FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
held on November 15, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

The Forest Hills Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, November 15, 2021, at Central Woodlands 5/6 School. President Vonck called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

President Vonck shared the district is recording the meeting and it will be posted so the community can view the meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Vonck, Atwater, Callahan, Meloche-Gregory, Covelle, Terryn, Fauson

Members Absent:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Members of Girl Scout Troops 4774 and 8118 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOME

Principal Amy Burton Major welcomed everyone to the meeting. She and her staff are thankful for the board of education and their support. She presented the board with a gift of a blank journal and some student writing pieces.

INSTRUCTIONAL HIGHLIGHT

Trish Stiles, Central Woodlands teacher, introduced the instructional highlight. One of the most potent ways to accelerate students' progress as learners is by equipping them with first-rate skills in writing. What we know about writing development is that students need extensive opportunities to write on topics they care about or learn to care about, they need explicit and sequenced instruction that helps them develop along a progression, and they need critical feedback that helps them know next steps.

Central Woodlands students are growing as writers! Narrative writing is a focus during the first part of the school year for both fifth- and sixth-graders. In a video presentation, students and teachers shared what they have been learning as writers this year.

PRESENTATION

21ST CENTURY LEARNING TASK FORCE

Superintendent Behm provided a brief presentation expanding on the work of the 21st Century Learning Task Force and detailing the district's efforts to provide students with relevant experiences to prepare them for life beyond high school.

He discussed the history of the Michigan Merit Curriculum and the transformation of the educational experience over the years. He shared the importance of an interdisciplinary approach and student engagement to create an experience that mirrors what adults do in the adult world.

Board discussion followed in support of 21st Century learning skills to cultivate possibilities and develop lifelong learning where all students can achieve their individual potential.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Superintendent Behm provided an update on the district's efforts to hire more bus drivers. The recent Bus Driver Fair was successful in producing

additional route drivers. The district is also looking to add reserve and part-time drivers and will be hosting a Ride and Drive event on December 4, 2021. Superintendent Behm introduced community member Paul Doyle who shared his recent experience in becoming a bus driver for the district.

Superintendent Behm recognized the veterans in attendance and thanked them for their service.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following members of public addressed the board:

- Marsha Meyers addressed the board regard diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Cynthia Lown spoke regarding bus safety.
- Colleen Fuelling addressed the board regarding equity and expressed gratitude for programs that parents and students are thankful for at Forest Hills.
- Mallory Korpalski encouraged the district to utilize multiple mitigation strategies until the COVID positivity rate returns to low level.
- Nick Prill addressed the board regarding district decision-making related to COVID protocols.
- Diane Springett shared her children felt very prepared and are very grateful for the education they received at Forest Hills Public Schools. She expressed her appreciation and support for the members of the board.
- Stefanie Boone addressed the Board regarding their response to political agendas and unconstitutional mandates.
- Becky Olson addressed the board regarding the importance of mental health.
- Mike Luyckx addressed the board regarding vaccines and the importance of choice.
- Claire Horlings addressed the board regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Carol Phelps addressed the board regarding political issues.
- Carol VanCouvering addressed the board regarding socialistic ideas and the vaccines.
- Paul Laidler addressed the board regarding contention, progress, transparency, and community involvement.
- An audience member named Jo inquired about the Public Participation Policy.
- Katie Morse inquired about rumors she is hearing regarding seizures occurring in the district. She also appreciates the board listening to medical professionals to help guide decision-making.
- Kathi Wilson-Burket addressed the board about collaboration and working together to help bridge the community divide.
- An audience member named Scott addressed the board regarding contentious issues impacting the district.
- Josh Schwannecke expressed appreciation for Meadow Brook Elementary Principal Tim Shaw, Superintendent Behm, and the board of education. He is also appreciative for the staff directory and information that is available on the district website.
- Sara Easter shared with the board some efforts taking place to address the bifurcations within the community.

- Eva Lauchie urged the board to offer a platform for community conversations.
- Nancy Tuohy inquired about illegal immigrants enrolling in the school district. She also shared she is proud the district is expanding in the area of 21st century learning.
- Sean Cordier addressed the board regarding COVID-19 mandates and parental rights.
- Iwona Chichno addressed the board regarding vaccines and parent choice.
- Sylvia Duffy addressed the board regarding vaccines and parent choice.
- Katherine Armstrong encouraged families to trust science and the medical experts.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT GROUPING ITEMS

Motion made by Member Covelle, second by Member Fauson, that the Forest Hills Board of Education approve consent grouping items VI, A-D.

