

**Northern Adirondack Central School District**  
**Ellenburg, NY**  
**Regular Meeting of the Board of Education**  
**September 15, 2020 – 6:00 PM Distance Learning Center MS/HS and via**  
**WebEx**

MEMBERS PRESENT:     Mark DeCoste  
                              Phalon Miner  
                              Bryan Trombley  
                              Steven Bartlemus  
                              Trevor Finley  
                              Willie Venne

ABSENT EXCUSED:     Paul Gilmore

Mr. Miner, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Six Board of Education members were present for this evening's meeting. Board President, Paul Gilmore was available via WebEx.

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus seconded by Mr. DeCoste and passed unanimously to go into Executive Session, at 6:02 PM. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss a matter of collective negotiations pursuant to article 14 of civil service law (The Taylor Law).

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus seconded by Mr. Finley and passed unanimously to come out of Executive Session, at 6:34 PM.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Trombley seconded by Mr. Finley, to accept the meeting minutes from the previous meetings

August 11, 2020 Regular Board Meeting  
August 27, 2020 Special Board Meeting

Five Board Members present voted yes – Mark DeCoste abstained on August 27th meeting - motion carried.

### **Superintendent Knight's Report**

Mr. Knight's report included an update to the school opening. Despite the obvious challenges things seem to be going well. Every morning seems to be going quicker and smoother as students enter the building. The Staff have been very flexible and open to changes in an effort to do the best for our students. Balancing those students who are in-person with those who decided on remote learning has been a challenge for all involved. There is a lot of effort in trying to make the two learning methods equitable and our Staff is doing the best that they can. We are starting to deploy services to the students with the greatest need, and we are attempting to establish wifi options around the district. One of the latest and hottest topics of discussion as of late has been that regarding high school athletics. Since Governor Como carelessly allowed school sports to begin on September 21<sup>st</sup>, without considering the realities of what Superintendent's and districts had to go through in planning for the basic reopening of schools, he has added a situation that in my opinion should not have been a local decision, Beyond that, section VII is unwilling to own a section wide decision stating that they will support our member schools and student athletes during these difficult times. This topic will be discussed with the Board later in the agenda, however, my professional opinion regarding this topic is that we should not participate at all or at a very minimal level to protect the current status of our school reopening for academics. As you should be aware, on a personal level, I am encouraging a decision that is tearing me up inside as a father of 2 senior athletes who I might not have the opportunity to watch play another high school sport.

Another serious topic must be mentioned before we move on to tonight's agenda. That is the unfair beating that Darla Bilow, our District Tax Collector and the rest of us are taking over the increase in our tax rate now that people have received their bills. First and foremost I want you all to know that I am a NAC Tax Payer who like all the rest of you have reaped the benefits of the lowest tax rates in Clinton County for many years all at the expense of our students and facilities. It is an absolute shame that we have fallen behind to the extent that we have. The facts are this – the NYS Comptrollers placed us on their fiscal stress monitoring. Listing last year as being in significant fiscal stress. We are one of four districts at that level out of over 700 districts and then we were audited by them from August through January when they determined that we must start adopting realistic and consistent budgeting practices while improving the district cash flow including our currently minimal fund balance and not existent fund balance. Starting in January we had a positive community presence at our budget planning meetings who encouraged our aggressive budget plan for this year to help combat what the comptrollers said would be insolvency in a couple of years without changes. A 49.7% well above the 2% tax cap required a super majority or 60% approval when voted upon in June and we received a 73% approval rating from 6 times as many voters as the previous year. It is more important to look at the actual increase by looking at rates. We went from \$12.10 per thousand to \$17.38 per thousand of assessed value. The \$17.38 is still the lowest rate out of the eight districts in Clinton County in which we are the largest by area and have transportation costs that reflect that. Wouldn't it be nice to be equivalent to our neighbors and offer our students similar in school academic opportunities? Well this increase starts to support that. I have heard the complaints about who can and who can't vote on school budgets. Remember that is governed by state laws and not the school districts. Also keep in mind the school districts have nothing to do with assessments and have no knowledge of when they will be changed or adjusted. It is also important to know that Governor Como has been changing the STAR exemption options which are also impacting some tax payers. For example a person who roughly paid \$200 last year should have paid roughly \$300 this year but in some cases received a bill for \$600 because of changes to STAR and

assessments. Believe me we understand the difficult times everyone is experiencing, but our district is now losing up to 20% of our state aid and which equated to 62.9% of our overall budget this year while we had to purchase many things we have never had to before because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for listening. I know some tax payers plan on expressing their views when they get a chance. I hope this helps you to understand.

