

Jason Chevrier Superintendent 518-732-2297 Shelley Palmer President Board of Education

Tuesday, April 25, 2023 April 25, 2023 - Board of Education Agenda - Regular Meeting

Minutes are final and were approved at the May 16, 2023, board meeting.

Meeting Time: 6:00 pm

Meeting Location open to public: 1477 South Schodack Road, Room 310

Live Stream Link for viewing or listening:

https://schodackk12.webex.com/schodackk12/j.php?MTID=m494d879702d15cf41e0a54d22df151dd

1-646-992-2010

Access number: 2333 054 6825

Present: Shelley Palmer, Mary Yurista, Tylea Gebbie, Sherri Gibson, Marion Spar, Daniel Grandinetti,

Ashley Palmer, and Kurt Maier

Absent: None.

Also Present: Jason Chevrier, Brian Carey, Alyssa Sabbatino, Hillary Brochu, James Derby, Kara Likar, Jacqueline Hill and Michele Reickert

1. MEETING OPENING

A. The Board of Education began with Executive Session at 5:30 to discuss the employment history of a particular person.

- B. **President, Shelley Palmer** called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm and thanked members of the public that were present for their patience.
- C. President, Shelley Palmer asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- D. Kurt Maier moved for approval of the present agenda, Sherri Gibson seconded, all present in favor.
- E. **Kurt Maier moved** to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2023, regular meeting, April 4, 2023, workshop meeting, and April 17, 2023, board meeting, **Ashely Palmer seconded**, **all present in favor**.

2. QUESTAR III ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET AND ELECTION

- A. **Sherri Gibson moved** for approval of the 2023-2024 Administrative Budget of the Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene BOCES in the amount of \$7,152,804, **Tylea Gebbie seconded, all present in favor.**
- B. **The Board of Education voted** electing four (4) candidates to the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Counties, to fill four (4) expiring terms.

Ms. Mary Dowd Daly (District of Residence: Hudson City School District)

9 Yes 0 No

Mr. Joseph (Seph) Garland (District of Residence: Coxsackie-Athens Central School District) 9 Yes 0 No

Mr. John C. Hill (District of Residence: Hoosic Valley Central School District)

9 Yes 0 No

Ms. Mary Yurista (District of Residence: Schodack Central School District)

9 yes 0 No

3. REPORTS

A. April 17, 2023 Presenter - Jason Chevrier & Alyssa Sabbatino

Jason Chevrier and Alyssa Sabbatino talked about the presenter from April 17, 2023, the presenter was asked in to talk about Poetry Slam, she had credible sources from Youth Leadership Symposium, sponsored by NYSUT, had some information provided to the librarian from an administrator from a local school district that had one consulting work with the individual, and came recommended to facilitate a presentation on Poetry Slam. While talking about herself as an individual she talked about her association with Black Lives Matter and the movement, and talked about lynching of George Floyd, she continued to talk down that path that it is public lynching by police anytime a black person is arrested. Said as an introduction of herself and was not part to the planned presentation. That information was not encouraged or asked for by the district. Teachers expressed concern to building admin, admin met with guest speaker and explained that comments were offensive and we are expected to be neutral. Kids were offended, a lot of us were offended, and administration responded swiftly. We don't expect kids to sit through that kind of stuff, we are hopefully approving a policy that will provide standard and guidelines on neutrality of topics.

Alyssa Sabbatino shared that teachers came to them about 5 minutes into her speaking and they were up within 8 minutes, pulled the presenter, spoke to the presenter about eliminating the context from the presentation for remainder of the day. After the block ended, they met to talk about the rest of the day, and that she stays on script for the rest of the day. The recordings from the rest of the day indicate that she did what was asked. Next steps of the coursework were discussed with the teachers to make a plan to talk to students acknowledging that the comments were unacceptable. Student did produce incredible poetry.

Jason talked about the vetting that goes into speakers that come into the district. I understand people were offended, school staff, and there are people that are not. It should not happen to our students unintentionally. Was not expected. We own it, and recognize it is not acceptable and put plans in place to assure it does not happen again.

