

## 10/21/20 - Regular Business Meeting

Present - Patrick McCabe, Roxanne Rebmann, James Grant, Jody Brege, Deborah Forrestel, Erik Polkowski, Robert Masse, Heather Cayea, Phil Kenline

Jim - Call meeting to order. Pledge to the Flag. Hearings of Individuals and Delegations. We do not have anyone who submitted an email to our District Clerk, Mrs. Rebmann. We're going to move on to the Superintendent's Report.

Pat - Good evening everyone. As you perhaps are aware by the amount of fanfare that is out in front of us, the week of October 19-23, 2020 is School Board Recognition Week. In addition to being a time to raise public awareness to all that School Board Associations due across Western New York for public education, it's also a special time here in Akron for us to acknowledge you for your tremendous contributions to the district. That is kind of a prelude as we honor you this evening and throughout the week. Thank you for your commitment to our kids and our district. Elementary, Middle, and High School students and staff and administrators have put together a little video recognition for you. Tristan, if you could play that for the Board. Thanks Tristan. I hope you appreciated that and I sincerely hope you can appreciate how much you are truly valued by the kids, by the community, by the staff. It's funny, maybe not funny, but the reality is right now in public education things couldn't be more challenging. Yet to get a glimpse into the window of what happens in school and classrooms, it is refreshing and I hope gives you a little shot of enthusiasm and adrenaline to remember what we're here for every day. Again, on behalf of everyone in the District, thank you for all you do. As I said, it's been a difficult and different school year for us in many ways. Beyond the classroom experiences, there's a variety of other factors that are impacting how we currently function. Whether it's issues related to the health and safety of our kids or unique economic conditions within our state and within our community, at the end of the day you all volunteer your time to study those issues, to be aware of what's going on and make informed decisions for everyone. Again, thanks. I wanted to share with you a number of things this evening. I want to segway right into kind of an update on what we're learning about the state and local response to COVID-19. In particular, on the health front. Some of the new expectations for school districts to be preparing for. I know you're all aware of the governor's cluster initiative in which he has designated red, orange, and yellow zones. Those red zones are those areas that have a 3% or higher infection rate over a 7-day rolling average. Orange is a quarter mile outside of that zone. Those zones are zip codes. Finally, yellow is a half mile outside of that zip code. If you are red or orange the school district needs to close for in-person learning and go to fully remote. If you're in the yellow zone, you can remain open in a hybrid model, but you are required to do 20% testing of those students and staff that are in attendance. You don't need to do 20% of your total population, just 20% of those in attendance. That's kind of the known. We also know that the state has said that they will provide the testing materials for COVID-19. We also know with the testing in itself, you have to open it to any members of the public that wish to be tested. There obviously are many benefits to collecting that data and doing that sample size of 20%. Unfortunately, I have to set the reality for ourselves and the community that there is a great deal of unknown yet. We are starting to examine what is happening downstate in places like Broome County where they're in these yellow zones. What we have learned through our outreach to those superintendents is the tests haven't necessarily arrived in time. They have to get the tests done in one week. Down there their local county's department of health has said we can't assist you nor has the state department of health said we're unable to assist you with performing these tests. It's up to the district. Then you get into some significant challenges for a district. You have to have trained staff. You have to have designated staff. You have to have an outdoor tent or facility to administer tests, collect the sample, to have it analyzed, to report the data. There is a lot of infrastructure and staffing involved and quite frankly, schools aren't equipped to be testing labs by and large. We have to recognize that is the occupation of the state that we do that. To that end, we can't abandon that responsibility by saying it's too hard, we don't have the personnel, we haven't budgeted for it yet. We need to start planning. Regionally, we are exploring and we're trying to learn from downstate. We're not learning much, quite frankly, because they're struggling. Regionally, we're exploring how to prepare. That may look like contracting with a healthcare entity, some of the labs you can currently go to. I won't mention them by name, but I'm sure you've heard of them. Whether or not they would be interested in perhaps doing a coser with BOCES, so we can arrange a contract with a mobile-like unit. I'm sure the reality of the cluster initiative and also the reality of implementing the cluster initiative, just to make the Board aware of the potential future requirements. Hopefully, it doesn't get to that. The other thing to note is the governor's

