

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education  
Community Unit School District #7  
High School Cafeteria  
612 Broadway Street  
Gillespie, Illinois 62033  
August 17, 2020**

The regular meeting of Community Unit District #7 School Board was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by President Hayes at the High School Cafeteria, 612 Broadway Street, Gillespie, IL 62033. This meeting is being held remotely by zoom.

ROLL CALL: Hatlee, present; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, present; Schmidt, present; Tiburzi, present; Alepra, present; Carter, present

Superintendent Owsley, Principals Jill Rosentreter, Tara Cooper, and Angela Sandretto attended the meeting remotely. Michelle Smith, Dave Ambrose, Keri Kaylor, Kerry Frensko, and Jennifer Hailstone also attended the meeting remotely.

Motion made by Carter, seconded by Schmidt to approve the agenda as presented. Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes. Motion carried.

Motion made by Alepra, seconded by Schmidt for Roll Call Vote to Adjourn to Closed Meeting at 6:10 p.m. for the following:

- A. Discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the District, pursuant to 105 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- B. Discussion of probable or imminent litigation, pursuant to 105 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- C. Discussion of student disciplinary cases, pursuant to 105 ILCS 120/2(c)(9)
- D. Discussion of collective negotiation matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives pursuant to 105 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes. Motion carried.

Motion made by Schmidt, seconded by Carter for Roll Call vote to return to open session at 7:04 p.m. Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent. Motion carried

**The Pledge of Allegiance was repeated.**

**Action on Closed Session Matters**

Motion made by Alepra, seconded Schmidt to accept the Resignation of Cafeteria Employee Mrs. Nancy Konneker and post the vacated position. Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes. Motion carried.

Agenda items Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball Coach, High School Assistant Volleyball Coach, and High School Assistant Softball Coach are postponed at this time due to the pandemic.

Motion made by Carter, seconded by Tiburzi to appoint Mrs. Casey Edgerton as Gillespie Middle School Yearbook Sponsor. Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes. Motion carried.

## Consent Agenda

Motion made by Alepra, seconded by Hatlee to approve the minutes of the regular meeting and the closed session minutes dated July 27, 2020. Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes. Motion Carried.

Motion made by Alepra, seconded by Carter to approve payment of the August 2020 bills as follows:

Education Fund	\$65,126.02
Operations & Maintenance Fund	\$ 9,266.58
Bond & Interest Fund	\$ 3,667.63
Transportation Fund	<u>\$ 5,421.48</u>
For a Grand Total of	\$83,481.71

Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent. Motion carried.

## Freedom of Information Requests

No requests were received.

## Recognition of the Public

Parent Keri Kaylor addressed the Board stating, in her opinion, the administration was unprepared for the start of the school year. She said that a number of families did not receive registration packets prior to the first day of school Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, which made them uninformed about the procedures of picking up computer devices, materials, and assignments. She also criticized what she considered a lack of instruction during the first week of school. Superintendent Owsley responded that all packets were in the mail no later than Monday August 10<sup>th</sup>, a full week before the start of school. Principal Rosentreter said she is viewing the first week as a week for ensuring students are properly included in Microsoft Teams, which is the equivalent of a virtual classroom and that students have opportunity for internet access. She added that the first week is about preparing students to use their devices and going slowly to make sure all our students are set up properly in Microsoft Teams. Mrs. Kaylor remarked to Board Members Alepra, Dobrino, and Hatlee that she did not get a response to her email to Board Members. Board Member Alepra thanked Mrs. Kaylor for participating in the meeting and responded that she does not respond to board-related inquiries when she is not at a board meeting because if she is not at a board meeting, she is not a board member. Mrs. Kaylor asked how the public is supposed to address Board Members. Member Alepra stated that the chain of command is the teacher, the principal, the superintendent, and then the Board. Board Member Dobrino was not present at the meeting. Board Member Hatlee responded that she either missed the email or did not receive it, but she would check her inbox after the meeting.

Parent Jennifer Hailstone submitted a letter to the Board and Superintendent Owsley prior to the meeting stating concerns and questions of which she would like clarification: "In regards to the remote learning plan, who devised the plan? Was there a task force? Were any parents asked to be involved? Were any students asked to be involved? Were any teachers asked to be involved? In regards to sports, The Coal Country Times reported from the July 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting that all extra-curricular activities were to be put on hold until further guidance is given. On July 29, 2020, IHSA set forth a plan, approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Governor's Office, deeming boys' and girls' golf, girls' tennis, cross country and girls' swimming and diving safe to play. On July 31, 2020, IESA revised their guidelines and deemed softball, baseball and cross country safe to play. These plans also stated that schools who were in remote learning could also participate. Why did the board not hold a special meeting to discuss the further guidance that was given? How many cases is considered too many, what is considered getting worse, what is considered getting better? I feel that it is up to