Alyssa Sabbatino stated that the district will still hold the Poetry Slam on May 3, 2023, the presenter will not be there, the poems and work of students are magnificent, the poetry slam will now be mc'd by students and kids are excited about it.

Dan Grandinetti stated that he was speaking for himself not as the board, don't believe it is a mistake, it is as predictable 2-3 months ago talking about difficult conversations, I raised concerns about bias, and ideologies and making sure our kids are not indoctrinated. In response a teacher sent an email to the Board suggesting Mr. Grandinetti is out of touch. At a later meeting, teacher shows up with another teacher

There was brief conversation between the Board President, other board members and Mr. Grandinetti regarding what could be discussed when relating to personnel matters. Board president asked Mr. Grandinetti to stop.

Mary Yurista moved to move along in the agenda, Angie Beber seconded, all present in favor.

Daniel Grandinetti and members of the board continued exchanging words.

Ashley Palmer moved to enter executive session at 6:32 pm to continue the discussion about the personnel matter, **Tylea Gebbie seconded**, all **present in favor**.

Mary Yurista moved to return to regular session at 6:51, Kurt Maier seconded, all present in favor.

Kurt Maier moved to enter Board Discussion followed by Public Comment, all present in favor.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Daniel Grandinetti apologized to the Board and community for the outburst and not following protocol and respectful behavior. He continued to express strong feelings about how things played out. Does not believe it is widespread in this district but some do have ideologies and he has concern some bias may be presented in a way that kids are being indoctrinated. A few years ago a student spoke at graduation and said comments that leaned one way in terms of ideology, this work was approved by English Department. Opinions should be balanced. We have a tragic incident happen at the school, on duty and off duty law enforcement come to protect our students and the following week is when this slam poetry happens. He googled speaker and shared a poem, and many articles involving the guest speaker on saying kids need to be introduced to this at schools. Feels the students, families, and board are owed an apology from presenter. Acknowledged Jason and Alyssa for cancelling future incidents. Letter to parents does not mention anything remotely offensive only references upcoming poetry event. No follow up letter, we did the right thing that should've been communicated with the public.

Alyssa Sabbatino stated she spoke with teachers, she told them she would not be comfortable with the speaker coming back and that was communicated to Mr. Chevrier, Ms. Sabbatino continued to say that the Poetry Slam for students would still happen.

Daniel Grandinetti spoke about the budget and that there was a School Resource Officer in the budget, and he supports it. It is unfortunate that the first time we are talking about having a school resource officer in the budget and we have someone in our district spewing such hatred about the police and wants to defund the police.

Shelley Palmer stated that she thought it was awful, it has been presented as unintentional and by continuing to discuss this person and them, we are giving them a platform and suggested that the meeting move on. She appreciates that action was taken and chooses to no longer give this person a platform.

Daniel Grandinetti stated that he does not want to give a platform either but it is important for community to know we are putting this ideology on notice, we don't want it, and it is not acceptable.

Mary Yurista mentioned the board policy on the agenda for approval that gives the authority to allow students to have conversations and think outside of the box, but in a controlled manner aligned with curriculum and standards. It needs guidelines that would say what any outside speaker

Kurt Maier pointed out the policy to be approved and the parent notification requirement in that policy.

Shelley Palmer asked if a student was uncomfortable, could they walk out of a presentation like that.

Alyssa Sabbatino answered, if a student has difficulty with any content it is appropriate for them to ask to be excused.

Tylea Gebbie stated that the controversial topic policy will help but it does not encompass guest speakers. Suggested a thorough policy on guest speakers.

Sherri Gibson expressed policy will help in providing something the admin and teachers to lean on. It will be helpful to have more in black and white. Guest speaker policy not only for vetting but it has to be in a way that it works, don't want so difficult that we can't bring in guest speakers.

There was discussion about the potential policy and different visitors that come to the school.

Sherri Gibson moved to close Board Discussion, Mary Yurista seconded, all present in favor.

Sherri Gibson moved to open public comment, Kurt Maier seconded, all present in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eric Leonard – There should be a form for a guest speaker, stated he can't roam through the hallways, standard of having a speaker come in has to be higher. A simple form, quick google search, it's about kid's safety. A quick google search would have shown that she was a BLM activist and follow up questions would have vetted a lot of information. Guidelines could have been set saying you are not allowed to talk about this. Hard questions need to be asked especially when it come to the safety of the kids.