language has been pretty strong. If schools aren't doing testing, he tends to withhold their aid. Using that shtick, if you will, to motivate you, but I think it's fair to note there's some significant challenges. One of the things I honestly feel like I say all the time, it's the truth, up until this evening I got a text message that Erie County is now putting the data by zip code on their Facebook account. Prior to this text message that I received on contacting the school tonight, that wasn't available. I did note that our zip code wasn't listed. Many of the zip codes within the county were not listed. They were only listing the ones that were at 1% or higher infection rate. Ideally, we'd be able to monitor our own zip codes and adjacent zip codes so that we could start to inform our constituents of trends that we're seeing as early as possible. I really just share that with you by means of an update kind of where we are relative to our COVID-19 response. The Board is aware, the community should be well aware, we've had four positive cases to date. We have participated aggressively with the Erie County Department of Health and contact tracing process. I know it's very alarming for teachers and for families. All I can say, and I don't make any promises, but all I can say is when I think of the number of individuals who have been put into 14 day quarantines, both students and staff as a result, it's a significant number. You're talking approximately 10 individuals for every confirmed case. Thankfully, the aggregate of the total we have not had any cases where anyone who has been put in the quarantine has tested positive. I hesitate to say that out loud, but I think it's an important statistic to share. It gives me some reassurance that our mitigating protective protocols that we put in place, our social distancing, our masks, our requirements for respiratory hygiene, handwashing are effective in controlling the spread here in school. I don't make any promises or guarantees. I'm just sharing our local data here at Akron. I'll share with you that holds true thus far for Erie County that Erie County has not reported any school-based spread of the virus with confirmed cases. It may not always be that way but something to note. We are nearing the end of the first marking period. If you recall, we communicated to families that those families that were wishing to go fully remote, we informed them that they would have to stick with that model for the entirety of the first marking period because of the implications it has on our scheduling, the number of kids we can put into a classroom, the number of children we can put on a bus. It has to be a controlled number. We are currently measuring families responses as to whether or not they want to return to a hybrid model, from fully remote to hybrid. That started with the survey that went out on October 13, 2020. The survey was due back on October 19, 2020. In addition with some great communication with our Native American staff members. Some of the family members just don't see or respond to the survey. There was a lot of personal phone call outreach, in particular on the Reservation. I was pleased to see I walked into a meeting today with all our building principals and again, not the ideal social distancing, they did have their masks on, but their computers out, their laptops out, documents spread all over the table. They're looking at the survey data, they're looking at the anecdotal phone calls, and they're trying to find places, looking at families K-12, to get families that chose to come back from remote to hybrid. We hope that data will be analyzed by the end of October 26, 2020 and we can start the outreach to families. There's definitely more spots on our B Cohort, the Tuesday, Friday. From there, we have been looking at our kids who are in the hybrid model to see if we can increase their participation on campus to four days a week. We are looking at prioritizing those kids who are most educationally vulnerable first. By that, I mean students who might have unreliable internet, children whose marking period grades, 5 week marking period and other anecdotal accounts suggest that they're academically at risk. We also know that the federal government expects us to maximize in-person learning for students with disabilities. There's a lot of data and analysis that the teams are doing now to try to make sure that if we have spots available for in-person instruction, we're filling them. Our kind of target goal is the start of the second marking period, which is November 9, 2020 at the secondary level. The elementary would like to coincide with that even though theirs is a little later. They would like to coincide with the secondary level in the interest of families getting all the kids on the bus should they have kids across the different buildings. I would like to provide the Board, the community, and staff with additional information, but I want to let you know that's another thing that's in the works. Any questions on that before I go to capital?

Jim - Do you have any preliminary indications, rough numbers of students coming back? Are there students that are in the hybrid that are going remote or was that not an option?

