretary at Benton Central Jr./Sr. High School effective June 10, 2020.

Resignations

- Jeanie Masterson as a 3.5 hour cafeteria employee at Benton Central Jr./Sr. High School effective May 6, 2020;
- Deborah Musser as a 3.5 hour cafeteria employee at Otterbein Elementary effective May 29, 2020.

Employment

Benton Central

- Janet Wiley as Life Academy Teacher for the summer school session June 1, 2020 through June 25, 2020;
- Transfer of Johnathan Woessner from his temporary position as Industrial Technology Teacher to a Certified Industrial

Technology Teacher position effective the beginning July 1, 2020 school year;

- Transfer of Carrie Gephart from Otterbein Elementary secretary position to the non-certified guidance secretary position effective July 1, 2020;
- Transfer of Danielle Payne from her Special Education Teaching position to the Certified Librarian position effective July 1, 2020;
- Transfer of Zac Rea from his Special Education Teaching position at Prairie Crossing to Special Education Teacher effective July 1, 2020.

Otterbein Elementary

- The Following ECA positions for the 2019-2020 school year:
 - o Heather Holder - Spell Bowl
 - o Jennifer Lambert - Student Council Sponsor
 - o Sara Crane - Math Bowl (Academic)

Boswell Elementary

- Dana Blanchard as 6th grade teacher effective July 1, 2020.

Motion carried. Mr. Jeffrey Toll introduced Dana Blanchard to the board. He indicated that Mrs. Blanchard had been the temporary fill for the 6th grade class after Mr. Brooks passed away and that she had done an amazing job and he was excited to keep her on staff as the permanent 6th grade teacher. The board welcomed Mrs. Blanchard and wished her luck in her classroom.

Mr. Hoover indicated the board had been provided the bread and dairy bid information in their board packets and asked that the board approve the recommendation of awarding the 2020-2021 Bread Bid to Aunt Millie's Bakery and the 2020-2021 Dairy Bid to Cloverleaf Farms Distributors Inc. Chad Tolen moved seconded by Gabe Widmer to approve the awarding of the 2020-2021 Bread Bid to Aunt Millie's Bakery and the 2020-2021 Dairy Bid to Cloverleaf Farms Distributors Inc. Motion carried.

Mr. Hoover indicated he had provided the board with information regarding the new copier leases with Copiers Plus and asked the board to approve same. Robert Sondgeroth moved, seconded by Gabe Widmer to approve the copier lease with Copiers Plus. Motion carried.

Mr. Hoover presented the board with the recommended lunch price increases for Benton Central and the Elementary schools according to the 2020-2021 Paid Lunch Equity Requirements. Chad Tolen moved, seconded by Robert Sondgeroth to increase the Benton Central student lunch price to \$2.60 and the Elementary student lunch price to \$2.50. Motion carried.

Mr. Hoover indicated that at the May 2020 board meeting the board had agreed to approve the bus bid recommendation of Midwest Transit but opted to not approve the purchase of the buses until after the vote on the referendum. Mr. Hoover stated information was provided to the board in their packets regarding the recommendation of himself, Mr. Bowman and Mrs. Albertson to only purchase 2 buses of the 5 buses on the replacement plan due to uncertainty with additional costs of reopening school due to COVID-19. Mr. Hoover indicated that with the two buses asking to be replaced, one has a blown engine and one has excessive miles and needs numerous repairs that will add up to large dollar amounts. He indicated they felt the other 3 buses on the replacement schedule could hopefully get by

another year without any major repairs. Mr. Sondgeroth asked how many miles the buses had on them. Mrs. Albertson indicated she had spoken with Mr. Bowman regarding the miles before the meeting and that they were close to 200,000 miles. Mr. Sondgeroth indicated he did not think that was excessive miles, that he has had many a truck with much more miles than that. He stated his Peterbilt's have gone into 300,000 mile range. He stated he thought we should be able to keep our buses on the road well past 200,000 miles. Mr. Sondgeroth asked how many years a bus is said to last. Mrs. Barce stated that she had just googled the question and the answer was 12 years. Mrs. Albertson said hence our bus replacement plan is a 12 year plan of replacements on our buses. Mr. Sondgeroth reiterated that he did not think the buses needed replaced especially if we were looking at a 1.7 million dollar extra expense to reopen the schools. Mrs. Barce reminded Mr. Sondgeroth that the 1.7 million dollar figure was an average price for the average school size and that we were half the size of the average school size so that would put our estimate in the \$800,000 to \$900,000 range. Mr. Sondgeroth stated again we should not replace any of the buses and that he could keep the buses running longer than they were currently. Mr. Hoover asked for the board to please make a decision and vote on the recommendation made by himself, the transportation director and the director of finance to purchase 2 of the 5 buses on the bus replacement schedule for this year. Mr. Sondgeroth stated he wanted a roll call on the vote. Jennifer Barce moved, seconded by Gabe Widmer to take the recommendation of Mr. Hoover, Mr. Bowman and Mrs. Albertson to purchase 2 new buses on this year's bus replacement schedule. Mr. Schroeder roll called for the aye's and nay's. Mr. Sondgeroth voted nay, Mr. Widmer voted aye, Mr. Tolen voted nay, Mrs. Barce voted aye and Mr. Schroeder voted nay. The motion did not carry.

Mr. Hoover presented the board with a Resolution for Suspension of School Board Policies Conflicting with Waivers or Extensions During Covid-19 Pandemic. Mr. Hoover indicated this resolution was a recommendation of ISBA. Robert Sondgeroth moved, seconded by Edward Schroeder to approve the Resolution for Suspension of School Board Policies Conflicting with Waivers and Extensions During Covid-19 Pandemic. Motion carried.

Mr. Schroeder indicated the next item on the agenda for the evening was the acceptance of Mr. Hoover's retirement letter. Mr. Hoover indicated he has enjoyed his 39 years working in our corporation and that this is his only corporation to work in but it was time to enter the next phase of his life. Mr. Schroeder stated he appreciated all of Mr. Hoover's hard work and that he has done an excellent job in dealing with the Covid-19 situation. He stated Mr. Hoover will be missed but he feels is it a wise idea to go. Mr. Schroeder indicated Mr. Hoover would be staying on until August 1st. Mr. Schroeder moved, seconded by Robert Sondgeroth to accept the retirement letter of Mr. Hoover. Motion carried.

Mr. Hoover indicated the last item on the agenda was the emergency addition of the approval of hiring Administrator Assistance for the superintendent search. Gabe Widmer moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce to hire Administrator Assistance to conduct the superintendent search to replace Mr. Hoover. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. The next regular board meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. Monday, July 20, 2020, at the Administration Office.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandie Burton, Recording Secretary

President

Member

Vice-President

Member

Secretary