

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
100 HINDS STREET, TONAWANDA, NY 14150**

**BOARD TRANSCRIPT  
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
JUNE 17, 2020**

- Sternin:** Before we begin, I'll once again announce that pursuant to the Governor's proclamation based on mass gatherings, no visitors would have been allowed to attend this meeting. Therefore, the Board of Education has agreed to conduct this meeting virtually via Zoom. Any members of the public who wish to see the agenda can find it on our website under board of education. The regular meeting of the Board is called to order at 6:00 PM. Roll Call Madam Clerk
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Here
- Maxwell:** Vice President Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner
- Misner:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese
- Calabrese:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler
- Schmutzler:** Here
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert
- Gilbert:** Here
- Sternin:** Please turn off all cell phones during board meetings. There were no changes or additions to the agenda. Madam Clerk, may I have a canvass of the polls?
- Maxwell:** For the Tonawanda City School District election and budget vote, proposition one, the 2020-2021 budget of \$36,667,466, yes votes 1,287, no votes 832. Candidate for the Board of Education, most votes for a three-year term

beginning July 1, 2020, ending June 30, 2023, would be Kristin Schmutzler with 1,257 votes. Second most votes for a three-year term would be Jeff Thorp with 928 votes. The other two candidates who ran, their tally Dennis R. Atkinson 875 votes and J. Mario Peña with 761.

**Sternin:** May I have a motion to accept the results of the 2020-2021 budget vote and election?

**Calabrese:** So moved

**Misner:** Second

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mr. Calabrese and a second from Mrs. Opalinski.

**Maxwell:** No, it wasn't Mrs. Opalinski.

**Misner:** I thought it was me, but ok.

**Sternin:** I'm sorry, it's hard for me to hear on this. Mrs. Misner, second from Mrs. Misner. Any questions or comments? For the purposes of this meeting, all votes will be done via roll call vote. Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

**Gilbert:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch

**Koch:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner

**Misner:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

**Opalinski:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

**Schmutzler:** Aye

- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. May I have a motion to approve the minutes and transcription from the meeting of May 12, 2020?
- Calabrese:** So moved.
- Opalinski:** Second
- Sternin:** I have a motion from Mr. Calabrese and a second from Mrs. Opalinski. Any revisions or corrections? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese
- Calabrese:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert
- Gilbert:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner
- Misner:** Aye, oh sorry abstain.
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler
- Schmutzler:** Aye
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. Is there any additional new business or changes or deletions to the old business list?
- Calabrese:** Yes, I think we can take my resolution off.
- Sternin:** Ok, so that was the suggestion that we set the date for reorg and we had set it already tentatively as July 7<sup>th</sup> for our reorg. Are we going ahead with that date? Everybody's ok with that date, July 7<sup>th</sup> for reorg?

- Koch:** Yes
- Sternin:** Ok, great. Thank you.
- Koch:** At 6:00?
- Sternin:** 6:00? 6:30 is our usual meeting time.
- Koch:** Ok
- Sternin:** Ok, this is Mrs. Misner's last meeting as a board trustee. We thank her for her service and I believe Mrs. Opalinski has some words she would like to say. You've got to unmute yourself, Danielle.
- Opalinski:** Ok, now? I want to say that working with you over the last few years has been an honor. Together we, along with many other members throughout the years, have accomplished so much for the students and our community. Your time and dedication to serving is truly appreciated and we wish you lots of happiness as you leave us. Be well my friend and keep in touch!
- Misner:** Thank you.
- Sternin:** Thank you very much. Dr. Oldenburg and his staff will provide us with updates at this time.
- Oldenburg:** Thanks President Sternin. Mrs. Misner, were you saying something?
- Misner:** No, I just said I couldn't say anything at this moment.
- Oldenburg:** Ok, I would like to go through a few things with the group here tonight. First of all, I'd like to recognize Mrs. Misner for her 9 years of service to the school district. Thank you for your leadership and willingness to serve and you certainly leave a fingerprint on our district for many years of service and support of students. You always had students in the forefront of your mind in decision-making through the years that I've work with you, Mrs. Misner and I wish you a lot of health and happiness and thank you for all that you've done for the school system. I'd also like to take a moment to recognize and congratulate Mrs. Schmutzler and Mr. Thorp for winning terms to serve and I'd also like to recognize Mr. Pena and Mr. Atkinson for their willingness to join the team. We're blessed to have a team of individuals who continually work towards the goals of the district and to support the needs of our students and Mrs. Schmutzler and Mr. Thorp, I know are confident in their leadership and their ability to continue to move this district forward so we look forward to the next school year and I'm grateful for their willingness to serve. I also would like to recognize Mrs. Maxwell for all of her work through these extremely difficult