Corie Noel – video was taken by my child, English teachers push one agenda and one agenda alone, don't bring in both sides, they don't talk about both sides, no discipline. They knew what they were doing, constantly push their agenda, we have consequences for our students quite a bit, we should have consequences for teachers. The email said how positive and great it was, but it wasn't. She would have been brought back if that video wasn't taken, child is tired of hearing one side in English class.

Jessica Colvin – the bigger problem is consistency, this is a one thing that has captured everyone's attention, but bigger issue is consistent and happens consistently across the board, seeing a trend more and more, elementary straight on up. Teachers, TAs, hall monitors, staff of any kind, children know position, everyone is entitled to position, however with best educators, kids come home and don't know their position. This was not an accident, not accidental everyone knew about this presenter and knew better than having this presenter. This cannot be tolerated.

Stephanie DiTonno – this goes beyond the incident with the guest speaker, there were two other incidents in the last three months, one during the wellness day, kids shown a Columbine video with kids throwing cocktails, kids getting shot at, unacceptable. English teacher talking about Black Lives Matter. It's got to end, don't push your agenda on our children.

Stephanie Leonard – although children do not attend Schodack School District anymore, a taxpayer and someone with many friends in community, need to express feelings. Thanked Jason Chevrier for owning this, is reassured to hear the board's reaction, feels visitor was calculated move and if there was no

recording it would have been dismissed. Ms. Sabbatino approved this speaker, I sat on the hiring committee when she was hired, amazing conversation and connection during interviews, felt she would be an amazing addition to Schodack Central Schools, but that was wrong. Bringing in Ms. Sangare was deliberate and disgusting and should have harsh consequences. Appears Ms. Sabbatino's agenda is not aligned with the Schodack community. One click of phone, brings up disgusting posts, deep hatred about police, and authority. This is the person that's chosen to speak to the teacher's union the state of NY, this is the way education is going in NY having people like this in? Do not believe no one knew of her opinions, appears to be an Oops let me do what I want to do and ask forgiveness later. Raise our children to respect the police and authority. Speaker owes us all an apology.

Jon Reickert – father of 3 in the district, going to have a slightly different opinion, speaker was brought to my attention by son who was in the class, we discussed it with him and then inquired with teachers and Ms. Sabbatino as to what happened and asked for answers. Answers came. Don't believe it was an intentional act by anybody but shows a failure with vetting which sounds like it is being addressed this evening. and lack of policy that is also being addressed this evening. Once these things are in place hopefully this will prevent this from happening again. For someone who has almost 28 years in law enforcement, my son had to sit in a class and listen to somebody liken his father's job to a public lynching. Son knew it was ridiculous. Urge implementing policies and following them, several small failures amount to a big one. Not blaming anyone, just want to see it get fixed.

Sherri Gibson moved to close public comment, Tylea Gebbie seconded, all present in favor.

B. Clay Traps - Kurt Maier, Ed Finney and Daniel Bentley

Jason Chevrier expressed that this has been a discussion for quite some time. Introduced Ed Finney and Dan Bentley who have expressed interest in getting this off the ground.

Kurt Maier reiterated that clay traps has been talked about for about a year now, reached out to other schools that have the club, it is the safest club (not a sport) in the state and he would argue the nation. Daniel Bentley and Ed Finney talked about the program, safety requirements, and shared that firearms and ammunition never come on school grounds, safety courses must be completed by all participants, a schedule was shared and it will not interfere with fall or spring sports participation. Gives students that don't participate in sports to have the opportunity to participate in a club and wear the MH logo with pride.

Tylea Gebbie - thank you for putting this together, helpful information, will be adding a club to her calendars, her kids will want to participate. Teaches safe and appropriate gun use. What happens with kids that already have hunter safety course?

Mr. Finney: They may want everyone to go through the course again.

Coach ratio will that create a cap to the numbers?

Ed Finney: Looking into but adult members of the club that have the certification will be there as well, they will count to the ratio.

