

Northern Adirondack Central School District

April 20, 2021 – 6:00 PM

Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

Ellenburg, NY

Roll Call:

Mark DeCoste- Present
Phalon Miner-Present
Bryan Trombley-Present
Steven Bartlemus- Present
Willie Venne- Present

Others Present:

James Knight, Jr. - Superintendent
Brian Tousignant - Business Manager
Jay Bouchard- Building & Grounds
Richard Harriman Sr., Kathy Rego,
Stephanie Donahue, Mike Roberts

Absent Excused:

Trevor Finley

Mr. Miner Board of Education's President, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Attendance was taken by Brittany LaBombard, District Clerk, Five Board of Education members were present for this evening's meeting. With one excused absents Mr. Finley

A motion was made by Mr. Trombley seconded by Mr. Bartlemus and passed unanimously to go into Executive Session, at 6:03PM. 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. Venne seconded by Mr. Trombley and passed unanimously to come out of Executive Session, at 6:55 PM.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Barlemus seconded by Mr. Trombley, to pass meeting minutes from previous meetings.

- March 9, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes- Mr. DeCoste Abstained
- March 9, 2021 Budget Work Session Minutes - Mr. DeCoste Abstained
- March 23, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes – Mr. Venne Abstained
- April 13, 2021 Budget Work Session Minutes - Mr. DeCoste Abstained

Four Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

Superintendent Knight's Report.

Good evening! As we have entered the final stretch of the school year it is safe to say that many things are continuing to keep us busy. What seems like daily changes in guidelines and updates has presented many challenges in trying to create a sense of normalcy in the traditional year-end events. The conclusion of the school year includes Prom, Graduation ceremonies, and many other events that we probably took for granted and were easy to plan prior to last March. Our High School has organized and continued to plan for a Junior/Senior Prom. We are fortunate with numbers to be able to remain under the 150 person maximum for an indoor event like such. However all in attendance must have proof of being two weeks removed from their last COVID-19 vaccination or having a negative COVID-19 test result within 72 hours of the event. Many of our 16 and over students will have the vaccination qualification, however the others will need a test. We as a district have submitted our request to become a testing site, which originally was considered when we were nearing the orange or red zone designations that the state once determined. Had that happened back then, we would have had to test a percentage of our students and staff regularly to remain open for in-person learning. Our nurses will be eligible to administer the necessary testing and upload the information on a secure database. Beyond the Prom, the NYS 3-8 ELA testing has begun this week. We are meeting the accepted criteria by only offering part one of the exam. There has been a promise that the results will be turned around quicker than ever for the diagnostic use by the teachers in determining student growth. With the ELA exams under way, the Math assessments will take place in May with the Science in June as well as the 4 required Regents exams. Which have been basically reduced to the ELA, Math, and Science and there would be a junior level year English, Science is either Earth Science of Biology and Math is algebra 1. Students who are fully remote will not be asked to attend for the tests, and students who are here should discuss their options with their parents. Basically for this year which ever score is higher the students over average or the regent's exam will be how we demine the student eligibility for graduation this year. As the year is winding down, the Fall II season which includes the high risk sport of Volleyball is underway and will lead in to the non-high risk and outdoors sports that we have in the spring season (tennis, baseball, and softball) which will start practicing on Monday, April 26th. With the late start and the somewhat cooperative weather thus far, our fields may be better than in normal year's right here on campus allowing for practices and game at school. What I am getting at here is my son is a senior and this is his 4th year on the varsity team and has yet to play a game on our field here at school, our home games are held in Lyon Mountain. Our field here at school are terrible because of drainage. Something that has gained a lot of attention lately is the CDC guidelines that have now been adopted by the NYS Department of Health. This guidance talks much about 3 feet in classrooms, but is very misleading. As it stands we must still use the CDC level of community transmission maps that determine to what extent the next guidelines can be followed. By the way if you look at the maps Clinton County is still on the highest spot on the maps according to the CDC. Since we are in a red zone the guidelines do not permit middle and high school aged students to be 3 feet apart in classrooms. Nor does it permit any age students to eat and drink in a cafeteria, participate in a physical education classroom in a gymnasium, or sing or play an instrument in a

music room at less than 6 feet. Adults are also not permitted to be within 6 feet of any student, and there is currently no new guidance for transporting students on buses. Ultimately, the new guidance does not allow for us to make many changes, and as a whole the changes would not be beneficial for the remainder of the school year. I say this because of how we have our elementary classes spread out to fit the 6 foot criteria, and the fact that we share so many staff members between the Middle and High school that would perpetuate additional study halls and not actual class time if the students were here more days than we currently have them scheduled. We are trying to utilize the new guidelines for changes in the fall, while we are still hoping for less rigid guidelines to be determined and distributed by July. I am optimistic in hoping for guidance that suggests low to no social distancing while wearing masks for the fall, but as of right now that is just a dream. Finally we are nearing the final stretch to another budget vote. More will be discussed by Mr. Tousignant as we proceed, but it is important to note that we received one completed petition to run for our open school board position. Once we have an approved budget proposal, it will be up to the voting public to approve it. Fortunately we are remaining within our statutory tax cap limit and therefore, our approval only requires a simple majority of the qualified voters who choose to vote. After the Board approves the budget proposal it will allow for those of us in the District Office to get to work on a newsletter and packet information in preparation for our Budget Presentation on May 11th in the MS/HS Auditorium.

Mr. Knight then shared an article from Rural Schools Association of NYS that he received later in the day. The title “Having trouble telling our community that you district isn’t in the State and Federal Money Grab?” this article is attached at the end of the meeting minutes, please review attachment for further detail. Mr. Knight has requested us to share this with the community.

Mr. Knight then opened up to the discussion up to public for any question in relation to what he just talked about:

Board Member Bryan Trombley- I have a question and I'm going to go to the CDC real quick. I went to the Clinton County website they haven't put anything out in regards to any of this guidance.

Mr. Knight- the Clinton County Health Department like other things basically said what the Department of Health put out is what they are doing.

Board Member Bryan Trombley- So I got a question going forward I see the problems that you highlighted. I do not agree with the CDC stratification of risk. We're heading into the summer, we're looking at next September. It pains me to hear you say that we're thinking about how we're going to institute this for next September. I don't see us changing from high risk to substantial risk. So, where do you stand if we don't change that and what are we going to do?

Mr. Knight- We are going to do the best we can. There's another thing that I didn't mention in the guidelines for the older students as you guys probably all can remember seventh grade this is when you are no longer traveling in the same group class to class. This is when you started going into classes and having different people in those classes. And that's normal, because at that level, all students start to separate take different courses, or at different levels, but one of the things that the CDC has also mentioned for that age level students is cohered, which is nearly impossible to

do. We do it in the elementary to the best we can, where like students will be in the 2nd grade class all attend phys ed , art and that same goes to music. When you get to like middle and high school, you might have 20 kids in English class, and then five of them go to science and then have another five go to math, and that's what I'm getting at because CDC is saying the only way to pull this off. To maintain like potential three foot distances is to cluster, every grade level right through 12th grade, which just doesn't work. And, you know that that creates a bigger problem for us, when we're in a position where we have a middle high school that shares so many staff. They share more staff now than they once did for a couple of reasons. We have lost numbers, so we're able to, in a normal year, we're able to pull off the classes, but when you have to have saved to have a class and you normally have one off, we need two teachers to teach those classes. Well, we don't have that. So that's why like kids just couldn't be here that cluster Coburn, I think what Brian's getting at is something that I personally believe in, like the same, because it's kind of the type of person I am, and probably not the most appropriate language, the hell of it we're bringing everybody back and we're just going to roll with it. But the problem with that is there's a bunch of problems. New York state insurance reciprocal and Munich and national blue is our insurance carrier. The two leading insurance carriers for schools in New York State. They cover about 95% of the schools in New York State have come right out and said, If any school district is not following the New York State Department Health guidelines, you are not covered by us any longer. That's a huge issue for a school. And, you know, back to something I've mentioned personally from day one with the way this has all been set up. If we ever got sued for not protecting people in a way, against COVID, that, you know, if we're ever proven that say somebody got sick because we were negligent, not following protocols. There's only one person that every school district that can assume, and they took the underlying liability kind of away from the district as a whole. The superintendent is that person who could be suitable. I really don't want to be in that position. But, you know, it is what it is. We all want students back. It's better for them it's better for us. We're moving that direction it's great that 16 and above can be vaccinated. It's great that they're developing and researching the vaccines for the younger age students, we will probably have a battle in New York State with like you know the anti-vaccine movement. And I think, honestly, it won't just be the traditional anti vaccines population but there's going to be another cluster of people that are afraid of getting their kids vaccinated for COVID but I understand that I accept that. It's, going to be a challenge. I guess if I were asked today. When I thought our best chance of being back to what we used to think was normal. I would say January of next year.

Board Member Bryan Trombley- Okay I appreciate your honest answer, but I also think we should start thinking outside the box because I don't believe our children should be put at risk for another year. And I know that we don't have a lot of facilities in Ellenburg but do we need to expand our physical space.

Mr. Knight- Well we need to, we can, and as we go forward. Last year we were kind of slammed last minute with the criteria pretty much until almost August and a short time to plan. We recognize elementary kids which is one of the most important to get these students in daily and then we'll figure it out. We initially established K through three, we certainly have enough staff in space to bring in following the criteria. And then we're like, alright, if we don't do pre K, that frees up more staff for elementary, we might be able to do fourth, maybe fifth but we ran out of room in this building. So then we explored the idea which we ended up going forward with using the gymnasium the middle school for our fifth grade, over in high school, got them in five days a week, all the students and families have monitor kids here, right. From that point on, it became

more challenging, sixth grade was here two days a week, seventh through twelfth one day a week. However, there's two groups of seventh grade so there's two days the seventh grade. We were able to piecemeal all that together in August to be able to open in September. As much as we know what we're doing is not the best for kids. We really have to look back and go, you know what, not only did Northern Adirondack do a great job but most of the schools in Northern New York did a hell of a job. I was just down in Philadelphia last weekend, visiting a college with my daughter and there's an elementary school that works with the college right across the street from campus. Those K -5th students haven't stepped foot the bill yet this school year. I know we are behind to where we want our own kids here, but as a whole, we have to be pretty proud of what we've done. Even in this area. We're one of the few that have had our kids' k-5th since the start of September. And one of the few that have had Middle/High school kids at some point from the beginning of September. It's hard to kind of be overly excited about it and you know it's still not as good as you want it. But it is, you know, it has been a lot of places. Yeah, you're hitting all the nails. I don't think there's anybody to talk to that isn't interested in trying to do more, and making it better, and recognizing the need to. With that being said, that's why we have so much emphasis on a summer program after school programming, you know, from, you know, using like stimulus funds and this other thing, but also looking at some sustainability ideas. It's outside the box. You know I, one thing I saw this past weekend, I was down, Kim Sierra. Now granted, it was a college campus. But one of the opportunities that we had was to put in our plan and get approval for like outside tents for classrooms. It's a great idea. The problem is our window of decent weather to be able to do that is so slim, it really wasn't a great idea for a school up here. It would have been costly and not necessarily the best bang for our buck. But you're right, we might need to start looking at other spaces in the communities.

Board Member Bryan Trombley- We have the church hall and walking distance which has classrooms. I mean you probably couldn't put a load of kids there but you would think and also they have a pretty large like bingo hall. I don't know I just thought of the other ways to make this work to get more kids here in school.

Mr. Knight- I agree thing too is we probably could identify the spaces that we can use but then there's more to it. We also have to identify our how are we going to be cleaning those spaces are those spaces suitable for the States needs for us to be there? We could also use the church hall in Altona but then how are we going be able to transport some kids there. And that's another whole planning but it's worth it because it's better than what we did this year.

Board Member Bryan Trombley- I think you hit the nail on the head I was trying to get the temperature of what your plan is and I think that plan needs to be reiterated and talked about every month. If we aren't going to open full term in September. I think we need to find other ways to get this to happen.

Mr. Knight- there are all sorts of things that we have thought of to get all the students in school. Thinking outside the box what do you think about having our Elementary students come to school from 8-12 and then having a second group come in from 12-3. But, you know, those are outside of the box ideas, what's better, shorter day with everyday exposure or less time spent in school with limited exposure.

Board Member Bryan Trombley- I know that would not work for me because I have a working family.

Mr. Knight- Sadly, as much as we love public education and as an educator, we think we're here to teach kids. We're here for daycare. Yeah, bottom line, if it's ever been proven to us more. It was slapped in our face this past year, what are we first were daycare, what are we second place

for feeding kids, are we third place to educate as hard as an educator to accept, but that's what we are as a public school system.

Stephane Donahue- We're talking about summer schools, a lot of these teachers like to have their summer know exactly.

Mr. Knight- We can't make it mandatory for every staff member work, but we will put a program together provide the staff hired like anything else, positions that are open. The reality is they are 10 month employees. If we said, you're working a six week summer school all of a sudden they would have to pay for another six weeks, and you know we wouldn't have all of our staff here, but it's a smaller population, a targeted population of students who are in need, who have struggled but also family, it is there's nothing worse than creating a program and then having people who don't show up, even though you know they need it.

Board Member Mark DeCoste- Can we communicate to the department now, the CDC and get a walk through.

Mr. Knight- it's been more frustrating than many will find the County Health Department we've met as superintendents and every time that the CDC has suggested guidelines even if the State Department of Health has suggested because what's happened and just say something in press conference that doesn't mean that it's actually in place yet. It's not in place until there's a document from the department out, and then your local health department has the right to adopt and tweak things, and always be stricter so they can never be less strict. I don't know the health department has been very upfront with us and say, we don't make any changes until the changes are in print. They said, other areas have done that, but they're like they have no jurisdiction to do that. Having them come here and look at things isn't fortunate.

Personnel –Appointments/ Resignations

Employee	Position	Department	Effective Date	Pay Rate	Comments
A. Brynn Ghostlaw	Part-Time Teacher Aide	District	3/11/2021	N/A	Resignation
B. Heidi Danis	English Teacher	MS/HS	6/30/2021	N/A	Retirement
C. Scott Decker	Sub- Custodial	Building & Grounds	4/21/2021	N/A	Fingerprint clearance
D. Sarah Matthews-Knight	Assistant Compleive Cheerleading Coach	Athletic	March 2021	N/A	
E. Melissa LaBombard	Custodian	Building & Grounds	March 30, 2021	N/A	Resignation

F. Mary Rabideau	Library Aide	Elementary	April 11, 2021	N/A	Retirement
G. Kim Ryan	Sub Aide	Elementary	March 22, 2021	N/A	Resignation
H. Kelley Manor	5 th Grade Teacher	Elementary	May 10, 2021	N/A	Medical Leave
I. Alexis Kerr	Modified Volleyball Coach	Athletic	March 2021	N/A	
J. Amanda St. Hillarie	Sub Teacher/ Sub Aide	District	April 21, 2021	N/A	Fingerprint Clearance
K. Greg Manney	Modified Baseball Head Coach	Athletic	April 2020	Per NATA Contract appendix C	
L. Jason Bushey	JV Softball Assistant Coach	Athletic	April 2020	Unpaid	
M. Jephrey Doorey	Physical Education	Middle/ High School	June 30, 2021	N/A	Retirement
N. Laurie Hogan	Teacher Aide	Elementary	April 26, 2021	N/A	Medical Leave

A motion was made by Mr. DeCoste seconded by Mr. Bartlemus and passed unanimously to approve all personnel appointments and resignations.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

Financial:

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Miner approve the expenditures and warrants.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Trombley approve budget status report and treasurer’s report.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried

Reports to School Board:

A motion was made by Mr. Trombley and seconded by Mr. Bartlemus 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:

Richard Harriman, Sr. - Gave us a quick update on the BOCES project. They are hoping to be in the south building by September. Project is still going within the budget. The main campus is complete.

Mr. Knight- Do you know if they will have an open house to invite our board to and see?

Richard Harriman, Sr. - I am not sure, I do know they have a virtual open house.

Board Member Willie Venne- Just wanted to make the public aware that with in the last 15years we have had 6 employees that have been a result of their company participating in the CV-TEC program.

New Business:

The Public Budget Hearing at 5:30pm in the Auditorium of the Middle/ High School on Tuesday, May 1, 2021. Followed by a Regular Board of education Meeting Starting at 6:00pm.

2021-2022 School Calendar:

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Venne to approve 2021-2022 District School Calendar.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried

President Phalon Miner opened meeting up to Public in regards to questions on the Budget:

Board Member Mark DeCoste- to sell this or put this up. I'm worried about what and cost money on bottom line

Mr. Tousignant- as proposed. It was what was reviewed at the last meeting with no changes, and assessments or anything like that...

Board Member Mark DeCoste- We received our assessments in the mail today with a significantly large increase for the Town of Ellenburg.

