

**VICKSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
September 11, 2023 - 7:00 PM  
VHS Performing Arts Center  
501 E. Highway Street  
Vicksburg, MI**

**MINUTES**

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**Members Present:** Ron Centofanti, Tina Forsyth, Carol Lohman, David Schriemer, Dan Grabowski, Stephanie Willoughby and Virgil Knowles

**Members Absent:** None

**Board Secretary:** Amy Manchester

**Administrators Present:** Keevin O'Neill, Steve Goss, Gail VanDaff, Adam Brush, Matt Hawkins, Allison Dygert, Joe Werkema, Amie McCaw, Sarah Bacalia, Sarah Dyer, Jessica Wheeler, Alyssa Thompson, Mike Barwegen, Dewey Waterman, Lourdes Puzevic

**Guests Present:** Lisa Coe, Kelly MacDonell, Cristina Patzelt, Tim Mullins, Stephanie Nelson, Janyce Hutchins, Dave Muzlijakovich, Megan Myers, Vic Simmons, Janet Beuckeloer, George Beucheloer, Melissa Tutt, Jen Brush, Lori Hunt, Dave & Heather Simmons, Tatiana Curtiss, Matt and Michelle Simmons, Alexa and Alexander Ault, Keith and Melanie Ahern, Robert Ford, Kasara Perry, Holly Hill, Julie Koeman, Katie Goss, Cherie Allen, Jessie DeKoning, Jim and Virginia Shaw, Jen Saidla, Kelly Vermeulen, Dennis and Laura Burr, Tyler and Christa Sharp, Myrtha and Ryler Connor, Christine Babcock, Tracy Hall, Keith and Stephanie Reed, Dan and Kelly Oswalt, Adrian McClelland, Perry Hostetler, Kurt Classen, Susan Louis, Stacie Kline, Jen Van Tassell, Sharon Hosner, Tammy Banter, Julie Johnson, Julie Gless, Laura and Jason Heckelman, Dave and Heather Zemitans, Maya and Kim Qualls, Gage DeGrave, Meaghan Brenan, Jessica Cox, John and Arlene Kiel, Jaime and Jennifer Buikema, Scott Lawrence, Marissa Cohrs, Ryan Schramer, Kendra Shearer, Allison Van Heulen, Steve Lam, Kendall Childs, Brittney Fess, Jennifer Roe, Kris DeVries, Tobin and Donna Houts, Kip and Tamara Young, August Roberts, Sheri Sherman, Trudy Gwilt, Cara Holysz, Charles Eyster, Lisa O'Neill, Anna Marie Caulder, Natalie Mason, Sarah Vine, Aaron Mason, Larry Ketchbaw, Michelle and Tim Wester, Gareth and Landon Troyer, Jen and Chad Cooley, Sarah Geist, Charles Glaes, Carina Snow, DeVries, Jennifer Grace, Kem Hoopengartner, M. Wessels and K. Austin, James Bippus, Scott and Shelley Tindall, Jessie and Tammy Sharp, Tom and Lori O'Malley, Amanda Dimock, Joshua Phillips, Mat Chemlouski, Scott Miller, Lisa Willcutt, Jason Patnoude, Nate Griffin, Jill Geerz, Claire Poun, John and Marcia Gardner, Krystal Witherell, Rick and Kristin Burmeister, Richard and Liz Cutshaw, Elyse Rowland, Tammy Bailey, Cheri and Andy Vandermoren, Marc Dinzik, Jacki Stevens, Lynn Hettinger, Kemi Lang, Todd and Missy Miller, Saleem Ismail, Katilyn Harville, Chelsea Lawrence, Lindsay Sommers, Michael Fry, Heidi Powell, Shawn Wayne, Michael Cleggs, Stephanie Orr, Cassie Byers, Lisa and Larry Hostetler, Eric and Shannon Myers, Gail Sampsell, Mason Adler, Denise Berry, Jim DeLaBarre, Josh Childs, Dana Ames, Chris Futrell, Tara Kanouse, Patrick Hagan, John Moter, Dan Ouelette, Greg Culver, Megan and Mary Burke, Katie Nantais, Logan Connors, Rachel and Joe King, Madeline Goodman, Ali Bryant-Shook, Lisa Johnson.

President Knowles called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

I. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Supt. O'Neill began with statements recognizing the great start of the school year and congratulated VHS for earning national ranking as recognized by US News and World Report.

A. Legislative Update

All remains quiet in Lansing as both the House and Senate have just returned from summer break. Supt. O'Neill will share future educational developments.

B. Important Dates

Supt. O'Neill directed the Board to the listing of important dates including Homecoming which is the first week of October.