Mary Yurista - serving on the Questar board has allowed her to talk with members on the Questar board from schools that have the program, what is the educational value.

Mr. Finney, education on proper care and safety, Dan Bentley talked about the social emotional benefits, what you learn on team you carry into life. Wonderful opportunity that gets community members involved with our kids.

Kurt Maier said he has heard from other schools that it gets kids that would not normally be around each other to bond and form friendships.

Angela Beber - will our club be 6-12?

Ed Finney - no our club will be 9-12 to see how it goes.

Jason Chevrier – we need to sign that the club can use the Maple Hill name, as long as there is no objection, Jason will sign that.

C. Superintendent's Recommended 2023-2024 Budget - Jason Chevrier and Brian Carey

Jason thanked Brian Carey, Jill Filkins and the business office for their work on the budget.

Brian Carey stated that we do not have a State budget yet numbers are based on the information we currently have. He shared information relating to what changed in revenue, additions and subtractions to expenses, what propositions will appear on the ballot, and what happens if the budget is voted down. The three-part budget was shared and what each part encompasses.

D. Volunteer Firefighter/EMT Property Tax Exemption

Brian Carey shared information on the new law that amends Real Property Tax Code allowing for an exemption to volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers. The requirements and additional benefits available were shared. There is no direct impact to the district, the exemption would be spread out over the remaining tax payers.

Kurt Maier asked about the verification process and when it would go into effect.

Brian Carey said it will be the responsibility of the individual entities to provide prove the members, and it would be effective next year.

Dan Grandinetti expressed if taxpayers had to pay for a fire department and ambulance the cost would be considerably higher, this is a small percentage considering what we could have to pay.

Mary Yurista asked what decision the board needs to make now.

A head nod was given for Brian Carey to move ahead with the public hearing and calculations. The board said they were comfortable with aligning with what the Town of Schodack approved. Public hearing to take place on May 16, 2023.

4. POLICY(IES) / OTHER ACTION

A. Sherri Gibson moved to approve the 2nd reading and adoption of the following policy(ies):

4770 Graduation Requirements

5100 Student Attendance

5152 Admission of Non-Resident Students

5225 Student Personal Expression

5420-R Student Health Services Regulation 5460 Child Abuse, Maltreatment or Neglect in a Domestic Setting 5500 Student Records, **Tylea Gebbie seconded**, all present in favor.

B. **Tylea Gebbie moved** to un-table policy 1420 Complaints about Curricula or Instructional Resources, which was tabled at March 16, 2023, Board of Education Meeting, **Sherri Gibson seconded, all present in favor.**

There was discussion about policy 1420 before motion was made about adding a timeline to the policy.

- C. **Sherri Gibson moved** for approval of the 2nd reading and adoption of policy 1420 Complaints about Curricula or Instructional Resources with amendment to the last paragraph to include language about 30 days, **Tylea Gebbie seconded**, **all present in favor**.
- D. **Mary Yurista moved** for approval of the 2nd reading and adoption of policy 4810 Teaching of Controversial Issues, **Sherri Gibson seconded**, **all present in favor**.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris fowler teaches 7th grade English and SFA co-president stated that March 30 & 31st and the days following the swatting incident the English department took time to write thank you letters to first responders. She holds an annual community history project with veterans, first responders, and community helpers that supports important people here in our education community.

Jon Reickert – trap team fantastic idea, former member of the Nassau Sportsman's Club Jr. Trap team, wonderful competitive time to have with other teams and as a 25 year police firearms instructor, range safety is not taken lightly and they should be proud that there have been no injuries with 70 million rounds. Offered to help out in any way.

6. BOARD DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEM FOLLOW UP

A. Board Discussion

Sherri Gibson asked about the Community Forum, still want to get a community group together to discuss a variety of topics.

Tylea Gebbie – asked about scheduling building tours, we need to look at calendars, discussion ensued about when to hold the meeting.

Angie thanked the community for coming in, the administration for giving the information when requested and encouraged the community, parents, family members to reach out and discussed concerns. Not many parents reached out, we want everyone to be heard, everyone makes mistakes, we hold everyone accountable but it shouldn't affect the value of the person.

