

**Avonworth School District**  
**258 Josephs Lane**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15237**  
**Avonworth Board of School Directors**  
**Minutes – Regular Meeting – December 7, 2020**  
**Avonworth School District – High School Cafeteria & Virtually**  
**7:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT IN THE BOARD ROOM (Roll Call Taken):**

Mr. Beau Blaser, Mr. John Brandt, Ms. Vicki Carlson, Mr. Patrick Stewart,

**MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY (Roll Call Taken & Verified by Voices & Video):**

Ms. Sandra Bolain, Ms. Yu-Ling Cheng, Ms. Kathryn Monti, Ms. Kristin Thompson,  
Ms. Danielle White

**OTHERS PRESENT IN THE BOARD ROOM:**

Dr. Thomas Ralston, Superintendent  
Mr. Brad Waters, Director, Fiscal Mgmt.  
Ms. Cindy Donovan, Board Secretary

Dr. Jeff Hadley, Asst. Superintendent  
Ms. Andrea Patton, Athletic Director

**OTHERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:**

Mr. William Andrews, Esq., Solicitor  
Ms. Suzanne Basista, Parent  
Ms. Rhodora Huffmyer, Parent  
Ms. Rachael MacKenzie, Parent  
Ms. Lindsay Scharding, Parent  
Ms. Heather Sabala, Parent  
Ms. Colleen Barcaskey, School Nurse  
Ms. Melissa Reagle, Teacher  
Ms. Beth Hendrickson, Parent  
Ms. Monica Swartz, Teacher  
Ms. Elizabeth Dugan, Parent  
Ms. Emily Zupancic, Parent  
Ms. Gail Lipchak, Parent  
Ms. Jenna Paulat, Parent  
Ms. Jaclyn Keane, Teacher  
Ms. Kate Campbell, Parent  
Ms. Katie Kalb, Parent  
Ms. Tracy Wiley, Teacher  
Ms. Kristen Hubbell, Parent  
Ms. Tracy Smallwood, Parent  
Ms. Kristy Alberts, Parent  
Ms. Siobahn Gallagher, Parent  
Ms. Tracy Graff, APC Secretary  
Ms. Jessica Edmiston, Parent  
Ms. Jennifer Handke, Parent  
Ms. Sibyl Bevington, Parent  
Ms. Carrie Brady, Parent  
Ms. Jaime Mary, Parent  
Ms. Nancy Whyte, *The Citizen*

Ms. Gail Love, Substitute Nurse  
Ms. Gretchen Crawford, Parent  
Ms. Jennifer Lindell, Parent  
Ms. Yvonne Hudnall, Parent  
Ms. Carla Zimmerly, Parent  
Ms. Kim Gallucci, Parent  
Mr. Jason Smith, Teacher  
Ms. Erin Lodge, Parent  
Ms. Jessica Johnston, Parent  
Ms. Constance Rankin, *The Citizen*  
Ms. Maureen Frew, Teacher  
Ms. Carly Molchen, Parent  
Mr. Robb Pfeil, Parent  
Ms. Jennifer Yoder, Parent  
Ms. Becky Marszalek, Paraprofessional/AESPA Pres.  
Ms. Lisa Simmons, Paraprofessional/Parent  
Dr. Scott Miller, APC Principal  
Ms. Alicia Mielnicki, Parent  
Ms. Kelli Sommers, Parent  
Ms. Jodi Buzzard, Parent  
Ms. Rebecca Myers, Parent  
Ms. Lindsay Scharding, Parent  
Ms. Laura Ludwig, Parent  
Ms. Linsey Stover, Parent  
Ms. Carrie Johnston, Parent  
Ms. Lisa Milsom, Parent  
Ms. Ashley Henry Shook, Parent  
Ms. Kelly Hansen, Teacher/AEA President  
Mr. Michael Hetcko, Parent