The next item on the agenda involves athletic discussion. I want to have a discussion with the board about athletics in section VII and in Northern Adirondack. I will lead off by stating that currently according to the Governor's option, school districts are allowed to start practicing for athletic contests on September 21<sup>st</sup>. We as a district I do not feel as though we are prepared to start on September 21<sup>st</sup> in anyway shape or form. Currently we have a situation throughout the section where many schools have opted to not participate in athletics. Some school would like to try it and others are waiting to see what will happen. I can tell you I represented our school's decision with an absolute "No" because of all logistics surround what would be necessary. Some of those participates in sports would have to wear masks at all times, as well as on the field and off the field. Plus any spectators that come only two per player would be allowed. We would be responsible for making sure we have an individual taking down names and addresses for all spectators just in case we had to do contact tracing. With that being said we run the risk of not being able to maintain our fields as promptly as normal because all of our staff that would be involved with that process are technically helping to make sure our buildings are sanitized and cleaned for our daily usage of students in an academic setting. Recognizing that some of the conversation from the section have involved regionalize play as compared to sectional play meaning you would only play the schools in close proximity. Recognizing that we all have transportation needs and issues. One being we don't have any transportation to get our kids to and from practices, so that will be on parents if we do decided to have sports. Beyond transportation for games is questionable. During the week if we were to play evening games under lights (that most of neighbor school districts actually have) stating at 6:30pm or 7:00pm would work because our buses would be able to get back from there afternoon run and sanitized. We could have parents drive their children to contests if that is something each parent could do. Another thing that has been highly talk about is having games on weekends both Saturday and Sunday. The state has waived the 7 day rule regards to high school sports for this season. Many sections around the region have decided to do a variety of many other things. Some have cancelled school sports till January, others have cancelled till the winter sports are supposed to start. When I say January there is a hybrid schedule that was kind of proposed by the state which would have some of the winter sports start in January. Some of our traditional fall sports they would fall to fall which would be March- May and then a spring season from May- June. The reality being as much as that schedule seems like a nice idea and waiting to see what is going to happen with COVID. March- May up here, I am not so sure we will be cleaning our field off to play soccer? I would love for it to be an opportunity but I am not so sure that is possible. So then there is the other alternates, do we say no fall sports at all? I will be honest we could probably pull off varsity sports, and when I say varsity sports I am saying varsity soccer both the girls and the boys. Anything below that we have already received numerus emails about "How would I ever get my kids to practice? I am working" this that and the other thing. At the varsity level

most of our athletes are driving and they can go a little bit later. My suggestion to the coaches would be to try to arrange practices from like 4:30pm to 6:00pm. This would give the people an opportunity and maybe parents an opportunity to get them here for practices. I want to hear what your options are. I can tell you those schools that are looking to schedule contests under the “Misfva Umbrella” which would require ten practices. There is a group of schools that are having a conversion tomorrow and I would kind of like to hear what they are talking about. They are having extra murals, kind of like intermural sports where you stay within yourself, they are trying to find out if we can do what they call extra murals. This would allow contests against someone else. But then it would be more like a club sport type of basis as compared to the high school sports umbrella. There are no sectional titles this year. There are no state championships for the fall. The opportunity is wide open. It has been an interesting topic that has again brought me back to my option stated before, the Governor knew the positions that school would be in. In my option he threw it out there to take it off from his plate so then it became part of our issue. Any questions?

Board members agreed “we have a hard enough time getting our kids safely to school and in school safely and back home. You know as much as it pains me to say it because I am a sports person. I rather not put our kids in that situation where things could transpire and then have a full blow outbreak”

Superintendent then said: One of the tricky things to this puzzle is that soccer and other sports have been going on all summer. But what people are forgetting is that summer league and other stuff that is going on that is on the parents. The liability falls onto the parents. Once it becomes a school thing the liability falls on us. There is a whole lot more that a school district has to do and account for then the way the state has set up the allowance for youth sports. I will be honest I am missing my daughters soccer games as we speak but that is a whole different environment then what a school game would be. Any how I appreciate you guys input on the topic.

Board Member: mentioned “academics become prior to athletics and putting 20% of the population in sport programs. I think we should be more focus of putting more kids in school.”

Superintendent: thanked board for their input, and appreciate agreeing with the “NO”. I will see what our other options are in regards to if we do the tri season thing starting January. Right now they currently have winter sports starting late November or mid-November. So right now we can wait for winter sports and see what happens. Thank you for the discussions.

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Trombley to accept the Schedules of Expenditures (Warrants) August 2020.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCoste and seconded by Mr. Finley to accept the Treasurer’s Report – August 2020.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Trombley to approve the Budget Status Report.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCoste, seconded by Mr. Venne to approve final fiscal year 2019-2020 budget transfers.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried

A motion was made by Mr. Trombley and seconded by Mr. Finley approve the CSE recommendations.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried

There were no updates to the following:

Food Service Report  
Custodial – Maintenance Report  
Student Association Reports and Bank Reconciliation Reports  
Administrators  
NATA  
CSEA

The Board opened the meeting for public comment. Board President, Paul Gilmore who was available via WebEx commented on how happy he was with the opening of school and thanked all the staff for their hard work and dedication for making this happen. Peggy Hogan was in agreement with delaying the sports for safety and financial reasons. Mr. Harriman Sr. gave updates on the BOCES Project and stated that everything was going well.

The next Board of Education meeting is Tuesday, October 20, 2020.

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Trombley to approve the revised District Calendar for 2020-2021.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus seconded by Mr. DeCoste to approve the final Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Smart Schools Investment Plan.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Trombley, seconded by Mr. Bartlemus to table the Real Property Tax Correction for FY 2020-2021.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus seconded by Mr. Venne to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Northern Adirondack Central School District and the Northern Adirondack Teachers' Association for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCoste seconded by Mr. Trombley to approve the following Appointments:

Employee	Position	Department	Effective Date	Pay Rate	Comments
A. Douglas Trombley	PT (4 hr.) Custodial Worker	Buildings & Grounds	9/16/2020	CSEA Contract Step 1 (pro-rated)	Replacing Retired Employee
B. Tyler Pombrio	Boys Varsity Tennis Coach	Athletics	9/16/2020	Per NATA Contract	
C. Kristen Patnode	Girl's Junior Varsity Soccer	Athletics	9/16/2020	Per NATA Contract	
D. Rebecca Dupree	Advisor for the class of 2024	MS/HS	9/16/2020	N/A	
E. Jennifer Hutchins	Advisor for the class of 2024	MS/HS	9/16/2020	N/A	

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

The Board opened the meeting for public comment. There were no comments.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCoste, seconded by Mr. Bartlemus and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 PM.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

Helen Yelle, District Clerk  
N.A.C.S. Board of Education