Superintendent Behm discussed the employment of the director of communications and public relations.

Member Atwater, Curriculum Committee Chair, and Member Meloche-Gregory, Finance Committee Chair, gave their respective committee reports.

AYES: Fauson, Meloche-Gregory, Atwater, Terryn, Covelle, Callahan, Vonck

NAYS: None

Motion carried by a 7-0 roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved the minutes of the October 18, 2021, Regular Meeting, with any added changes or revisions.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Approved expenditures for the payment of bills for October 2021, as presented.

GENERAL FUND	$12,229,708.19
DEBT FUND	3,132.15
CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND 2019	1,636,571.80
SCHOOL SERVICES FUND	
1. Food Service Fund	289,384.61
2. Child Care Fund	0.00
3. Student/School Activity	90,263.10
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$14,249,032.85**

CENTRAL MIDDLE RENOVATION

Approved the contracts to perform construction work at Central Middle at a total cost of $8,241,563 including contingency, fees, general conditions, and allowances.

BUS PURCHASE

Approved the purchase of six new school bus units at a cost of $663,402 from Midwest Transit.

Adopted the resolution authorizing collection of 50% of the district tax levy in July 2022. — SUMMER TAX LEVY RESOLUTION

(**NOTE:** The Resolution, as approved, may be found in the Board Reference File, which is located in the Superintendent's Office and identified as **Ref. No. 21-11/15-A**).

Authorized reimbursement of $46.34 to Ada Township for refunded property taxes. — REFUNDED PROPERTY TAXES

Approved the request to add *The Rent Collector* by Camron Wright to the supplemental instructional resources collection at Central High School. — SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE REQUEST

Approved the hire and issue of an administrative contract to Kyle Gilbert for the 2021-2022 school year. — EMPLOYMENT OF NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Superintendent Behm thanked everyone for attending the meeting. School districts across the state and nation are dealing with polarizing issues. He stands ready to work with everyone and encourages the Forest Hills community to come together to do what is best for kids. — SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Behm discussed the format of board of education meetings. He explained meetings are held to conduct school district business and are not designed for community dialogue. Members of the public have an opportunity to provide comment during each meeting. The community elects board of education members. The members of the board have been focused on doing the best for kids, knowing that all decisions will not please everyone. He applauded the job of Board President Vonck and the inordinate amount of time she takes to connect with everyone who contacts the board. The district will look to provide more opportunities for community dialogue and is happy to work with individuals to provide information.

Superintendent Behm responded to the concern expressed during Public Comments regarding seizures. The district has not seen any seizure activity that is unusual. Student medical conditions cannot be discussed due to privacy protections.

Superintendent Behm indicated the district does not ask immigrant status as part of the enrollment process. In accordance with federal statute, school districts are required to educate all resident K-12 students.

Superintendent Behm indicated the district does not have a plan to require a COVID vaccine mandate for students. Staff have been provided current information on the Emergency Temporary Standard issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that requires

employers with more than 100 employees to report the vaccination status of all employees. This is currently moving through the judicial process.

Superintendent Behm thanked Central Woodlands for hosting the meeting and expressed his appreciation to the staff and team at Central Woodlands.

Superintendent Behm shared the Collaborative Team of the Year was recognized at the Foundation Gala. He congratulated the recipients – Lynn Cvengros, Dan McElheny, and Melissa Morley.

Superintendent Behm thanked the Forest Hills community for extending grace during this contentious time. It is important to recognize the common humanity that we all share with each other.

Superintendent Behm thanked the staff for all of their hard work.

Superintendent Behm concluded his report by wishing everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Member Meloche-Gregory gave an update from the Forest Hills Foundation.

- The 2021 Gala was a success. The event raised over $170,000. The focus of this year's Gala was on alumni. Special thanks was given to Elizabeth Brink for a wonderful job with the Gala.
- Lynn Cvengros, Dan McElheny, and Melissa Morley were honored at the Gala as the recipients of the 2021 Collaborative Team of the Year.
- The end of the year Annual Appeal campaign is currently taking place.
- Happy Thanksgiving from the Foundation.

Member Callahan shared that she and President Vonck recently attended the Michigan Association of School Boards' Annual Leadership Conference. She felt it was very beneficial and encouraged other board members to take advantage of these professional learning opportunities.

Member Atwater shared the Veterans' Day celebrations across the district were wonderful and she enjoyed the instructional highlight.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Member Covelle, second by Member Meloche-Gregory, that the Board adjourn. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Callahan, Secretary
Forest Hills Board of Education