

The Lowellville Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 via Zoom; President Stephanie Yon presiding. Mrs. Yon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Stephanie Yon – Present Gerald Dubos - Present  
Michael Palumbo - Present Joseph Sturm - Present  
Brian Wharry – Present

**Minutes:**

(21-01-7804)

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the minutes from the regular Board December 23, 2020:

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Gerald Dubos seconded by Michael Palumbo.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

**Treasurer's Report:**

1. Review December Financial Reports and Agenda Items for Approval. Mrs. Yon inquired about the District's financial performance especially relating to COVID-19 expenses. Mr. Schiraldi updated the Board noting that even with the unexpected COVID costs, the District has been doing a great job of being efficient with their funds. The original forecast was predicting a three-hundred-thousand-dollar loss for the year, but that number has been cut in half due to the actual performance of the District. Mr. Schiraldi commended the administration and staff for being very diligent with spending throughout the year and for chipping away at the deficit while maintaining revenues. Mr. Dubos asked if more COVID supplies will be needed. Mr. Schiraldi said that there are some items that will be ongoing such as sanitation wipes, but the bigger ticket items such as desk shields have already been purchased.

**Treasurer's Recommendations:**

(21-01-7805)

2. It is recommended that the Board approve the Financial Report, Bills and Payroll for December 2020, as submitted by the Treasurer:

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Brian Wharry seconded by Stephanie Yon.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

**Principal's Report:**

Mrs. Parry updated the Board that the District is preparing for next school year and have begun to review the course catalogue. Guidance counselors have been meeting with teachers to discuss updates and changes. There are some new courses including a study skills course for Jr. High and a summer bridge program for math in anticipation of learning gaps. Mr. Palumbo asked about if any VLA students will be returning to in-person. Mrs. Parry noted that seven of the VLA students will be returning, four elementary and three high-school. Mrs. Yon asked how many students are enrolled in VLA. Mrs. Parry noted there are currently sixty-six students enrolled. Mrs. Yon asked how the transition back to in-person will look. Mrs. Parry informed the Board that the students met with Mrs. Killingsworth and worked on pacing their VLA

courses. They should have twelve VLA courses completed by the end of this nine weeks. Mr. Dubos asked who taught VLA. Mrs. Parry noted that it was Joe DiMuccio and Jenna Deichman.

Mrs. Yon asked if there will be a committee for graduation and banquets. Dr. Thomas informed the Board that these events have advisors who get supplementals and they are handling it. Mrs. Yon asked if they would get reports on the events. Dr. Thomas said yes. Mrs. Yon recommending have a plan A, B, and C due to uncertainty of where things will be at that time. Mr. Wharry agreed and noted that a lot or very little can change so various plans will be important.

**Superintendent's Report:**

Dr. Thomas informed the Board that they will be receiving a certificate and as Board President, Mr. Palumbo will be getting a plaque and gavel in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month.

Dr. Thomas updated the Board that there is an All-County Boards Meeting on January 27, 2021. It will be a virtual event running from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. He asked the Board to let him know by Friday if they are interested in attending.

**Committee Reports:**

None

**Old Business:**

Mr. Dubos asked for an update on the Crilley Lawsuit. Dr. Thomas gave some background information regarding the lawsuit. The Board was sued for violation of the open meetings act. They were looking for a remedy to overturn a resolution for remote learning, damages, and attorney fees. As a result, the defendant (the Board) was ordered to issue a revised policy for Board Meeting Notices, the magistrate denied overturning the resolution, the District will pay damages of five-hundred dollars, and the plaintiff was denied attorney fees being paid by the defendant. The District gets its policies from Ohio School Boards Association which provides school policies to many districts in the state and the Board policy relating to Meeting notices has already been updated to be more in-line with how the law reads. The plaintiff objected to this decision by the magistrate and it was upheld by the judge. Now, the Crilley's have decided to appeal this decision to an appellate court. Once filed with the appellate court, the plaintiff will have twenty days to submit a brief and then the defendant will have twenty days to file their brief. Currently, the District has paid upwards of \$30,000 in legal fees due to this lawsuit, all prior to the case going to the appellate court. The District asked the plaintiff what a settlement might look like, and they asked for \$17,500 in damages. Dr. Thomas complimented the staff, students, and community for their hard-work and support throughout this school year. Mr. Palumbo asked what the \$17,500 is for exactly and if it includes attorney fees. Dr. Thomas noted that he was not sure what all it covered as it was a blanket amount.

Mr. Dubos inquired whether there have been any changes due to new COVID guidelines. Dr. Thomas noted that there is an upcoming Superintendents' meeting where they need to get clarification on some of the new rules such as whether the cafeteria or band room fall under the new classroom guidance. He noted that the District will update their guidance pertaining to those rules, although every case is a unique scenario. Mr. Wharry asked if the Mahoning County Health Department is following the CDC. Dr. Thomas said yes and noted that the District's goal is to ensure safety while limiting unnecessary quarantine. Mr. Wharry asked how things are looking for returning to in-person. Dr. Thomas said things are looking better. There was a large drop off in the number of quarantines today and the District added two more substitutes. The District is also awaiting the rollout of the vaccine. Mrs. Yon asked if Dr. Thomas has met with the transition task force at all. Dr. Thomas noted that he has not. The District is using the same plan and staff will have a refresher of the procedures on Friday. Mr. Dubos asked about the Governors three feet to six

feet exception. Dr. Thomas said yes, and no. Classroom has new guidance, and the District will not be excessive with its decisions.