II. REPORTS AND PUBLIC INQUIRY

A. Budget and Finance Report - Steve Goss

Asst. Supt. Goss presented the monthly budget progress report for month ending August, 2023 with total revenues of \$418,184; total expenditures of \$1,325,982 and deficit of revenues over expenditures of \$(907,798).

B. Investment Holdings Update - Steve Goss

Asst. Supt. Goss gave an update of the District's investments.

C. VCS Athletics Annual Report - Mike Roy

Athletic Director Mike Roy presented the VCS Athletic Department's annual report which he started by introducing new Athletic Secretary, Kris DeVries. He expressed appreciation to all the staff that help the programs run smoothly. The athletic boosters continue to be very supportive and provide many student athlete scholarships each year. He shared that many students will be competing at the collegiate level in 2023-24.

III. AUDIENCE

Kendall Childs spoke about vaping in the bathrooms at the HS being a bigger concern than transgender students in the bathroom.

Jason Patnoudé spoke out against the lawsuit.

Rick Burmeister addressed the Board regarding the district bathroom policy. He questioned the Board on the policy.

Richard Cutshaw is concerned about the Board not protecting students. He shared statistics of depression in children and teens.

Liz Cutshaw read a letter on behalf of Liz Belcher (who was unable to be at the meeting) She feels there is too much focus on children's sexuality.

Cherie Vandermore expressed her son's concerns about being at VMS and he now wants to be home schooled due to what is going on in the District.

Lynn Hettinger addressed the Board regarding her fears for her grandson. She's hoping this can all be resolved soon.

Missy Miller spoke about wanting all kids to feel safe. An accommodation for transgender students is needed for students to feel safe.

Stephanie Orr shared that her son is at Indian Lake Elementary and she is worried about transgender students in bathrooms. She does not agree with the Board and the school policies.

Lisa Hostettler has concerns about the Board's policy and feels it is unfair and unsafe. She is upset that the Board is grooming students. Why is Vicksburg doing this?

Eric Myers addressed the Board with questions on the transgender policy.

Vic Simmons addressed the board regarding their experience at VHS as a transgender student.

Mason Adler expressed appreciation to the Board for upholding the law.

Mary Burke shared her appreciation for the Board and the school district with special appreciation to Mr. Brush and Mr. Hawkins who always make all students feel supported.

Megan Burke told the Board that she's always attended Vicksburg Schools and has never once felt unsafe. There is too much negativity and not enough about positivity.

Christine Babcock is disappointed in some members of the Vicksburg community and spoke in support of the district.

Tracy Hall from OutFront Kalamazoo addressed the Board in support of transgender students.

Cassie Byers addressed the Board on the use of restrooms. She believes the transgender students should be the ones to use the private bathrooms and not use the gender they identify with. She is also concerned that staff will not tell parents about gender issues.

#### IV. BOARD ACTION REQUIRED

A. Approval of the August 14, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes: A motion for approval was made by Forsyth and supported by Lohman.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of General Fund Invoices for the month ending August 2023, Totaling \$521,493.32 - ROLL CALL VOTE: A motion for approval was made by Lohman and supported by Centofanti.

Motion carried unanimously by roll-call vote.

C. Approval of Purchase Card Disbursements for July 2023, Totaling \$101,602.51 - ROLL CALL VOTE: A motion for approval was made by Grabowski and supported by Forsyth.

Motion carried unanimously by roll-call vote.

- D. Approval of Readmittance of Student 2019-20B on a Behavior Contract - ROLL CALL VOTE: A motion for approval was made by Lohmand and supported by Grabowski.

Motion carried unanimously by roll-call vote.

- E. Approval of the resignation of Sunset Lake Teacher, Rasma Gertners, effective August 23, 2023. A motion for approval was made by Forsyth and supported by Centofanti.

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. Approval of the Following Teacher Contracts Upon Results of State and Federal Records and Unprofessional Conduct Checks: A motion for approval was made by Willoughby and supported by Schriemer.

Motion carried unanimously.

1. Robert Nolan - Pathways HS
2. Michelle Johnson - Pathways HS
3. Jennifer Stubbs - Vicksburg Middle School
4. Amanda Dabideen - Sunset Lake Elementary

- G. Approval to move into closed session for the purpose of considering an attorney-client privileged communication, as allowed under the Open Meetings Act 15.268, Section 8(h). - ROLL CALL VOTE: A motion for approval was made by Forsyth and supported by Willoughby

Motion carried unanimously by roll-call vote and the Board entered closed session at 8:20 pm.

Thrun Attorney, Cristina Patzelt, distributed a confidential Attorney-Client Communication and gave an update to the Board on the status of the lawsuit. Attorney Tim Mullins was also present to answer questions from the Board.

President Knowles adjourned the closed session and reconvened regular session at 9:42 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Knowles adjourned the meeting at 9:43 pm.

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President Virgil Knowles

October 9, 2023

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Secretary Amy Manchester