and ever changing times regarding the preparation for this vote. The absentee changes, the date changes and everything leading up to just an hour before this very meeting where she was running around and making sure that this whole process was extremely planned, organized and logistically able for us to hold this meeting here tonight, so Dana thank you very much for all that you've done. I'd certainly like to recognize Donna Hill and her team in the business office for their work and preparation on and about the budget. Obviously, when the community comes out like this and supports the furthering of our work, it's a testament to a lot of different areas of the organization, but today it's especially sweet for the business office and their planning, preparation and foresight to put our district in the position it continues to deliver high class services to the diverse student population so I'm certainly grateful for that. As you know, we finished the school calendar just this past Friday and our ten-month teaching staff will be finishing their calendar year this later on this week but I do want to recognize our support and maintenance staff, engineers, cleaners and a whole bunch of other people who work for us that have done excellent work through this COVID period, through these recent weeks as we continue to maintain our facilities and provide opportunities for students to retrieve items, to be delivered items, to support with food service and a whole bunch of other requirements as we work to meet the needs of our families these extremely unusual times. I want to thank that group. Certainly, our teachers have done a tremendous job. They jumped off the diving board straight away into a virtual learning scenario, they did it with high marks, professionalism and a lot of care for our students and I'd be remiss if this year comes to an end if I didn't recognize their dedication, service and hard work. I'd also like to mention that our administrative team, too, was working every single day here often times in the office, was trying to figure out the executive orders as they're being sent out on a day by day basis and did a lot to support all of our employees here as they worked to support our students and our families. At this time, I'd like to allow some of our building principals and administrators to speak about our retirees that have retired during this year and some that will be retiring effective June 30<sup>th</sup>. I wanted the board to understand who is leaving us and a little bit more about each and every one of them. Tomorrow, the central office team in large part will be visiting our retirees and celebrating their service to our district and delivering tokens of appreciation. I know the entire board won't be able to see this or join us for this, but I did want to publicly recognize our retirees and we'll do that here this evening, so Mrs. Panaro I'm going to start with you and I'm going to unmute you here. I'm struggling to unmute you, so let me see, I can't, Dana will you help me, perhaps I don't

**Panaro:** I got it. Good?

**Oldenburg:** Excellent.

**Panaro:** I would just like to recognize at this time Denise Danvir who is retiring this year. Mrs. Danvir has been a second grade teacher for many years at Riverview.

She has been a very important part of our school community. She has done a tremendous job with our students and families. She was a very, very important role for our student lighthouse team, which was also our student leadership team and I just want to thank her for all she's done. We will miss her. I wish her all the best and just wanted to recognize her at this time for her retirement and all she's done for our school community.

**Oldenburg:** Great, thanks Claudia. Diana, I'm going to have Dana unmute you. I'm struggling with this.

**Nigro:** I've got it. Ok, at Mullen, we'll be losing three amazing educators this year. Patty Truskey has worked in Tonawanda for 30 years as a teaching assistant, Diane Sharry has been a teacher for 20 years coming back after she was done raising her children and Catherine Vitello has been with us in education for 34 years. The students, the staff and the community are greatly going to miss them and it's a big loss for us, but we wish them the best of luck and nothing but happiness and relaxation in their next adventure.

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Diana. Amy, you're up.

**Edgerton:** I am recognizing John Streeter, I'd like to thank John for his service, first as a lifeguard and then a custodian. He loves our Tonawanda community and you can always wave to him near the high school where he often walks by with his dog. Next is Gail Walter. She has been a nurse in the middle school/high school her humor and knowledge were well balanced and allowed her to work with that middle school high school population in a professional manner. Thankfully she's agreed to sub for us and train our new nursing staff. And finally, Gary Bisone. And Gary was Gail's partner in the middle school high school nursing program and he took pride in knowing all the students and would work at the after party for the prom every year.

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Amy. Michelle will be next.

**Siebert:** I'm recognizing three of our beloved staff members at Fletcher. First is Karen Burgett who currently is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in our ICT room. Karen advocates for her students on a regular basis and is dedicated educator. She has touched the lives of many of our students and families here at Tonawanda City. She'll be greatly missed and we wish her well in the next chapter of her life. We have 2 TA's also retiring. Actually, Deb Mileham. She's known as Ma Deb to the staff here at Fletcher. She fills many roles, depending on the needs we have but they range from working in our office, doing some clerical work, making copies, working with students and our staff directly. She's going to be greatly missed. She is definitely well loved by students here and she's kind of the glue that kind of makes sure kids do well in transition between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. And finally, I'd like to recognize Sharry Folmsbee.. She did retire at the end of January, so we've been missing her for a few months now, but she too is a TA.

She's worked in our self-contained classrooms helping students meet their needs, both in the special ed classroom and then being with them in the gen ed setting as well so we also with Sharry and Debbie much happiness in their next chapter in their lives as well.

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Mrs. Siebert. Mr. Brown, you're next. Dana?

**Brown:** Hi, everyone. I'm here to recognize two teachers from the high school. First is Kim Crawford. Kim, we just want to thank you for your years of teaching special education at the high school. You worked with students every day to make sure they were successful. We hope you enjoy retirement and wish you only the best in years to come. We just want to thank you again for your years of service to our students in Tonawanda City School District. Next is Patty Mulcahy. Patty on behalf of the high school, we want to thank you for your dedication and service for our students. You always put students first and always did what was in their best interest. Your leadership with our school climate was truly unprecedented, you always went above and beyond. We hope you enjoy every moment of your retirement and we wish you only the best in years to come. Both of these educators will be missed at the high school, so like I said, we really do wish them only the best in their retirement. Thank you.

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Mr. Brown. Mr. Sellan

**Sellan:** Yes, the middle school will lose 2 wonderful teaching assistants this year. First is Mary Jo Eikenburg. Mary Jo has dedicated 31 years to Tonawanda students, 6 with the district. I believe Mary Jo's strongest asset was in being she did everything she could to support them, checking on them on daily basis, reaching out to their teachers to lend support and staying in close contact and communication with families to make sure that. Next is Deanna O'Brocta. Deanna dedicated over 20 years to Tonawanda City School District. Deanna's biggest asset was she was always putting students first. Whenever she was given a new assignment or task, she not only excelled, she made it better for the students, faculty and staff. The last couple years she headed up the annual 8<sup>th</sup> grade Washington DC trip, making wonderful memories for students that they would never forget. That's what she always does and was always her goal was just to make for all students. She will be sorely missed in the middle school.

**Oldenburg:** Thank you, Mr. Sellan. At this time I'll just do a brief roundtable for central office administrators, but again we do look forward to recognizing our retirees tomorrow when we make personal visits to them, but we're really proud of all they've done for our district and they will be missed and we're grateful for their dedication. But with that being said, Mrs. Edgerton, do you have anything for this evening?

**Edgerton:** I would just like to say congratulations to Diane and I'm going to miss my shoulder partner at the table.

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Amy. Mrs. Scullion?

**Scullion:** I just want to say congratulations to Diane. Congratulations to the board members and congratulations to all the retirees.

**Oldenburg:** Great, thank you. And I don't believe Mrs. Hill is with us right now, Donna. Oh, I do see her. Donna are you there? I don't know if she can be unmuted.

**Hill:** Am I unmuted now?

**Oldenburg:** Yes

**Hill:** Ok, I'd also like to mimic what Amy and Mary Beth said and welcome our new board members. Thank you Mrs. Misner for your years of service. I would also like to say congratulation to all the retirees, and also add in Carol Smith who also retired with us in December after 30 some years as the secretary to the business office, and she put a lot of work into our district and was a history book for many of us. And that's all, and thank you to everyone else.

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Donna. It's appreciated. And the only retiree we're not visiting tomorrow is Gary Bisone, who moved to Florida. Unfortunately, we're not going to make that trip tomorrow, although it doesn't sound like a bad idea some of these days. But we wish him the best and will be in contact with him very soon as well. The last thing I'd like to address just the board is that please know that we're working very hard in planning for the school year. As you know, much of the decisions have been and likely will be out of our hands as far as local decisions on what school will look like in the fall. We'll continue to follow guidance and take direction from the Governor and New York State Department of Health, the CDC, and the Erie County Department of Health but there's a lot of task force and committees starting to form. I and our team are actively involved in those and we're going to do everything within our power to create a system, create a program that meets the needs of our students and aligns itself with what best practices are moving forward come the beginning of September. So a lot of that is up in the air, unfortunately not much of it at this time is in concrete, but we are working really hard on when we're making sure we avail ourselves of the data, the science, the information and will be part of larger groups and larger teams in our region, in our county, in our state on devising a plan for what education will look like come the start of the new school year. So I just wanted, if you have any questions about what that is or things that change in the coming weeks please reach out to me, but I want you to be aware that we're all engaged in this at a very high level and we promise to work to meet the needs our stakeholders, our parents, our staff and our students of course. Thank you, President Sternin.



**Sternin:** Thank you. We will now move to consent agenda items. May I have a motion to approve Items 7.1 and 7.2?

**Misner:** So moved

**Koch:** Second

**Sternin:** Sorry, was that a motion from Mrs. Misner?

**Misner:** Yes

**Sternin:** and a second from Mrs. Koch. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

**Gilbert:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch

**Koch:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner

**Misner:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

**Opalinski:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

**Schmutzler:** Aye

**Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.

**Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. May I have a motion to approve instructional personnel items 8.1 through 8.3?

**Koch:** So moved

**Misner:** Second

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Misner. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

**Gilbert:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch

**Koch:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner

**Misner:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

**Opalinski:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

**Schmutzler:** Aye

**Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.

**Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. May I have a motion to approve non-instructional personnel items 9.1 through 9.4?

**Koch:** So moved

**Calabrese:** Support

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mr. Calabrese. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

- Gilbert:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner
- Misner:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler
- Schmutzler:** Aye
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries.
- Oldenburg:** President Sternin, may I interrupt for a moment?
- Sternin:** Yes
- Oldenburg:** I'd like to unmute Mrs. Scullion to do an introduction of our new computer support technician, Davail Steele. Mary Beth?
- Scullion:** I'm happy to introduce our new computer technician, Davail Steele. He is an IT specialist coming to us with years of experience as a field technician in the business sector. We're excited to welcome him to the technology department and have an additional five day a week technician. We are looking for everything that he can do to help support us, so welcome to Tonawanda.
- Steele:** I really appreciate the welcome. I have got a good welcome since I got hired. I'm definitely looking to be a great asset to the City of Tonawanda School District, knowing that the IT field is very important now in this modern day. I believe that the pandemic has brought a lot of uncertainty to a lot of school districts such as the City of Tonawanda I just want to be a part of it to make sure I be a viable access to be there to do specific projects and help bring this specific situation smoothly the best way I can.
- Sternin:** Thank you

**Oldenburg:** Thanks, Davail. Congratulations on the appointment to this position, welcome and we look forward to seeing you here very soon.

**Steele:** Me too. I appreciate it.

**Oldenburg:** Great. Thank you, President Sternin.

**Sternin:** May I have a motion to approve Item 9.5?

**Misner:** So moved

**Koch:** Support

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mrs. Misner and a second from Mrs. Koch. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

**Gilbert:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch

**Koch:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner

**Misner:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

**Opalinski:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

**Schmutzler:** Aye

**Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.

**Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. Thank you. May I have a motion to approve CSE information item 10.1?

**Calabrese:** So moved

**Koch:** Support

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mr. Calabrese and a second from Mrs. Koch. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

**Gilbert:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch

**Koch:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner

**Misner:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

**Opalinski:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

**Schmutzler:** Aye

**Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.

**Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. There are no policy items to discuss. May I have a motion to approve Item 12.1?

**Koch:** So moved

**Gilbert:** Second

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mrs. Koch and a second from Mrs. Gilbert. Any questions or comments? Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert
- Gilbert:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch
- Koch:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner
- Misner:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski
- Opalinski:** Aye
- Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler
- Schmutzler:** Aye
- Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.
- Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. May I have a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 PM?
- Misner:** Didn't we skip roundup?
- Sternin:** We don't usually do roundup at the Zoom meetings, but if you want to say something, certainly.
- Misner:** Yes, actually I would.
- Sternin:** Ok, please
- Oldenburg:** Heather, that's my fault. I thought there was roundtable and I spoke to Mrs. Misner about that. I'm sorry for the confusion.
- Sternin:** That's ok, we've very happy if she has something to say. Go ahead, Mrs. Misner.
- Misner:** This is a bittersweet day. My love of children is what pushed me to be a school board member. I've always felt that I was put on this earth for the betterment of children, being a pediatric nurse for over 30 years, including school nursing for 18 and dealing with mental health issues with children/adolescents for the past seven years. Being a board member provided me with knowledge on the other side of school health education. I've enjoyed the learning process. I've also enjoyed the many opportunities for the students attending board meetings,

showing off their talents and what they are learning in class, expressing their individuality or being a team player like sports, plays, music, art and tech wars. I will miss all those little smiles. I want to thank all the community members who supported me and helped guide me to the right decisions regarding the education being provided for the students of this district. I have made many friends over the 9 years, board members, teachers and administrative staff working together to provide the best education for our students. I feel a little robbed this year with the COVID virus but hope to see all of you at community events.

**Sternin:** Thank you, Mrs. Misner. It's been a pleasure working with you. May I have a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 PM?

**Misner:** So moved

**Gilbert:** Second

**Sternin:** I have a motion from Mrs. Misner and a second from Mrs. Gilbert?

**Gilbert:** Sure

**Sternin:** Roll Call vote Madam Clerk

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mr. Calabrese

**Calabrese:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Gilbert

**Gilbert:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Koch

**Koch:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Misner

**Misner:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Opalinski

**Opalinski:** Aye

**Maxwell:** Trustee Mrs. Schmutzler

**Schmutzler:** Aye

**Maxwell:** President Ms. Sternin.

**Sternin:** Aye. Motion carries. Thank you.