**New Business:**

Mrs. Yon inquired about the District preparing for graduation, banquets, and other school related events. Dr. Thomas informed the Board that plans are being discussed and worked on by staff almost daily and the District wants nothing more than to get plans in place for the students. Mrs. Parry also noted that advisors have been and are submitting plans for these events.

Mr. Palumbo informed the Board about Huddle Focus which is a camera that would be installed in the gymnasium and show a live stream of basketball and volleyball games. He also asked about getting a quote for the camera setup. Mrs. Yon asked if it could also do concerts and plays. Mr. Palumbo stated that yes it could and there could also have a subscription for it. Mr. Dubos inquired if there is any potential for the school to generate revenue for it. Mr. Palumbo said yes, with a subscription or selling sponsorships. Mr. Sturm asked for an estimate of the cost. Mr. Palumbo said it would be around nine-thousand dollars and then yearly upkeep. Mr. Dubos agreed that the ability to watch a live stream has been great. The Board agreed to investigate the Huddle Focus camera more.

**President's Report:**

Ron Bunofsky was introduced for public comment. He thanked the Board for the informative meeting and thanked Mr. Sammartino for doing a great job getting the live stream for games set up. He inquired about updated COVID guidelines and how classrooms were physically setup. Dr. Thomas informed him that desks are three feet apart with desk tents and students wear masks. Mr. Bunofsky asked about updated quarantine rules with masks and social distancing. He also asked about the alternative quarantine rules. Dr. Thomas noted that with every case, the Districts talks as an admin team and with the Department of Health to determine quarantine procedures. The District uses the guidelines, including the new classroom guidelines, and do not want kids to quarantine if they do not have to.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

(21-01-7806)

1. It is recommended that the Board eliminate the "Nepotism" Policy listed on the Board of Education Home Page on the District website:

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Joseph Sturm seconded by Brian Wharry.

Mrs. Yon asked if this vote was just to remove the policy from the website. Dr. Thomas said yes. Mr. Dubos clarified further that this policy was covered under other policies and ORC so this was not needed.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

(21-01-7807)

2. It is recommended that the Board accept the resignation of Ronald Purtee as bus driver (substitute and as needed) effective December 20, 2020:

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Gerald Dubos seconded by Michael Palumbo.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

(21-01-7808)

3. It is recommended that the Board approve payment to Tammy Pettit who transports her two children to school "In Lieu of Transportation" after May 28, 2021 at the minimum rate set by the Ohio Department of Education for the 2020-2021 school year:

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Michael Palumbo seconded by Brian Wharry.

Mr. Sturm asked for clarification on this item. Dr. Thomas informed the Board that some Lowellville students go to other schools and their parents transport the student themselves. These parents apply for "in lieu of transportation" reimbursements for this and at then end of the school year we pay out the state minimum amount for that reimbursement. This is in place of the school having to provide transportation instead of the parent.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

(21-01-7809)

4. It is recommended that the Board approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Kent State University for College Credit Plus for the 2021-2022 school year:

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Gerald Dubos seconded by Joseph Sturm.

Mr. Dubos asked if there were any changes. Dr. Thomas said no, it is all boiler plate. Mr. Dubos asked if we pay the fees. Dr. Thomas replied, yes. Mr. Dubos expanded on whether it has been successful. Dr. Thomas replied that it varies, but he recently met with Easter Gateway about programs as well.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

(21-01-7810)

5. It is recommended that the Board approve the following Field Trip Requests:

Junior Class ACT Exam	Holy Rosary	March 9, 2021
-----------------------	-------------	---------------

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Michael Palumbo seconded by Stephanie Yon.

Mr. Dubos asked if there is a backup plan if this needs to be cancelled for health and safety reasons. Dr. Thomas replied, yes, we have a backup.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

(21-01-7811)

6. Other: Maternity Leave; Nicole Firmstone will need to adjust dates and start February 8, 2021.

Mrs. Yon called for a motion to approve. Moved by Gerald Dubos seconded by Joseph Sturm.

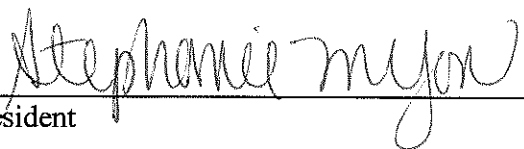
ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

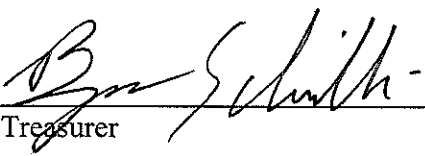
(21-01-7812)

7. Adjournment:

Brian Wharry moved to adjourn at 7:34 pm. Seconded by Joseph Sturm.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos - Palumbo - Sturm - Wharry - All Aye.  
Stephanie Yon declared motion carried 5-0.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer