

Special Board Minutes (Draft)

Monday, December 7, 2020 @ 5:00 p.m.

Administration Conference Room

Present/Virtually: Donna Yellow Owl-Chair, Brenda Croff, Wendy Bremner, Mistee RidesAtTheDoor, Brian Gallup, Rae TallWhiteman. Present (in attendance): Kristy Bullshoe, James Evans.

Ms. Yellow Owl called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Yellow Owl noted that the Superintendent Evaluation is scheduled for 12/29/20 @ 5:00 p.m. and Boardsmanship Training is scheduled for 1/13/21 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Mr. Evans to approve the agenda with no changes. Second by Ms. Croff. All in favor/Motion passed.

Public Comment: None.

ITEMS OF ACTION - Approvals

Approval of Winter Sports for BHS: Ms. Yellow Owl stated that the following attachments in the packet to be reviewed by the board; winter sports plan/coaches, COVID guidance plan, open gym/practice, list all attached, MHSA guidance, winter sports committee on child health and COVID 19. Also, the BHS COVID Winter Plan was reviewed by the Tribe and Rose Lapine, the Local Public Health Officer and Tribal Revenue Business-Kim Boy and the plan was approved. Now school board will discuss, change, and approve having winter sports, or not. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she has suggestions for changes to the Winter Plan and asked if the board agrees to approve winter sports, and is it for freshman, JV and Varsity teams. Ms. Yellow Owl also noted that only Varsity was allowed to participate in the Fall Sports. Mr. Evans stated that because he is more knowledgeable of COVID than he was during Fall Sports he feels the board should approve Fr, JV and Varsity for Winter Sports. Ms. Bremner asked if there will be sports at all, and noted that the board has not made a motion yet. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she does not want to vote first to do sports then have to come back and change the motion if not going to have sports or change the request. Mr. Gallup agreed with having discussion first, then a vote.

Ms. Yellow Owl stated that if the board agrees to have winter sports and is in favor of having freshman, JV and Varsity, she suggests #1) everyone should wear masks for Winter Sports, and noted that Fall Sports was conducted outside (XC, FB, Cheer, VB) and had to wear masks. The Plan says that athletes will wear plastic shield covers but Ms. Yellow Owl felt that 3 ply masks were sufficient and they will have to figure out how the wrestlers will use masks. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that in order to protect staff, coaches, and students everyone should wear masks at all times, including when they are playing outside of the Browning School District and visiting schools will also wear masks when playing in Browning; #2) Ms. Yellow Owl stated she is not in favor of having spectators at any home games or away games but if sports is approved, she will support senior players who make the Varsity team to have two (2) guests, that reside in the players immediate home, to attend the games and no guests for the freshman and JV teams. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she would agree to the local radio, Siyeh, television to film Varsity and have freshman and JV on Facebook live or local radio. Also, Ms. Yellow Owl requested that the gyms be cleared in between games and no teams will enter the gym until everything is cleaned and washed down. Ms. Yellow Owl supports varsity games to be played at BHS. Mr. Evans stated that with the games in different gyms everyone could spread out there and have two (2) people per every athlete. Ms. Yellow Owl did not agree and stated that there were no COVID cases in the fall and today there are 40 cases with 5 new cases and the board needs to take all precautions; the district has a lot of technology to provide access to families and if everyone is in the gym together, it is elbow to elbow and the virus will spread; traveling teams must follow our rules (speech & debate is virtual). Ms. Yellow Owl stated that it is the coaches responsibility to make sure everyone is masked and maintains the 6 ft rule; all teams must come dressed and ready for play including wrestlers (there will be no locker room use unless there is an emergency); keep all bottom bleachers pushed in, and on one side will be scorekeepers who maintain 6 ft apart, at half time each have their area to discuss game