## Minutes – Regular Meeting December 7, 2020

Ms. Courtney Kuzma, Parent	Ms. Julie Brown, Parent
Ms. Debi Van Mater, Parent	Ms. Ann Marie Harvey, Parent
Ms. Amanda Lemon, Parent	Ms. Makenzie Wetzal, Parent
Ms. Kim Kennis, Parent	Mr. Jared Quinn, Parent
Mr. Cory Bonnet, Parent	Ms. Jessica Jackson, Parent
Ms. Kari Johnson, Teacher	Ms. Raili Kielely, Parent
Ms. Pennie Anderson, Parent	Ms. Anne Blaser, Parent
Ms. Emily Heller, Parent	Ms. Emily Hensch, Parent
Ms. Tricia Floyd OScheller, Paraprofessional	Ms. Amy Maddalena, Parent
Ms. Morgan Carpenter-Panuski, Parent	Mr. Scott Huffmyer, Parent
Ms. Pharlan Ives, APC/AES Asst. Principal	Ms. Megan Pastore, Parent
Ms. Erin Pascuzzi, Parent	Mr. Mike Hall, AMS Principal
Ms. Lauren Zivic, Teacher	Ms. Carol Loutzenhiser, Parent
Mr. James Loutzenhiser	Ms. Kaitlin Remensky, AMS/AHS Asst. Principal
Ms. Hannah Valeriano, Parent	Mr. Chris Foreman, Parent
Ms. Amanda Berneburg, Parent	Ms. Marlena Stevens, Parent
Ms. Kristie Lulich, Parent	Ms. Anna Marie White, Parent
Ms. Sara Studt, Teacher	Mr. Brant Colamarino, Bldgs./Grounds Supvsr.
Ms. Christina Herrle, Parent	Ms. Omolara Fatukasi, Parent
Ms. Melissa Lesko, Parent	Ms. Lindsay Wolff, Parent
Ms. Krystyn Birt, Parent	Ms. Debra Bacon, Parent
Ms. Angela Klaum, Parent	Mr. Bill White, Parent
Ms. Stephani Machen, Parent	Ms. Marijane Antkiewicz, Parent
Ms. Kristen Hollywood, Parent	Ms. Sherah Rothman, Teacher
Mr. Chad Osborn, Parent	Ms. Maureen O'Connor, Parent

### **Call to Order**

*Board President, Mr. Beau Blaser, called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:37 P.M.*

### **Visitors' Comments**

*No visitor comments.*

### **Report of Student Representative – Ms. Kyra Carlson**

*Ms. Carlson reported that in November, Student Council created and mailed/mailed cards to staff members for Veteran's Day and provided them with flag pins. They held a fundraiser to provide Thanksgiving dinner for a local family in need and hosted a jeans week for staff. In December they researched holiday books for grade 2-4 students and created PDFs and virtual presentations to read to elementary age students: The Grinch, Polar Express, and Hanukkah traditions. They also plan to read virtually to elementary students and complete an interactive activity on December 9.*

### **Report of Administration – Dr. Thomas Ralston, Superintendent**

*Dr. Ralston reported a successful shift to virtual instruction on November 12. We have received great feedback on our program at our Board meetings, emails and surveys. Synchronous has allowed increased engagement of students. We had the completion of our Facility Master Plan. The next step is to discuss moving forward with projects identified in the feasibility study. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion group met within the last month. Focus on those who are going to be really committing to identify/focus on specific opportunities for projects growth. We completed work on the latest strategic plan in the Fall but due*

*to the pandemic we are still addressing. Focus areas of diversity, equity inclusion, curriculum, career readiness, community relationships. We will formally launch when we can. The IT Department distributed the new Chromebooks to students in grades 4, 7, and 10.*

*Report of the Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Jeff Hadley*

*Math Night was held November 10 for grades K-5. There is a link on our website to Eureka Math resources as well as the recordings of the sessions held during the K-5 Math Night. Dr. Hadley thanked Mrs. Torri Robinson for her assistance at the last Diversity, Equity and Inclusion meeting on November 12. There were a lot of the ideas generated by the group. Dr. Hadley encouraged the school community to stay tuned as many of the ideas are meant to involve the whole school community and students. In November the Drama Department recorded a radio play, “A Christmas Carol” and it is posted on our website for all to enjoy until December 31. Dr. Hadley recognized senior Sean Boaks for being elected the President of the AWBCC /National Tech Honor Society and President of USA Skills. Dr. Hadley also recognized Michael Kohl for being elected Treasurer and McKenna Kohl as Parliamentarian. This is Computer Science Week. Information was in the last newsletter regarding many of the great activities taking place at Avonworth Elementary School for Computer Science Week.*

*Report of the Solicitor – Mr. William Andrews, Esq.*

*No report at this time. Mr. Andrews will have a detailed report in January.*

*Beattie Key Notes/AIU News – Ms. Kate Monti*

*Mrs. Monti reported that AWBCC is operating in a limited learning capacity and will switch to a hybrid model January 11. Dr. Pat Mannarino is the representative at AWBCC. AWBCC’s Reorganization Meeting will be held Thursday evening.*

*Mr. Brad Waters discussed the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget. He will recommend passing a “Not to Exceed” resolution at the January meeting. The Board will be asked to approve the proposed final budget in January and the final at the June meeting.*

*Dr. Ralston provided a COVID-19 Update. The Department of Health feels the positivity rate is higher than on the dashboard. Colleges test athletes each week and throw in sports teams who test every day. The Dept. of Health issued a travel order which requires quarantine for those over age 11 except for travel for work, travel for less than 24 hours, for medical reasons, military personnel, transit through PA, travel required by court order. The CDC/Dept. Of Health quarantine information option to reduce quarantine from 14 days to 10 days or 7 days with a negative test on or after day 5 of quarantine. Priority 1: Bring grades K-2 back for full, in-person with 6 ft. distancing at the semester if conditions allow January 25. Priority 2: Bring grades 3-6 back for full, in-person with 6 ft. distancing at the semester or later if conditions allow. Priority 3: Grades 7-12 would remain in hybrid. Dr. Hadley reviewed the survey for which we had 844 responses which represents 82% of current K-6 families, 1,033 enrollment. Dr. Ralston said the Administration would recommend grades K-6 educational model 1. Make the effort to address K-2 staffing need for full in-person instruction; A. Maintain AM/PM model for K-2 if staffing need cannot be met or conditions/metrics do not change; 2. Maintain AM/PM hybrid model for grade 3-6 students. Secondary campus – not optimistic in bringing grade 7-12 students back in the near future. Mrs. Carlson clarified K-2 return first and continue grades 3-6 in the hybrid format. Mrs. Carlson answered a question in the Q&A about why other schools can be doing something different. She replied that other Boards and districts can make other decisions.*

*The Board discussed defining the term “when conditions allow” and coming back full time, face-to-face. Discussion included being in the moderate range for a couple of weeks in order for the administration to make a recommendation. Mrs. White asked if the country provides guidance to school districts as to which instructional model to operate in. Dr. Ralston said Dr. Freeman felt students could return with 6 ft. distancing and masks and Dr. Rottinghouse felt we could operate if we are in the medium range. Neither doctor felt the substantial range would be safe with 6 ft. distancing and masks. Dr. Ralston said we secured building substitutes at the beginning of the school year. Teachers have continued to teach if they have COVID voluntarily. We have provided additional tables with grant money so we can use other spaces for lunch. Dr. Ralston said the Dept. of Health provides what is happening in the county they have not gotten into directing us about instructional models. Mrs. Thompson asked what time frame we would need to hire teachers. Dr. Ralston asked the Board permission to advertise and see what kind of response we get. We could hire substitutes in January, do some training before we would roll out any new models. Dr. Hadley said the Primary Center operates on a trimester schedule so we have flexibility. Dr. Ralston said if we do not get a good response we are also exploring internal options. Mrs. White asked using emergency certifications could be a possibility if we didn’t receive enough qualified applicants for the positions posted. Dr. Ralston said we can emergency certify someone if they have a Bachelor’s degree.*

*Dr. Ralston said a parent had suggested some students attend in-person for one week and then do virtual the following week or attend 2 days one week and three days the following week.*

*Mrs. Carlson then took questions from virtual attendees. Mr. Bonnet asked about students attending in-person for half one week and half the next. He feels the synchronous model has been much calmer because of the structure but feels re-rostering would be hard on the students.*

*Dr. Hadley noted we did see students that are not meeting benchmarks and we are making improvements. He also noted students have shown improvement in the areas of reading and math.*

*Mr. Brandt suggested the working team convene on these items and come up with a proposal that could determine “when conditions allow” and decide when to start the process.*

*Mrs. Carlson recognized Mrs. Jenna Paulat who felt there’s a need to recognize the misconception that synchronous and virtual learning are the same.*

*Ms. Carol Loutzenhiser asked for clarification if the secondary campus would be going back to hybrid and if synchronous would still be there for her children. Dr. Ralston said yes, the goal is to continue to work with that in the secondary classrooms.*

*Mr. Hetcko expressed frustration to hear people saying “moderate range.” Why try to change what has already been decided. Don’t move the goal post on what moderate is. Mr. Blaser feels the community would need at least three days to digest the information and we would put it on the website if we intend to vote. He is okay with advertising for substitutes.*