Pat - It is an option, Mr. Grant. I will tell you each time we have a confirmed positive case and the communication goes up, there are families that call the buildings with concerns about having their children attend even in a hybrid model, indicating they want to go remote. I apologize, I don't have that exact number, but anecdotally, I can tell you it happens. One of the things that, again I'll be perfectly candid, is struggling to believe it's in the children's best

educational interest to be with us and to be with us much as possible. I appreciate and respect families' concerns about their children's' health and the health situations which may arise within their home. At the same time, can you compel a family to come to school when the governor has said districts need to provide a remote option? That's a real struggle for me personally, as your superintendent, but I think for school districts and superintendents throughout the state. I firmly believe that our kids are better served with us. I'm very concerned about their academic and social-emotional health when they're not with us. Schools do more than just provide education. I've said this to you many times. They provide children with a place to be connected and in that absence, I am concerned. Mr. Grant, that was a long-winded answer to your direct question. I don't have the data, but I will tell anecdotally some families are choosing remote.

Bob - As far as students with disabilities, you prioritize them by putting them in school 4 days a week, right?

Pat - Children that are in self-contained settings have been with us 4 days a week, unless their families requested fully remote. We didn't offer them the classic 2 days a week hybrid model. We believe for the most part we have room for those students. Again, I just want to fill every spot. It does have implications for the bus. The more we fill the building, I'm grateful they have chosen to transport. I think it gives them some reassurance, but it also helps us out, quite frankly. As long as we have the 6 feet social distancing requirement, we're capped at the number of kids we can have on campus at any given time or in any particular room. It's much more complex at the secondary level.

Heather - Will you continue to look at this quarterly?

Pat - Yes.

Heather - Ok.

Pat - Constantly. Anything else on that?

Erik - Just one other question, and I know you alluded to it earlier in the year. Facility utilization evaluation. Basically, identifying what the maximum capacity is for each and every location throughout the school was. Has that been completed to a point so you have a guideline?

Pat - Yes, that was done. I will share with you, we are looking at revisiting. Anything that isn't nailed into the wall has pretty much been pulled out, but in some spaces if there's furniture that's portable or moveable, it's another student desk to another spot. We are looking at what other furniture potentially can be moved. Mr. Polkowski, one thing that we haven't done to date is look at converting space. Converting a library to an instructional space, a gymnasium to an instructional space, a cafeteria to an instructional space. You need a state approval to do that. To make a place that isn't designed to be a classroom, we need the NYS Department of Facilities to approve any modification of a non-instructional space to an instructional space. It's a bit of a cumbersome process, and that's why a lot of districts haven't done it. You saw initially a lot of districts looking at portable or tents and most of them have pulled back because the requirements for doing such were too much, were too much. Obviously, you saw from the video we're using the auditorium for instruction, we're using the MPR for instruction. Capital project. Just wanted to share and give the Board an update regarding where we are. As you're probably aware, most of our Phase 1 is really entirely on schedule. In some instances, we are a little bit ahead of our initial projections for scheduling. Most of Phase 1 is nearly complete. There are a number of things in Phase 1 that are going to be moved on to the summer, particularly some of the exterior, door replacements, some of the kitchen area ventilation and A/C units. That all was designed to go into next summer and into next school year. However, you are aware that there was some money, approximately \$623k available at the end of our bid to explore and to do things in Phase 2, which was addressing the fuel delivery system within our transportation department. We have been working on finalizing those plans, and I would like to give the Board an update. We anticipate going to SED with our graph plan on Friday in fact. On the table Mrs. Rebmann provided you and I think she also linked it in BoardDocs, a document of a rendering of the transportation area. I would like to just do a quick overview of it just to finalize some of the areas that will be addressed. As you're looking at the document you'll see the CPL logo should be in the upper right corner as it's facing you, it's also on your laptops. Down at the bottom toward the right, you'll see a grey rectangle, that rectangle is the building. In front of that in the middle of the page you'll see something almost like a T or an L, that is