each individual to make an informed decision for his or her child.” She is asking “that the school board form a task force composed of administrators, teachers, parents and students to consider future plans for either returning to school or remote learning.” She is also asking “to immediately reverse the decision to suspend the IHSA and IESA approved sports during remote learning.” President Hayes responded that the board concurred with the decision to open with remote learning announced by Superintendent Owsley during the July 29<sup>th</sup> Special Board meeting. The issue was not previously on the agenda, so the board was precluded from voting that night but unanimously approve a resolution the following week giving the superintendent authority to implement protocols as necessary in response to the pandemic. The faculty was in agreement with the Board and the Administration to begin with remote learning.

Kerry Frensko addressed the Board regarding concerns of a lack of instruction on Wednesdays. Superintendent Owsley responded that Wednesdays are set aside for cleaning and sanitation when students return for classroom instruction. In the meantime, teachers will remain in contact with students and parents on Wednesdays to respond to inquiries.

Reading from a prepared statement, President Hayes responded to concerns about the sports program suspension as follows: “Members of the CUSD#7 Board of Education and the Administration Team have and always will look out for the safety of our students and staff. This has been our priority during the decision-making process and will continue to be. District leadership has determined that it is not safe enough for students to return to in-person instruction. It has also been determined that if it is not safe enough for our students to return to the classrooms it is also not safe enough for them to return to the diamond, field, or course. We fully understand the importance of extra-curricular activities to the educational process but also realize these are supplemental activities, not primary events. We look forward to the day where all our students can return to their classrooms, furthermore, we also look forward to watching our Indians and Miners re-take the course, diamond, court, and field. Unfortunately, now is not the time for either of these things to take place. District Leadership will continue to monitor the COVID numbers in Macoupin County and will reassess the situation on a continuous basis.”

### **Superintendent’s Report**

There was no “District Focus”.

Union President Michelle Smith gave the Union Report. She expressed a need for flexibility for K-3 distribution and internet band width issue. She also suggested phones need to be in classrooms to be able to contact parents.

Principal Sandretto gave the Ben-Gil Elementary Report:

- Teachers/staff returned with material ready for parents – Tuesday, August 11
- Information was mailed to parents/students
- Teachers contacted all parents by phone for distribution
- Distributions started today and continues tomorrow
- The distribution is going extremely well – great work by teachers, staff, parents, and students to make this work
- The decision was made Friday to move the distribution outside
- Teachers/staff worked to set things up and make parents/students feel welcome and have an organized day
- Thanks to teachers, staff, parents, and students
- Teachers have appointments set to allow about 15 minutes to explain material, expectations, and what remote learning looks like

Principal Cooper gave the Gillespie Middle School Report:

- Registration was successful!
  - Health/safety guidelines followed
  - Middle School parents received student schedules
  - All students are registered
  - Information has been updated in Skyward
- Grade-level team meetings occurred on Tuesday, August 11 to discuss:
  - Middle School Remote learning Schedule
  - Remote Learning Plan-specifically teacher expectations
  - Teacher/Staff Handbook
  - Return to School FAQs
  - Middle School Distribution Days
  - Symptom/temperature check morning routines
  - MOUs
  - GEM Program-Great Employees Matter (Jeremy Smith = last week's winner)
- Content meetings occurred on Wednesday, August 12
  - Students shared Microsoft Teams tips and ideas
  - Practiced Teams video conferencing
- Remote Learning Training with Andrew Easton on Thursday, August 13
  - 1.5 PD hours for staff members
  - Provided SEL information and ideas
  - Provided a variety of remote learning resources
    - Including assessment ideas
- I contacted all students who stated "no-Internet" during registration  
Parents/guardians were provided with 3 options:
  - Go to public library or school parking lot to access free Wifi several times a week
  - USB exchange weekly
  - Paper packets
- Microsoft Teams video conferencing =
  - Practiced as MS staff Thursday and Friday
  - Final Distribution Days meeting held via Teams video conferencing on Friday afternoon
- Distribution Days #1 = SUCCESS
  - It was great for staff to see students and for me to meet students and parents
  - Awesome weather = Tables and tents set up for drive thru in front of MS
  - Teachers had all student devices and other learning materials ready to go
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade in AM and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade in PM
    - Only two 7<sup>th</sup> graders and four 8<sup>th</sup> graders who didn't pick up
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade is all day tomorrow
  - Teachers have been extremely positive and we have gotten good feedback from parents
- Students were already using login information TODAY to check in with teachers on Teams, and some teachers already held calls and video conferences with students through Teams
  - About me activities
  - Teams Scavenger hunts

\*\*Staff and students are both ready to kick off Remote Learning!