B. Action Item Follow-up

- Community Service Requirement for Graduation follow up to come
- Additional dual enrollment college courses follow up to come
- SRO follow up.

SRO, Jason sent an email to supervisor Peter that we are asking the board to approve the Superintendent's Recommended Budget, which includes a SRO and engage in conversation. Haven't heard back yet, will reach out again. If it doesn't work out with the Town, we will reach out to Rensselaer County Sheriff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

2nd board discussion

7. DISTRICT/BUILDING/STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE/COMMITTEE

A. District Updates

24 applicants for Principal, resumes are reviewed by leadership and a consensus is made on who will be screened virtually, collectively there is discussion about how many candidates are moved forward to the stakeholders groups. Looking at a June appointment.

- Anchor Food Drive Rensselaer County DA's officer, and some of the districts service clubs helped collect food for the Anchor. The anchor does a great job supporting our community.
- Capital Project Update Gym floor is done a picture will be shared. Phase 1 expected to start soon, we are waiting on approval from State Ed. Consultants were contacted by the State and we anticipate approval soon. Phase 2 will also be approved soon but will start next summer.
- Enrollment Report attached for review.

B. Building Updates

- Castleton Elementary School First Grandparents day since 2019, well received, positive
 comments, lip sync was last Friday night, not packed but the stands were filled, kids put on a
 great show, wrapped up a 2-week long fundraiser organized by 6th grade student CAPP not for
 profit all workers are volunteers, student brought in so many things to donate.
- Maple Hill Jr./Sr. High School Last week was State ELA test, 7th & 8th completed it via Computer Based Testing. It Department was very helpful, it went well. Nutrition committee met last week for student to share thoughts and opinions. Senior Citizen luncheon tomorrow first since COVID, Band will play, guitar club will perform. Next Friday is Prom at Birch Hill from 7:00 10:00, walkthroughs will start at 4:00.

C. Committee Updates

- CES Building Planning Committee Marion Spar, Tylea Gebbie, and Ashley Palmer No Report
- MS/HS Building Planning Committee Marion Spar, Angela Beber, Kurt Maier, and Sherri Gibson
 No Report
- Professional Development Planning Committee Shelley Palmer and Marion Spar met this past week, full meeting, a lot of reflecting on March 17 PD Day, gathered feedback and worked to engage team with reflection template to reflect on MTSS process in the district and to get input on how to get feedback in the district as a whole. Future Monday PD session ideas were discussed as well as summer PD offerings.
- Technology Committee Mary Yurista and Sherri Gibson Ed Finney lead with Alyssa, discussion about preparation for the state testing, next Tech meeting will be June 1. More parents in

- CANVAS than in the Fall, almost doubled, 334 parents, change syllabus in canvas using standard terminology, and 7th grade skills course ¼ be dedicated to technology.
- NYSSBA Legislative Liaison Angela Beber No Report
- Health and Safety / SAVE Committee Marion Spar, Ashley Palmer, and Tylea Gebbie No Report
- o Audit Committee Mary Yurista, Kurt Maier, and Daniel Grandinetti No Report
- o Building Visitation Committee All members as a whole No Report

8. FINANCE

Prins Agency Inc.

A. **Sherri Gibson moved** for approval of a resolution adopting the 2023-2024 school district budget in the amount of \$28,020,109 to be presented to voters on May 16, 2023, **Tylea Gebbie seconded, all present in favor.**

Kurt Maier moved to approve items 8. B. through 8. G., Mary Yurista seconded, all present in favor.

- B. Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report for the month(s) of February 2023.
- C. Acceptance of the Claims Auditor's Report for the month(s) of February 2023.