the existing fuel delivery system. Above that toward the track and football field, you'll see where the bus parking is. You'll see that is denoted by the parallel lines for the bus stops. I want to spend a minute on just that section. Currently, the buses park parallel to one another. A couple of things are happening there. One is the weight of the engines and axles is starting to cause indentations and sinking into the pavement. Part of this project would be putting concrete pads where the wheels are or perhaps, even a pad where the whole section instead of a stripe for the front wheel and a stripe for the rear wheel of concrete, a single pad for the bus to prevent further deterioration of that surface and water infiltration and cracking and so on. Behind where the buses, cause they back into the space, there needs to be a concrete or a pad so that the mechanics can access the rear panels and do some maintenance issues on the buses. Moving further there's a safety rail, chocks so the wheels hit, so they don't go off the end of the hill. Behind that walking area there will be an installation of a new water catchment system. Someone referred to it as a gravel sponge. We had looked at and the engineers had looked at capturing that water and diverting down the culvert and toward the football field toward the middle school. Upon further examination and the just the hydraulic pressure, all that water was going to push up against the foundation of the middle school and cause what is already a wet foundation area to perhaps get worse. They really felt that that was not the best method to address that. Instead, what they are talking about is this catchment system, we're calling it a gravel diffuser. It runs the length of that strip there and it causes the surface water from the parking area to go there in a slow absorption into the ground. It slows the flow so it's not all sheeting off the surface area all at once, whether it's collected there and slowly seeps in. That's been engineered to help slow the migration of water down that slope into some of the playing field but also into some of the adjacent properties of our neighbors. That's the plan for that part.

Bob - Real quick, have the mechanics, the people that work on the buses been involved in designing this?

Pat - Yes.

Bob - Just to make sure.

Pat - One of the things Mr. Masse, we're going to have some additional lighting out there, they helped direct where the lighting should go to do their daily inspections to see. The original plan called for moving some of the heater boxes, the electrical boxes. We're slowly decommissioning the diesels, we still have 6 or 8 of them left. Their timeline for turnover is like 6 years. They're integral in saying we're keeping those. They did a lot of site visits, including last week, with the mechanics and Mr. Alexander to further refine this plan. Mr. Alexander has been involved in all the conversations. Moving to the left on the page, you will first see the first dotted line, that is the new fuel delivery system. Moving it off of that general open area and what will happen is a vehicle can pull up. If it's passenger-side fueling, they'll just veer to the right, pull up there and fuel. If it's driver-side fueling, they will have to enter the lot. They assured me there is plenty of room for our vehicles and for our emergency vehicles within the town to loop around and kind of pull off to the left. That will have a permanent hard-structure canopy over the top. We're thinking about putting an Akron logo up there or something to make it attractive. It will have some additional lighting and safety features, fire extinguishers, waste receptacles, things of that nature. Kind of moving again further to the left, the original plan called for what we have now, which is a horizontal sliding gate. What would happen if we utilized that is it would slide off and it would be hanging 6 feet over the heads of the spectators out there at the baseball diamond. Here comes the gate. Obviously, the engineers have eliminated that design and now we're looking at a swing gate that will fold in as you're coming up the drive, it will open inward. On the driver's side there will be a reader to swipe a card to pad that gate, open up. As you go to leave, you roll over a pad and it automatically opens the gate. It will have lines and marking and stop signs, so you pull too close because it is a swing gate. Those are some of the major elements of that project and there will be some security cameras out by the fuel island. I think I neglected to mention that. The final thing on the exterior work, in order for this portion project to be crisp, work must be approximately \$10k work to be done on the inside of the building as well. We have long-known there has been a need to improve ventilation and exhaust fans. We're looking at the big overhead rotary fans and some additional fans and additional electrical work, distribution panels for cameras and security, door access controls as well. Really this plan has been months and months in development but this is about what we'll see going to SED. A few final things then for me. Included in your packets is a draft budget calendar for your review. You're familiar we used documents similar to this last year. Most significant changes, although we did add some extra

details really just for us, internally, to remember to include certain discussions that we had to circle back to last year. It is really a working tool for the administrative team and also for the Board, to keep you aware. We'll make adjustments to the budget calendar if necessary, but we try as best as possible to stick to it and have a thoughtful budget development process in the calendar is certainly helpful. Any questions on it?

Jim - No, just a general comment. I thought last year's budget process, as difficult as the year became, was a much better and more involved inclusive process than we've seen in the past. This level of detail in the calendar is important.

Pat - I believe so too. If it's not written down,

Jim - It doesn't happen.