*Mr. Stewart thinks “moderate” is “moderate” and not “low, medium or high.”*

*Mrs. Carlson is okay with advertising for substitutes and administration coming up with a recommendation at the January meeting. We want to go forward with a minimum of K-2 advertising for these positions and spending money to go forward with all K-2 students to*

*come back full time, face-to-face. Mrs. Thompson agrees with advertising for substitutes and asked administration to come to the January meeting with responses and, if we have the numbers, come to an agreement.*

*Mrs. Carlson said we are still doing synchronous on Wednesdays at the secondary campus.*

*Dr. Ralston said he asked Mrs. Andrea Patton, Athletic Director, to attend tonight's meeting to give an update on what's happening with athletics. Mrs. Patton held a parent information meeting on November 23 to update them on what athletics would look like and how to conduct athletics in a virtual format. Mrs. Patton has the practice schedule in a google calendar on our website. Mrs. Loutenheizer asked about an upcoming WPIAL or PIAA meeting. Mrs. Patton confirmed there is a PIAA Board meeting scheduled for December 9 and a WPIAL meeting after that to provide an update and recommendations.*

*Mr. Blaser said the Curriculum Committee met this evening in the High School Cafeteria and virtually to discuss curriculum matters.*

**NOTE: When voicing their votes, Board members also raised their hands to signify their vote so virtual attendees could see them.**

**Motion:** B. Blaser; **Second:** J. Brandt; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve the Minutes of the November 2, 2020 Work Session/General Purpose Meeting and the Minutes of the November 9, 2020 Regular Meeting (Voice Vote)

*Minutes*

**FINANCE – D. White/P. Stewart, Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** D. White; **Second:** P. Stewart; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve items 1.1-1.6 and 2-6:

- |            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| <b>1.1</b> | Ratify payment of General Fund bills for November, 2020, beginning with Check #49932 and ending with Check #50117 in the amount of \$708,927.30.  | <i>General Fund</i>                        |
| <b>1.2</b> | Ratify the November, 2020 payroll in the amount of \$1,331,069.54.  | <i>Payroll</i>                             |
| <b>1.3</b> | Treasurer's Report for October, 2020.   | <i>Treasurer's Rpt.</i>                    |
| <b>1.4</b> | Ratify payment of Food Service Fund checks for November, 2020, beginning with Check #2771 and ending with Check #2774 in the total amount of \$18,993.97.   | <i>Food Svc. Fund</i>                      |
| <b>1.5</b> | Ratify payment of Athletic Fund checks for November, 2020, beginning with Check #9198 and ending with Check #9201 in the total amount of \$205.   | <i>Athletic Fund</i>                       |
| <b>1.6</b> | To approve capital project payments of \$5,603.25.  | <i>Capital Projects</i>                    |
| <b>2.</b>  | To approve the Department of Education's approval of Plan Con Part K: Project Refinancing" for a portion of Series A of 2020 General Obligation Bonds assigned Lease No. 202465 be accepted and entered into the Minutes of this meeting.   | <i>Plan Con Part K<br/>Series A 2020</i>   |
| <b>3.</b>  | To approve the Department of Education's approval of Plan Con Part K: Project Refinancing" for a portion of Series B-1 of 2020 General Obligation Bonds assigned Lease No. 203634 be accepted and entered into the Minutes of this meeting. | <i>Plan Con Part K<br/>Series B-1 2020</i> |
| <b>4.</b>  | To approve the Department of Education's approval of Plan Con Part K: Project Refinancing" for a portion of Series B-2 of 2020 General Obligation Bonds assigned Lease No. 204634 be accepted and entered into the Minutes of this meeting. | <i>Plan Con Part K<br/>Series B-2 2020</i> |

**Finance, continued**

**ADDENDUM ITEMS (2)**

5. To retroactively approve **Mr. Bill White** to write two PPG Innovation in the Classroom (Corporate) Grants in the amount of \$1,000 each and to approve **Mr. White** receive a stipend in the amount of \$75 for writing each grant. One is for the High School and one is for the Middle School. *Grants*
  
6. To approve the Service Agreement with the Children’s Institute Day School. *Svc. Agreement*

**PERSONNEL – K. Thompson/V. Carlson, Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** K. Thompson; **Second:** J. Brandt; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve items 1-8:

1. To approve the request of **Ms. Stephani Machen**, Paraprofessional, for an extension to her unpaid leave of absence through March 16, 2021. *Unpaid Leave Ext.*
  
2. To approve the request of **Mr. Jason DeGusipe**, Paraprofessional, for an intermittent FMLA for up to twelve weeks beginning December 2, 2020. *Intermittent FMLA*
  
3. To approve the request of **Ms. Tessa Babcock** for an unpaid leave from January 29, 2021 through January 12, 2022. *Unpaid Leave*

**ADDENDUM ITEMS (5)**

4. To approve **Ms. Marian Ott** as a Substitute Food Service Worker for the 2020-2021 School Year pending requirements of the District, with no benefits, at a rate of \$10.25/hour, with a start date to be determined. *Sub Fd. Svc. Worker*
  
5. To approve **Ms. Julie Navilliat** as a Substitute Food Service Worker for the 2020-2021 School Year pending requirements of the District, with no benefits, at a rate of \$10.25/hour, with a start date to be determined. *Sub Fd. Svc. Worker*
  
6. To accept the resignation of **Ms. Kim Rask**, Paraprofessional, effective December 2, 2020. *Resignation*
  
7. To approve the request of **Mr. Dave Bartolac**, for a sabbatical from January 22, 2021 through June 10, 2021. *Sabbatical*
  
8. To approve **Ms. Anastasia Simpson** as a Day-to-Day Fourth Grade Substitute Teacher at \$140/day, with no benefits, commencing December 4, 2020 through approximately January 29, 2021, pending requirements of the District. *DTD Sub*

**PUBLIC RELATIONS – Y. Cheng/K. Thompson, Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** Y. Cheng; **Second:** J. Brandt; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve item 1:

1. To approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar as attached. *2021-2022 Calendar*

**ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES – J. Brandt/B. Blaser, Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** J. Brandt; **Second:** P. Stewart; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve items 1-3:

1. To accept the resignation of **Mr. Darion Trimmer**, Assistant Jr. High Wrestling Coach, effective November 17, 2020. *Resignation*
2. The Administration recommends approval of the following coaches for the 2020-2021 School Year, pending requirements of the District. In the event that an athletic season or other activity is shortened or cancelled in its entirety, payment for the affected supplemental positions(s) shall be reduced on a pro rata basis. This appointment does not guarantee any of the persons listed below that his/her position will be needed and in place or that it will continue uninterrupted during the 2020-2021 School Year. *Coaches*
  - A. Shared Assistant Middle School Softball Coach – **Mr. Scott Savatt**
  - B. Assistant Jr. High Wrestling Coach – **Mr. Ryan Schmiedlin**

**ADDENDUM ITEM**

3. To approve **Ms. Kathryn Goetz**, as a volunteer Girls' Varsity Basketball Coach for the 2020-2021 School Year, pending requirements of the District. *Vol. Coach*

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – P. Stewart/S. Bolain – Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** P. Stewart; **Second:** B. Blaser; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve item 1:

1. To declare a John Deere 425 tractor with a lawn cutting deck and a plow as obsolete and sell/dispose of accordingly. *(This piece of equipment is no longer operating and needs extensive repairs.)* *Obsolete Tractor*

**Old Business**

*No Old Business.*

**New Business**

**Motion from the Floor:** S. Bolain; **Second:** K. Monti; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve item 1:

1. To authorize the administration to post for nine long term substitute teaching positions for grades K-2.

*Post Sub Positions*

Mr. Blaser clarified this was to advertise and not commit to hiring at this time. Mrs. Bolain asked what if we cannot find nine substitutes, would K-2 go back? Dr. Ralston said he wasn't prepared to answer at this time.

Mrs. White felt the public needs to understand what is being discussed at Board meetings and suggested sending out more specific information the Friday before each meeting.

Ms. Cheng noted that the JAM Club made 90 gift bags that contained a decorated Christmas tree, a homemade pillow and card to Emsworth Meals on Wheels and 90 gift bags to Light of Life containing a homemade scarf, hat, blanket, a toiletry kit, mask and socks.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** B. Blaser; **Second:** J. Brandt; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous Voice Vote to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 10:43 P.M. to an Executive Session to discuss personnel, contract, and real estate matters.

*Adjournment*

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy S. F. Donovan,  
Board Secretary