Mr. Tousignant- And again, as we talked about last year because there were certain townships that had increases last year, across the board. The tax rate and the tax assessments work hand in hand to sort of equalize amongst themselves. So, will you still have quote unquote winners and losers? Yes, because not everybody's assessment changed by the same amount, but if it was a true say blanket district wide assessment change everybody's assessment changed at the same amount, the tax rate, would be adjusted accordingly. And so the percentage increase in the actual tax level, the dollars that we're going to collect as a district across the entire tax base is going to be that percentage increase is what you're going to see. Based on no change the tax levy would go to 17.42 to 18.30sh cents an increase of 88 cents.

Board Member Mark DeCoste- humor me and what is the amount in increase on a \$100k home.

Mr. Tousignant- on a \$100K home you are looking at a total increase of roughly \$60ish.

Board Member Mark DeCoste- scenario needs to be conveyed, which would be extremely helpful to put things in perspective.

Mr. Tousignant- This is something that we are going to have for the public but we can't have this information out to the public before the Board adopts the proposed budget figure. Once the board adopts that figure than we can get the budget newsletter out to the public and get ready for the budget hearing. These are some of the things we will have ready for the public after tonight and before our next meeting.

Kathy Rego- Isn't your budget already passed by them. I mean, you're going to go May and we're going to vote on this. So if the assessments get raised after the fact, you're still there yourself based on baseline analysis. Now everything needs to get adjusted.

Mr. Tousignant- We don't actually get the assessment rolls until generally it's early to mid July, we get the final tax rolls as they're referred to from the County Real Property Office, and that's when we actually create the tax bills from those totals. What we tried to do ahead of the budget vote is to try to take a reasonable estimate in the last few years we use 1% increase on the total assessed value as our estimate, some years it's been slightly more than that, Some years has been actually slightly less than that. But that gives us at least an estimate to say, if the total district wide assessment goes up by 1%, and then the actual tax rate, you know, would be X dollars.

2021-2022 School Budget:

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Trombley to approve 2021-2022 School Budget in the amount of \$24,737,225.

Four Board Members voted yes and one Board Member voted no - motion carried

Out of District Student:

A motion was made by Mr. Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. DeCoste to approve an out of district student to attend Northern Adirondack Central School at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

All Board Members present voted yes- motion carried

Election of the C-E-W-W BOCES (CVES) Board Members

There are five vacancies on the Board of Cooperative Educational Services to be filled at the annual election to be held on April 22, 2021. (please note: *only three nominations were received from the eligible component districts*).

The Board of Education of each component school district, by resolution, may cast one vote for each vacancy to be filled, provided that no more than one vote may be cast for any candidate. No more than one person residing in a particular component school district may be elected to serve on the Board of Cooperative Educational Services at one time, except as provided in Education Law 1950 (2-a).

Resolved , that the Board of Education of the Northern Adirondack Central School District cast on vote of the Three (3) seats vacant on the Clinton- Essex- Warren- Washington Board of Cooperative Educational Services (Champlain Valley Educational Services) Board.

It is resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Adirondack Central School District cast one vote for **Patricia Gero** for one of the five (5) seats vacant on the Clinton- Essex- Warren- Washington Board of Cooperative Educational Services (Champlain Valley Educational Services) Board. Motion made by Mr. Steven Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Mark DeCoste.

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 1 Absent

It is resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Adirondack Central School District cast one vote for **Richard Harriman, Sr.** for one of the five (5) seats vacant on the Clinton- Essex- Warren- Washington Board of Cooperative Educational Services (Champlain Valley Educational Services) Board. Motion made by Mr. Steven Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Mark DeCoste.

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 1 Absent

It is resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Adirondack Central School District cast one vote for **Donna Wotton** for one of the five (5) seats vacant on the Clinton- Essex- Warren- Washington Board of Cooperative Educational Services (Champlain Valley Educational Services) Board. Motion made by Mr. Steven Bartlemus and seconded by Mr. Mark DeCoste.

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 1 Absent

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Northern Adirondack Central School District voted to:

Approve- X Disapprove

The tentative Administrative Budget of the Clinton- Essex- Warren- Washington Board of Cooperative Educational Services for the school year 2021-2022 in the amount of \$6,342,1740.00

Motion made by Mr. Bryan Trombley and seconded by Mr. Steven Bartlemus

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 1 Absent

The Board opened the meeting for public comment.

Richard Harriman, Sr. - Suggested to keep track of how many people do not attend the vote that are out of town like Churubusco and Lyon Mountain.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. DeCoste, seconded by Mr. Bartlemus and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:21PM.

All Board Members present voted yes – motion carried.

Brittany LaBombard, District Clerk
N.A.C.S. Board of Education