Pat - Create your plan and work your plan. Really that's it. Also for your review, I included an advocacy letter that I sent out. I know that the federal government is still wrestling with the stimulus package to the extent that we can raise our hands and say don't forget about us in public education. Here in Akron, that's important. That's all I have for this evening.

Jim - Thank you very much. Anything else for Mr. McCabe? Item #4 is our minutes from the Regular Business Meeting on September 23, 2020 and our Workshop Meeting held on October 7, 2020. The recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education does hereby approve the Meeting Minutes for those two meetings, consent #5A & 5B.

Jody - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Questions or comments on those minutes?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Item #5 Personnel 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 instructional items, consent #5A & 5B.

Bob - Moved.

Phil - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments on the Personnel Instructional items?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #6 is 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-6E.

Heather - Moved.

Phil - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments on those items?

Pat - I have a comment.

Jim - Yes, Mr. McCabe.

Pat - I just want to take a moment to recognize Tristan Payne and to congratulate him on his new position. He is a tremendous individual and tremendous employee, an asset to our district. He's moving up in his career, and we're happy for you, but very sad to see you go. You'll do great things, Tristan.

Jim - We agree. Thank you and we appreciate your support for our meetings since we've started our own hybrid meetings here.

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Item #7 District Items. 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 District Items, consent #7A-7C.

Bob - Moved.

Erik - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #8 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 Special Education items, consent #8A and 8B.

Debbie - Moved.

Heather - Second.

Jim - Questions or comments?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #9 School Board Correspondence. Thursday, November 12, 2020 is the Albany Update with Dave Little at Erie 1 BOCES from 6:30-8:30pm. Please see Mrs. Rebmann for registration. I know that Mr. McCabe, Mr. Kenline, and I attended that last year. Very informative. Dave Little's a great speaker and very knowledgeable. Dave Lowry sent out there's only 11 seats available as of this morning.

Phil - We discussed this at the Budget Committee meeting week before last, and they are actually looking into the possibility of being able to stream Dave's presentation. I don't know how far they're going to get between now and then, but it is a possible venue to get more attendance. What they've asked is as soon as somebody lets you know they want to go, let them know so they can keep track of those 11 seats.

Jim - Upcoming Dates is Wednesday, November 4, 2020 is our Board of Education Workshop Business Meeting at 7pm here in the cafeteria as well as streamed via Zoom. Item #11 Hearing of Individuals and Delegations of Non Agenda Items. Input from the public? Any other Board discussion?

Jody - I'd just like to say that athletics' parents, spectators, I know as well Mr. Polkowski's been talking about it on Twitter that everybody's been very respectful about social distancing, bringing their own chairs, staying their 6 feet, sports have been going off quite well. Teams are being very respectful and I think the kids appreciate it. I think it's been good to go.

Jim - Good.

Jody - Mr. Kenline's wife has been doing a lot of scorekeeping for field hockey.

Phil - She's learning a lot about field hockey.

Jody - She is.

Erik - Home and away.

Jim - Other school districts are doing the same.

Erik - Yes. It's been very receptive on all aspects, whether you're visiting or at home, it's a very good show from the N-O League.

Pat - We had a league meeting and I wrote the agenda with Mr. Roth from Wilson. That was a focal point. As a league to be on the same page. We need to be messaging the same things to our communities, so I'm so pleased to hear that it's working out that well.

Erik - I can verify that when we were in Barker they were checking tickets to make sure.

Jody - Everybody has different tickets, so they questioned. Barker had these fancy lanyard things, we had our orange tickets. My husband, thank God, was first, and was like this is what we have and also had his school ID with him. She was like ok, then she knew what to look for. That's the only thing, as long as they have something that says sports athletics is good.

Jim - I know how difficult the decision was for this Board, for all of the schools, looking at athletics. It's good to hear that it's happening the way it's intended to within the guidelines that we've got. Athletics is one of those non-instructional things that are so important to students from a social-emotional aspect, as well as maybe the reason why a particular child wants to come to school. Anything else? Item #12 Executive Session. We do have the need to go into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.

Phil - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - We are in Executive Session at 7:49pm. We do not anticipate conducting business after we come out of Executive Session. I wish to thank members of the community who have joined us via Zoom tonight. Tristan, thank you very much.