plans, and wrestling plans; on one side of the gym push bleachers back for cheerleaders to cheer on one side of the gym alternating cheers and same for the visiting team; the seniors guests will be seated on the top and there will be no charges at the door and no concessions; everyone will have to check in as per COVID prevention plan and take the questionnaire, temperature, etc. In the letter from the tribal IC, they have stated the final decision is up to the school board. Ms. Bremner stated she is hesitant to agree to Winter Sports due to meeting with the IC Command and Rose LaPine and stated the letters are not encouraging and it is not safe to open at this time; the Tribe did not move to phase 2 and she wants to follow the plan from the tribe for safety. Ms. Bremner agrees that everyone should be required to wear masks and supports having no spectators at all, and also felt that the school should be very careful if having sports. Ms. Bremner stated that the Academy of Pediatrics recommends no one in the gym except people who are necessary to make the game occur; the tribe is still in phase 1 on the reservation and there are 45 cases today and it continues to rise. She supports freshman, JV and Varsity if the board agrees to open and they feel it is safe for kids to practice here, but traveling to other places exposes kids to everything. Ms. Yellow Owl stated the board was sent a statement from American Academy of Pediatrics that states “the NFHS classifies the winter sports of basketball, ice hockey, wrestling, dance, and competitive cheer as high to moderate risk because of the close physical contact that occurs between athletes, as well, the fact that these sports are played indoors”. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that everyone needs to wear 3 ply masks at all times and the district also needs to figure out how wrestling will work. Ms. RidesAtTheDoor supports moving forward with Winter Sports and explaining the process to each athlete, as well as wrestlers, also allow 2 spectators from same home for wrestlers too; our kids enjoy seeing their parents involved and we have a solid plan; parents will step-up to make it a safe season and if parents agree to a contract than open sports up for them. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that the plan on the agenda is COVID guidance plan for basketball 2021, the big plan identifies all Winter Sports. Superintendent Hall stated the reason the plan is separate is to open gyms for basketball; the plans have been submitted and the coach’s plans were reviewed by the COVID Committee, but it is all in one plan; the basketball coach wants masks worn at all times and all are the same for cheer, wrestling, basketball, speech & debate. Ms. Yellow Owl stated she is not in favor of spectators at any level except varsity. Ms. Bullshoe stated that the plans are well written and she supports freshman, JV, and Varsity participation because of the mental and emotional state the kids are in; they need to interact with their own. Ms. Bullshoe supports both parents as spectators and noted that some kids have more than one set of parents that need to be accommodated. Ms. Yellow Owl agreed to accommodate kids with other parent/s but is not in favor of all teams having spectators. Mr. Evans stated he agrees with having freshman, JV and Varsity having 2 spectators per athlete but also stated that there are only 10 kids on the freshman team and that means only 20 people in the gym and also wants to see 2 spectators for every wrestler at any meet. Ms. Yellow Owl stated it is seniors only that will be allowed 2 spectators and it is not open for spectators for every player. She does not want to open Winter Sports and have a big blow up. Mr. Evans asked why the board can’t look at spectators after the first of the year and if the numbers are still down than add more spectators. Ms. Yellow Owl agreed to come back to the table again after the first of the year. Ms. Croff agreed with freshman, JV and Varsity and no spectators except seniors for now. Ms. Croff does not agree with wearing masks at all times and felt that athletes should not have to wear masks during play. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that they had to wear masks during fall sports and the athlete is at risk if not wearing them and if cases go down the board can look at this again. Ms. RidesAtTheDoor stated that MHSA has guidelines for wrestling and they allow the athlete to take masks off and also stated that she agrees with 2 spectators per wrestler because the varsity wrestlers will not all be seniors. Ms. Yellow Owl disagreed and suggested only seniors be allowed 2 guests from their immediate household. Ms. RidesAtTheDoor stated the same number as basketball. Ms. Yellow noted the COVID, return to play form, in the packet regarding participants diagnosed with COVID and stated that this has to be added to the Winter Sports Plan; the participant cannot return to play unless diagnosed and released by a licensed health professional and the county health department. Superintendent Hall stated that all participants must have permission to tryout and all forms will be in the activities handbooks and must be filled out completely and signed by the parent/guardian. The district nurses will help screen and test all participants. Superintendent Hall stated that she has met with the nurses regarding the district owning a rapid testing machine and they will begin training and helping with contact tracing and if approved the district will use the rapid testing for athletes; district nurses will be on the next agenda for hazard pay. There is an agreement that needs to be signed by parent/guardian for consent to test; also, students with issues such as asthma, etc. will need to obtain clearance form from the health care provider to participate in sports even if they clear the sports physical exam which needs

to be in the school plan. Ms. RidesAtTheDoor asked if a student athlete has traveled in the last couple of days will they have to quarantine with tryouts starting tomorrow. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she hopes the student has already quarantined and noted that travel is only for emergency. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that the tribe is doing what is needed for our protection and all need to follow our leaders' direction. Ms. Bullshoe stated that if we want our children to do this, then the leaders need to do the same. Ms. Bremner stated that her grandkids have said there are tryouts tonight and this should not be happening as the board is only now meeting on this. Ms. Croff asked where this information is coming from because there are no tryouts tonight and she has not heard this information from anyone.