\$75

Award

CM691.6

Geometry Award

D. Acceptance and/or Acknowledgement of Donations:

Schodack Central School District						
Gifts & Donations for Acceptance (Increasing General Fund) at Board Meeting						
Date:						
	DONATION			ADDITIONAL		
DONOR NAME	AMOUNT	PURPOSE	CODE	INFORMATION		
Maple Hill Booster			A2855 401 80	Towards cost of installing a		
Club	\$2,500	Donation	0000	softball fence		
Schodack Central School District						
Gifts & Donations to be Acknowledged (TA & TE) at Board Meeting Date: April						
25, 2023						
	DONATION			ADDITIONAL		
DONOR NAME	AMOUNT	PURPOSE	CODE	INFORMATION		
				JoAnn Bennison Scholarship		
Angela F. Colvin	\$25	Scholarship	CM691.Bennison	donation		
Rensselaer Teachers'				JoAnn Bennison Scholarship		
Association	\$25	Scholarship	CM691.Bennison	donation		
				JoAnn Bennison Scholarship		
Carol K. Donnelly						

				Eleanor Tanner Business
Kathleen M. Tanner	\$250	Scholarship	CM691.Scholar	Education Award

E. Approval of a Contracts

Schodack Central School District						
Contract / Lease Approvals for Board Meeting: Date: April 25, 2023						
CONTRACTOR /	TERM OF			ADDITIONAL		
VENDOR NAME	CONTRACT	PURPOSE	RATE/RETAINER	INFORMATION		
				District Wide Reconstruction &		
Turner Contract		Construction		Renovations - 2022 Capital		
Agreement		Manager		Project		
US OMNI & TSACG		Services Agreement for				
Compliance Svcs.		403(b) & 457(b)	See Exhibit A	3rd Party Administrator		
TENANT NAME						

- F. Approval of salaries for the District Clerk, Claims Auditor, Undesignated and Management Confidential employees for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years.
- G. Acceptance of the recommendation of Turner Construction to award Contract No. 01 Site Construction Prime Contract to DelSignore Blacktop Paving, Inc. with ADD Alternate NO. SC-3: High School Tennis Courts and to authorize the District to send an intent to proceed letter to DelSignore Blacktop Paving, Inc. with the intent to present a contract to the Board of Education for approval at the May 4, 2023, meeting.

9. OTHER ACTION

Mary Yurista moved to approve items 9. A. through 9. C., Kurt Maier seconded, all present in favor.

- A. Approval of the recommendation of the District Committee on Preschool Special Education and the District Committee on Special Education regarding Special Education Services for student(s) as indicated on the attached report(s).
- **B.** Approval of a resolution declaring that the work to be done in the Maple Hill Jr/Sr High School Gymnasium is a Type II action and requires no further review and authorizes the district to enter into contracts associated with the project.
- C. Motion to approve the 2023-2024 school calendar.

10. RESIGNATIONS / APPOINTMENTS

Mary Yurista moved to approve items 10. A. through 10. B., Sherri Gibson seconded, all present in favor.

A. Approval of Staffing Actions

	Schodack Central School District						
Staffing Actions for Board Meeting Date: April 25, 2023							
RESIGNATIONS	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON	COMMENT			
Frederick Hiller	Automotive Mechanic	March 31, 2023	Resignation	To take a position as School Bus Driver.			
Jennifer Cardamone	School Social Worker	April 6, 2023	Resignation				
Caroline Hampton	Elementary Education Teacher	June 23, 2023	Resignation				
SUBSTITUTE APPOINTMENTS	SUBSTITUTE AREA			RATE			
Davina Gladney	Teacher and Teaching Assistant			Rate set at the July 14, 2022 organizational meeting.			
Rebecca Hall	Teaching Assistant			Rate set at the July 14, 2022 organizational meeting.			
			EFFECTIVE				
APPOINTMENT Frederick Hiller	AREA School Bus Driver	TYPE	DATE	RATE CSEA Job Rate			
Philip Meppen	Building Maintenance Mechanic	Probationary	April 3, 2023 April 19, 2023	CSEA JOD Rate CSEA Start Rate			

B. Approval of a Resolution allowing Lisa Bryda to rescind her resignation.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

12. ACTION ITEMS

Policy on Guest Speaker, Community Forum, Building visit times and dates, and a letter for the Clay Trap Team.

13. ADJOURNMENT

A. **Kurt Maier moved** to adjourn to the executive session to discuss contract negotiations with the Business Administrator and a personnel matter of a particular employee, **Ashley Palmer seconded**, **all present in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Reickert District Clerk