Principal Rosentreter gave the Gillespie High School Report:

- Registration ran smoothly the first week of August. We had sufficient staff who welcomed parents at the front door, conducted symptom checks, answered questions, directed the flow of traffic and collected all necessary information (which included food distribution, bussing info, demographics, scheduling questions, and remote learning concerns) while practicing social distancing.

- Teachers have dedicated themselves to creating Microsoft Teams for each of their classes and have designed those classes so students have access to communication, attendance, assignments and instructional engagement.
- Teachers have been involved in learning how to effectively “teach” remotely. They were involved in a professional development where we had the opportunity to learn from Mr. Andrew Easton (who works for the state of Nebraska) on best remote instructional practices. He spoke on the importance of address students’ social and emotional needs first and foremost, followed by dozens of online resources used to create interactive and engaging lessons.
- Teachers have also been learning about effective remote instruction through collaboration with one another, reaching out to experts in the field and reading many professional articles dedicated to remote instruction.
- Once the technology department made student laptops available, teachers then prepped those devices to be ready for student distribution today and tomorrow. They also sorted and prepared all classroom materials to be sent home for each student. All 360 students had a specific place in the gym where their materials could easily be found and quickly given during a drive-thru system.
- Mr. Kevin McNicholas has not only been communicating with many students about their emotional wellbeing, he has also been delivering instructional materials to those who are quarantined.
- A special shout out goes to our special education instructors who are doing their best to make sure their students are going to get the support they need throughout remote learning.
- Our food distribution began today and a huge thank you goes to Gary Niehaus and his crew for making this happen. His knowledge of routes, bus stops and the timing behind it all is priceless.
- I would like to take this opportunity to “Thank” the teachers and supporting staff at the HS for coming in this week (and throughout the summer months) and embracing this change in education. There are so many moving parts to this transition, but they are adjusting and accepting the challenge.
- I have the honor to announce that Logan Schmitt, Tyler Watters, and Ethan Hamman have spent the summer in basic training. They will all be arriving back home within the next week to begin their senior year. And Senior Dylan Lewis has recently signed with the Marines Corp.

Superintendent Owsley reported that he met with staff last Tuesday and introduced new staff members. He also reported that there are three staff members retiring at the end of this school year.

Today kicked off distribution.

Superintendent Owsley stated that he has applied for grants for Professional Development Remote Learning.

### **Old Business**

Motion made by Schmidt, seconded by Tiburzi to approve the Second Reading and adopt Press Plus Issue #104 – 5 Year Review as presented: Policy 7:40 Nonpublic School Students, Including Parochial and Home-Schooled Students; Policy 2:220 Board of Education Meeting Procedure; Policy 7:190 Student Behavior; Policy 7:340 Student Records; Policy 2:220-E9 Exhibit-Requirements for No Physical Presence of Quorum and Participation by Audio or Video During Disaster Declaration; Policy 7:345 Use of Educational Technologies; Student Data Privacy and Security; Policy 4:180 Pandemic Preparedness; Management; and Recovery. Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes. Motion carried.

Graham & Hyde Architects needed direction for the Shop Expansion Project in regards to the bid that was accepted from Boeker Construction. The bid was for replacing the roof and adding a 30-foot addition to the existing Vocational Building. An alternate bid had been submitted to expand the building by 48 feet instead of the 30 feet. Superintendent Owsley recommended that the Board stay with the base bid of 30-foot addition. The Board consensus was to stay with the base bid as President Hayes pointed out that with the uncertainty of

facing terms of funding and with the state advising school districts to expect the same level of state funding as was awarded last year, the district should stick with the base bid at this time.

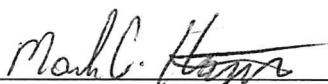
### New Business

Motion made by Carter, seconded by Hatlee to adopt Gillespie C.U.S.D. #7 Technology Policy as presented. Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes. Motion Carried.

Motion made by Schmidt, seconded by Alepra to approve the FSY 21 District Budget for Public Display for 30 days as presented. Alepra, yes; Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes. Motion Carried.

The Board gave Superintendent Owsley authorization to apply for state verification for the District's E-Learning Plans. This would allow the district to use E-Learning Days in lieu of emergency days in the School Calendar. This would allow students to continue their remote education on these days and not have the classroom attendance cancelled. Superintendent Owsley stated that with students having devices, this would be essentially what students are doing now. The plan will require a Public Hearing for approval; date to be announced at a later date.

Motion made by Alepra, seconded by Tiburzi to **adjourn** the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Carter, yes; Hatlee, yes; Dobrino, absent; Hayes, yes; Schmidt, yes; Tiburzi, yes; Alepra, yes. Motion Carried.

  
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Mark Hayes, President

  
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William J. Carter Jr., Secretary