

OCTORARA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes of Board Meeting Held on August 3, 2020

The Work Session of the Octorara Area School Board was held in the Octorara Area Jr./Sr. High School Multi-Purpose Room and via Zoom on August 3, 2020.

A moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance preceded the meeting.

The President, Mr. Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Other members present were Ms. Bowman, Mr. Falgiatore, Mr. Ganow (Mr. Ganow left the MPR at 7:52 to join via Zoom), Mr. Hurley, Mr. Koennecker, Mr. Norris, Ms. Yelovich, and Mr. Zimmerman. Also present were Mrs. Hardy, Secretary; Dr. Orner, Superintendent; Mr. Curtis, Business Manager; members of the administrative team via Zoom; Ava Zimmerman, student representative, one reporter, and one citizen with an additional 365 citizens who attended the meeting via Zoom

Under presentations, Dr. Orner, Dr. Tachau, and Mr. Hilbolt gave a presentation on the school reopening plan.

Under visitors' comments for agenda items only, Tracey Wichhart, West Fallowfield, expressed her concern about students not being able to build a portfolio in the CTE programs if they are not having in person instruction.

Dr. Orner said the CTE programs would possibly be one of the first HUBS put in place.

Karen Williamson, Christiana, said she would like the opportunity to teach students face-to-face.

Katie Klingensmith, Parkesburg, thanked everyone for their work in this unprecedented time with the difficult decisions that need to be made. She asked for clarification on students being able to remove their masks while seated at their desks if they are 6' apart. She also asked for clarification on whether staff will be required to wear masks while on school property.

Karen Smith, Christiana, asked if there would be in person support available to come to the home for students with an IEP if parents choose remote learning.

Sarah Mitchell, Londonderry Township, asked if there will be extra support at home for students with an IEP or 504 who cannot wear a mask and choose remote learning.

Scott Rohrer, West Fallowfield, thanked the district for their efforts and encouraged the Board and administration to return students to school as soon as possible.

Rebecca Underwood, Atglen, asked if there will be a process for screening students daily, if parents will need to screen their students at home before they come to school, and if there will be repercussions for parents who do not screen their children.

Dr. Orner said the guidance the district has received from the Department of Health says the screening process is done at home.

There were no information items.

On motion of Ms. Bowman, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present by a roll call vote with Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Falgiatore voting no, the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Superintendent's recommendation for the reopening of school for 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Fox presented the following items for action at the August 17, 2020 Board meeting:

- A. That the Octorara Board of School Directors approve Policy 707 *Use of Public School Facilities*, first reading.
- B. That the Octorara Board of School Directors approve the new and revised curricula, textbooks, and resources as presented by Dr. Tachau.

Hiring Approvals:

- C. That the Octorara Board of School Directors approve Ms. Donna Ferrier as a long term substitute instructional assistant at the Octorara Primary Learning Center effective September 8, 2020 through approximately January 22, 2021. Ms. Ferrier's rate will be \$12.65 per hour for 5.75 hours per day. (Ms. Ferrier is an approved substitute and is replacing a family medical leave.)
- D. That the Octorara Board of School Directors approve the list of supplemental contracts for the 2020-2021 school year.
- E. That the Octorara Board of School Directors approve the list of substitute teachers and support staff for the 2020-2021 school year.

Under the Policy Committee Report, Ms. Bowman reported the Committee discussed the first reading of Policy 707 *Use of Public School Facilities*.

Under the Facilities Committee Report, Mr. Norris said the Committee met briefly and discussed the removal of a tree on the Jr. High property

There were no other items/concerns or visitors' comments for items in general.

Under administrator comments, Dr. Orner said she appreciated the determined and thoughtful approach the administration took in the school reopening process. She thanked the Board for their patience and understanding, along with the questions and challenges that they put before the administrative team to ensure a reopening plan that is in the best interest of all stakeholders.

Under Board comments, Mr. Falgiatore said he wanted the administrative team to understand that his no vote for the plan was not a reflection on the work that they have done. He explained his no vote was for the parents who responded to the survey that wanted their students back in school.

Mr. Hurley asked what level we are at for sports.

Ms. Gaido responded that as of today, August 3, we are at level 3.

Mr. Zimmerman said his no vote had nothing against administration but feels we need to look at the numbers. He is concerned that Octorara will have to do what other Chester County school districts are doing despite the fact that we do not have the number of cases other districts are seeing.

Ms. Bowman thanked everyone for attending the Zoom meeting and for the comments. She thanked the Board and the administrative team for the work they have put into the plan considering all the moving targets. She is optimistic that we will continue to cautiously move forward in the best interest of the students and staff.

Mr. Ganow said he is excited to see K-6 students having the choice of being able to return to school. His take away from tonight's meeting is the need to find a way to get the seniors back to school as soon as possible.

Mr. Fox thanked the administration, Board, and the community for their civil comments during tonight's meeting. He said we all want the same thing and that is getting the students back to school. The dilemma is how and when we can do it safely.

Mr. Fox announced Austin Balady, an Octorara graduate, was on the design team for the drogue parachute for the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover that launched recently. The parachute decelerates the Rover for landing to avoid crashing, a process that starts millions of miles before it reaches the surface of Mars. Austin put his initials on the Rover – we are proud that a part of Octorara will be represented on Mars.

Mr. Fox announced an executive session for legal matters was held on July 28, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High Multi-Purpose Room/Zoom.

Mr. Fox announced the following upcoming meetings to be held:

Finance Committee Meeting – Monday, August 17, 2020 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room/Zoom

Next regularly scheduled Board Meeting – Monday, August 17, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room/Zoom

Education Committee Meeting – Monday, August 24, 2020 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room/Zoom

There being no further items of business the meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m. on motion of Mr. Koennecker, second by Ms. Bowman and approval of all members present.

This Board meeting can be viewed in its entirety on You Tube.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill L. Hardy, Secretary
Octorara Board of School Directors