Public Comment: Wayne Smith stated all his concerns have been addressed by the trustees and thanked all for great amount of concern and considerations taken. Mr. Smith stated that he knows the risks and he sees it every day in the community. Mr. Smith stated that this is a good thing for the public but having Icks' open is not good. The emotional well-being of our children is important and they have suffered at every turn and none will come out without being effect but it can be done with evolving dialogue to improve the situation with parents.

Public Comment: Tony Carlson thanked board for moving forward and stated he has 2 athletes at home and allowing sports for the kids will create a safe atmosphere for them instead of having them congregating at other events. Mr. Carlson stated his worry about COVID but stated that kids are at minimal risk in sports and physical activity staves off COVID. Also, Mr. Carlson supported splitting each grade in the gyms but stated that he doesn't see why every athlete cannot have 2 spectators at every gym; there are only 4 or 5 seniors and they will have only 2 parents each in the gym and feels 10-16 parents in a gym made to hold 3000 is safe. Come up with ideas to keep all safe, i.e. wearing masks, and social distancing, etc..

Public Comment: Joe Bullshoe felt it is important for youth that they are allowed sports. Mr. Bullshoe stated that the COVID pandemic has ravished the world and at some point, we have to make a stand for our children to enjoy life and participate again. This has been hard on kids and it would be good for all kids to see all athletes getting to play, it brings hope to all ages. The community is down right now and with protocol this can be addressed and things can be done safely.

Public Comment: Dan Connelly stated that he feels strongly about wearing masks during games; the mask is paramount to minimize the risk and hopes the board makes the decision to agree to wear masks even during practice. The COVID Contract needs to be in place and wants students and parents held accountable for activities outside of the gym all forms to be filled out and kids be ready to roll when tryouts start. Mr. Connelly asked about gym cleaning after tryouts, and if the teams need to take 2 buses per team. Superintendent Hall stated that custodians will be cleaning. Ms. Yellow Owl stated all gyms need to be wiped down and cleaned between games and before a team can enter the gym and suggested more than 1 custodian per building, and all forms will need to be filled out and signed before tryouts; each team should have their own bus no matter the number of buses used. Superintendent Hall stated that in the tryout, practice plan there is a bus per team and as many custodians as necessary, Varsity will be at BHS, JV at BES, freshman at BMS. If one person gets sick only that team should be quarantined. Ms. Yellow Owl agreed. Mr. Connelly stated that kids will have more than the normal number of breaks for kids to change out their masks and breath.

Public Comment: Daryl "Poorboy" Croff stated all is in the COVID plan and noted that MHSA has said as long as they are playing, they do not have to wear masks. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she is aware of what MHSA says but if fall sports can wear masks, winter sports can too; there is more safety in wearing masks, more precautions.

Ms. Bremner asked if the district is prepared to go forward. Superintendent Hall stated that she is ready and will have the activities secretary get all the forms ready and set up a mandatory parent meeting with Rose Lapine (2:30/3:00) and tryouts can happen after all is approved. Superintendent Hall noted that all forms need to be signed and physicals need to be turned in before an athlete can be on the court and kids in quarantine can tryout virtually. Katie McDonald stated concern because there are 36 cheerleaders and limited space to practice upstairs

and felt it is not safe. Superintendent Hall stated that Ms. McDonald can request use of the Napi gym for practice from the building principal.

Ms. Yellow Owl recapped the discussion stating that “all plans under the Browning Public School 2020-2021 Winter Sports COVID-19 plan will be followed” as well as any changes/additions as discussed:

1. The Board agreed to allow Freshman, JV & Varsity teams for Winter Sports
2. Masks are to be worn at all times, on the floor and off the floor. All involved will wear masks i.e. Wrestling, Basketball Players, Cheerleaders, Managers, Coaches, Time/Score Keepers, any Administrator on Duty at any event, EMS, and Radio Announcers
3. 3-ply Disposable Masks are required and if BHS logo masks are used they must also have 3 ply protection.
4. No Spectators - this will also be revisited at a later date
5. All Gyms will be utilities to play Basketball - Varsity BHS, JV BES, Freshman Middle School.
6. Cheerleading needs an area to practice and they need schedules to alternate practices.
7. Gym set Up - All bottom bleacher will be pushed in, there is to be alternating chairs for each player, and coach to sit on. Browning will sit on the South side, visiting team on the North side of the gym. Upper North area of the gym will be used for Cheerleaders to cheer. Radio is to sit in the designated area, EMS will sit on the upper South bleacher - Administrator on duty will also sit the upper South bleacher. No One Is To Be On The Floor Except The Teams and Coaches, Score Workers, and Referees
8. NO Locker Rooms are to be used, only the restroom will be available
9. All teams are to come dressed and ready for play and/or cheer. If a wrestler needs to change their singlet he/she may use a designated locker-room assigned to the team by the AD Director.
10. All belongings (backpacks, bags etc.) will need to be placed behind each team on the floor. Nothing is to be left in any restroom.
11. Prior to any tryouts, practices, etc. for any team, all forms must be signed and returned.

