

**Minutes for Regular Called Meeting  
Pope County CUSD #1  
Board of Education  
J. H. Hobbs Memorial Library  
November 17, 2020  
7:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Hogg and the following members were present: Aly, Wallace, Simmons, and Hogg. Walker and Schuchardt were absent.**

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Wallace and seconded by Aly. Roll call vote: all ayes.**

**Motion was made by Aly and seconded by Wallace to approve the consent agenda including the following: 1) Approve Minutes of Board Meetings on 10/15/2020; 2) Approve Closed Session Minutes; 3) Approve Bills for Payment; 4) Accept Financial Reports; 5) Publication of Annual Statement of Affairs; and 6) Resignation of Debbie Logsdon, Individual Aide. After some questions regarding the bills, roll call vote: all ayes.**

**President Hogg recognized Mr. Jacob Lane and student, Ryder Ward. They presented a proposal to the Board for starting an Esports Club for video gaming. This is an up and coming sport in high schools and in colleges. It is an IHSA regulated sport and all the games played for competition are IHSA approved. There is a growing interest in the high school and Mr. Lane stated colleges even**

offer scholarships. Mr. Lane stated he would be the sponsor of this club and they could meet after school or just play online together from home. He feels this would be a good club for our students to get involved, especially during COVID due to the ability to play from home. The Board was receptive and will be supportive in this endeavor.

Under Administrative reports, Mr. Blankenship reported the following:

1) Progress reports for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter were mailed out on November 16<sup>th</sup>; 2) Picture re-takes will be taken on November 23<sup>rd</sup>; 3) The janitors have installed 2 of the new bottle filling water fountains. We have 2 more to install. These have been a big hit and have filled 398 bottles so far; and 4) Current Enrollment 330; 285 in-person (85%) and 45 remote (14%) as of November 17. Wallace asked about the grades of remote learners. Mr. Blankenship stated they are not doing well due to not turning in their packets or turning in incomplete work. They have contacted parents, sent letters home, put on social media and in newspaper urging parents to keep up with their children's work and grades. Sherriff Suits has been notified and made some wellness checks for truancy issues.

Mr. Graves reported the following: 1) Progress Reports went out Monday the 16<sup>th</sup>; 2) Picture retakes and club pictures are December 8<sup>th</sup>; 3) Hometown Heroes have raised \$9100 so far for their sign project; 4) Hometown Heroes would also like to present the school board with gift bags in gratitude for their donation from last year; 5) Our janitors have installed 3 new water fountains with hands

free water bottle accessibility; 6) Emma Collier signed a letter of intent to play softball at John A Logan College on November 11<sup>th</sup>; 7) In the first SISAL Speech Tournament of the year, we brought home 11 finalists. That is one less than the combined number of finalists of all the tournaments of last year; 8) The High School and Grade School were awarded with the Back to Books grant through the Illinois Secretary of State's office. The High School will be receiving \$3,000 and the Grade School \$1,500 for Library use; and 9) Enrollment: 170. Remote Learners: 33% (56); Packets: 27; E-Learning: 29. President Hogg asked how the grades were in the high school. Mr. Graves stated that 53% of remote learners have at least 1 F. It is a goal to have 100% parent contact within the high school by the end of the year. During Remote Learning Days, the teachers are to make contact with parents of students that have failing grades. Some of the teachers are making multiple contacts with the same parents. Member Aly added that having the class average on the progress report is a good idea. Mr. Graves stated most of the failing grades is the lack of assignments turned in.

Mr. Fritch reported on the following: 1) The tax bill did not pass this past election and the Governor has threatened to pull funding by 5% this year and 10% next year, potentially costing the District \$345,000; and 2) They are expecting to release another round of COVID Federal Grant money.

**Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel performance, procedures, and employment was made by Wallace and seconded by Aly. Roll call vote: all ayes. Board entered executive session at 7:29 pm.**

**Motion to return to regular session was made by Simmons and seconded by Wallace. Roll call vote: all ayes. Board returned at 8:07 pm.**

**Motion to appoint Randall Kazziar to the current board vacancy ending in April 2021 was made by Wallace and seconded by Simmons. Roll call vote: all ayes.**

**Mr. Fritch distributed a handout of the tentative tax levy with a worksheet explaining how he arrived at the numbers. He explained we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest tax rate in Southern Illinois. The tentative tax levy is at 4.99% as it has been in the past. After some discussion and questions, a motion to approve intent to levy taxes at the 4.99% and to display tentative tax levy was made by Wallace and seconded by Aly. Roll call vote: all ayes.**

**Mr. Fritch distributed copies of the bills received from Baysinger from the doors and windows projects. He explained that Michael Baysinger came and talked with him explaining the charges on these bills. After some discussion, a motion was made by Wallace and seconded by Aly to approve payment of Baysinger bills. Roll call vote: all ayes.**

Mr. Fritch stated IHSA, IDPH, and the Governor's office can't seem to come together on a Return to Play Plan for basketball. They have gone back and forth on the regulations and rules and has changed several times over the last few months. He stated our attorney and our insurance provider have both sent letters to the District advising not to participate. A meeting was supposed to take place this week but the Governor's office and IDPH representative was unavailable to attend. As stated in the letter from our attorney, the Board and each member could personally be held responsible if the order is ignored. Under the advisement of our lawyer and the insurance provider, it would be in the best interest of the District to just wait it out and not play for now. Mr. Fritch stated it is a bad deal for our students and their parents but there isn't much we can do at this point but wait.

Mr. Fritch distributed a handout of the Limitation of Administrative Cost and explained what this is and why a public hearing is needed. Due to having an interim superintendent the last two years with paying no benefits to having a full-time superintendent with benefits, exceeded the 5% administrative cost limit. Since this has occurred this year, we have to apply for a waiver. Part of this process is having a public hearing, sending letters the State Representatives offices, and getting it approved through ISBE. A motion to set Limitation of Administrative Cost Public Hearing for December 17, 2020 at 6:45 pm was made by Simmons and seconded by Wallace. Roll call vote: all ayes.

**Under Old Business, Mr. Fritch stated that Project 2 has been completed on the doors and windows. They look amazing and very pleased with the contractor.**

**We have seven more units to go.**

**Under Other School Business, a motion to hire Abby Clanton as full-time individual aide was made by Wallace and seconded by Aly. Roll call vote: Aly, Wallace, Hogg; ayes, Simmons abstained. Motion passed.**

**Mr. Fritch stated the COVID situation in the District has been kept isolated so far with only 4 individuals testing positive. The administration and the Return to School Committee met last week and developed some guidelines if an outbreak were to occur. The District will shut down if the following should occur: 1) Five cases in the District that causes spread; or 2) Too many faculty being absent due to positive test or quarantined and not being able to cover classes. Other measures have been put in place to assure the safety of faculty and staff. The administration and the teacher's union met to establish the guidelines of essential workers. The union put it to vote and voted 70%/30% to go with the State mandates and IDPH regulations.**

**Mr. Fritch added that just this afternoon, the septic system at the elementary has backed up. We may have to cancel school for tomorrow. An all call will be made if needed and will be a remote learning day.**

**With no further business to be discussed, a motion was made by Wallace and seconded by Simmons to adjourn the meeting until the next scheduled meeting to be held on Thursday, December 17, 2019 at 7:00 pm with a Public Hearing at 6:45 pm in the J.H. Hobbs Memorial Library. All members present voted aye.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.**

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**Jeremy Hogg, President  
Board of Education**

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**Paula Baker, Secretary  
Board of Education**