Further discussion: Ms. Yellow Owl stated that referees need to be advised on how BPS will operate in the gyms. Ms. Bremner stated that the board will meet in January to discuss numbers of spectators and the public will be informed; if the numbers are high, there will be no spectators. The first BB game on January 2, 2021 is with Shelby; home meet in wrestling is on January 23, 2021. Everett Armstrong stated that there are only 3 home matches for wrestling and one can be utilized as senior night. Casey McDonald stated that he does not feel there is any more danger in wrestling than any other sport; all are in very close contact and the wrestlers will take all precautions and follow all protocol 100% which is extra work on the coaching staff and a lot of responsibility on the kids. Mr. McDonald stated that kids do need this mentally and emotionally and felt that they should be in the community. Also, Mr. McDonald stated that there are only 15 wrestlers and felt that there should be 2 spectators allowed for each wrestler because a freshman may be a varsity wrestler and they will not get to have any spectators which he feels is a conflict because wrestlers do not have a lot of fans, and most of the Western A schools allow four spectators for home games and 2 for away games. Ms. Yellow Owl stated only 2 spectators per senior wrestler.

Dan Connelly stated his assistant who has underlying conditions and wants to take sabbatical and he has another assistant in quarantine and will be 12 more days before having an assistant. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that the board

would not make anyone do anything they are not comfortable doing. The Activities Director needs to get with the coach and go through the process. Mr. Connelly also felt that senior night should be held at the first home game because football did not get to have a senior night. Mr. Connelly stated that seniors should be recognized right away in case COVID gets bad and things get shut down again. Ms. Yellow Owl agreed. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that she can see that the majority of the board is moving toward having winter sports, and reiterate that Cut Bank and Shelby are smaller level schools and BPS plays in high COVID area. BPS needs to be prepared as they go into areas where they do not believe in wearing masks; coaches need to make certain precautions are taken at the highest level and stated that she agrees the coach should take sabbatical if they feel it is necessary. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that she does not want people at BPS games right now and this can be revisited later and believes that the second wave of virus is going to be higher. Also, no one should say tryouts are happening tomorrow because there is a lot of preparation to get ready and the forms are not on google yet and no one has been told there are tryouts and suggested that everyone give realistic timelines. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that all forms and all signatures need to be done before tryouts get started. If anyone has COVID, they need to fill out another form. The activities department needs to get notice out to all on the correct timelines and have their paperwork ready. Motion by Mr. Evans to Approve Winter Sports for BHS and meet again in January and review number of spectators. Second by Ms. Bullshoe. Motion passed with Donna Yellow Owl, Brenda Croff, Wendy Bremner, Mistee RidesAtTheDoor, Brian Gallup, Rae TallWhiteman. Kristy Bullshoe, James Evans voting for.

COVID 19 Rapid Testing: Superintendent Hall stated that she has found that BPS can get free testing and has met with the school nurses who have already had the training. The district will get test kits for contestants and if anyone has symptoms they will go the school-based clinic and work with Rose LaPine to do rapid testing which will take place after teams are selected as there are no available tests yet. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she prefers to test prior to tryouts. If a student tests positive, the coach makes the decision to have a virtual tryout and supports screening prior to teams are selected. Ms. Bremner stated she is frustrated because the district could have had their own testing machine by now. Superintendent Hall stated that she is meeting with the committee and nurses tomorrow and needs board permission to get everything in place. Board members agreed but requested that testing is all done prior to tryouts and all must take necessary precautions. Motion passed with Donna Yellow Owl, Brenda Croff, Wendy Bremner, Mistee RidesAtTheDoor, Brian Gallup, Rae TallWhiteman. Kristy Bullshoe, James Evans voting for.

Motion by Mr. Evans to adjourn at 7:00 p.m. Second by Ms. Bullshoe. All in favor/Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:

_____ Carlene Adamson, Board Secretary

_____ Donna Yellow Owl, Board Chairperson

_____ Stacy Edwards, District Clerk