

# **NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **School Board Minutes**

December 14, 2020

Northfield High School Media Center and Zoom

### **I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Julie Pritchard called the Regular meeting of the Northfield Board of Education of Independent School District 659 to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to the health pandemic and the extension of Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-01 COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency, and in accordance with Minnesota Statute 13D.021, which permits boards to hold a meeting by telephone conference call or other electronic means, this meeting was conducted via video conference. In addition, Superintendent Dr. Matt Hillmann was present at the Northfield High School Media Center in order for Northfield school district taxpayers to ask questions or make comments after the Truth In Taxation presentation. The district did make accommodations for public comment, for both the Truth In Taxation presentation and the Regular board meeting, which are outlined below.

Board member attendance was taken by roll call. Anita Aase, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Education, called the name of each board member in alphabetical order by last name and the board member responded "present" when his/her name was called. Present: Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. Absent: None.

Also present at this video conference meeting was: Matt Hillmann, Anita Aase, Erin Bailey, Director of Community Education; Val Mertesdorf, Director of Finance; Greg Gelineau, Middle School Principal; and Craig Popenhagen, Principal with CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP. This meeting was live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted to the school district website.

Board Chair Pritchard outlined the procedures for this meeting:

- Board members were asked to mute their microphones when not speaking.
- During the course of the meeting when a motion and a second is required, Dr. Hillmann would initiate the "unmute" for all board members.
- At the start of each discussion Chair Pritchard said she would call on each board member in alphabetical order by last name for any questions or comments. If they didn't wish to speak, they would be welcome to pass.
- There would be one round of questioning for board members. If board members had a follow-up question or comment, they could consider using the Raise Hand feature in order to be recognized by the Chair.
- All votes on the Items for Individual Action would be conducted by roll call by Aase. Each board member was instructed to wait until their name was called before voting.

### **II. Agenda Approval/Table File**

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board approved the agenda by roll call. Voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

### **III. Public Comment**

To accommodate the Truth In Taxation portion of our meeting, members of the public were invited via the school district website to submit feedback to the Board via email by 3:00 p.m. on December 14, 2020. The public also had the ability to comment live after the Truth In Taxation presentation. To accommodate the public comment portion of our meeting, members of the public were invited via the school district website to submit feedback to the Board via email by 5:00 p.m. on December 14, 2020. All submissions that followed the district policy regarding public comment were read by Chair Pritchard. Public comment was submitted by Jane Jeffrey, 903 St. Lawrence Drive; Marja and Sam Steinberg, 409 Highland Avenue; Jane Becker Nelson, 905 Ivanhoe Drive; Corey Butler, 825 Linden Street North; and Claudia Gonzalez-George, 2427 Valley Drive, in support of updating the Northfield Raider mascot.

### **IV. Announcements and Recognitions**

Congratulations to Maggie Malecha who is the 2021 MSHSL ExCel Winner. Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for Minnesota high school juniors who are active in school activities, leaders in their schools, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to community service.

V. Items for Discussion and Reports

- A. Truth in Taxation Presentation for the Payable 2021 Property Tax Levy Followed by Public Comment. The amount of the proposed levy for 2021 is \$20,313,043.39 and represents a 1.64% increase from the prior year. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf reviewed the levy, the current year's revised general fund budget, and an updated financial forecast. The public was invited to speak following the presentation. One resident spoke at the meeting.
- B. FY2020 Audit Results and Presentation. Craig Popenhagen presented the results of the 2019-20 fiscal year audit. His comments focused on the executive audit summary. The auditors issued a clean opinion on financial statements with no comments, and issued what is known as a "clean" audit report with no findings in the internal controls, financial reporting, or preparation of the audit papers. The district expended approximately \$267,000 of ESSER (Coronavirus Relief funding) program funds. The compliance supplement the auditors need to test compliance has not yet been issued in final form. They did test the expenditures that had been claimed and they look appropriate, however, they cannot issue the final audited statements until they have the compliance supplement from the federal government. The auditors recommend pulling the federal compliance piece out, and issue that separately at another point in time when the compliance supplement is released. The Board of Education commended Director Mertesdorf and the finance office staff for their excellent work.
- C. Middle School Update. Middle School Principal Greg Gelineau updated the Board about activities, accomplishments and challenges occurring at the Middle School. Safety protocols worked well while in the hybrid learning model and family engagement was prioritized which resulted in a 99% participation rate during family conferences at the beginning of the school year. Ongoing challenges include connecting with students during distance learning and getting students to complete work outside of the classroom.
- D. Northfield Community Education Center Update  
Northfield Community Education Center Director Erin Bailey updated the Board about activities, accomplishments and challenges occurring at the Community Education Center. Hand in Hand successfully launched "Portage" total distance learning preschool with eighteen students. Students and staff were pleased to start the school year in person and the transition to distance learning has been successful. Supporting students who are in quarantine and stress management for all staff have proved to be challenging.
- E. COVID-19 Response and Operations Update  
Superintendent Hillmann informed the board the district has entered its third week of distance learning at most sites and we continue to support students, parents, teachers and educational assistants as they adapt to distance learning. Leadership is preparing metrics to determine when and how students might return to in person learning. The third week of COVID-19 testing targeting asymptomatic people will happen this week at Northfield Middle School. This testing program is a collaborative effort between the district and the Minnesota Department of Health. The district continues to work on its anti-racism framework to support racial equity including progress toward a process that would refresh the Raider logo.

VI. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Iverson, seconded by Quinnell, the Board approved the consent agenda by roll call. Voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

- A. Minutes
  - Minutes of the Regular School Board meeting held on November 23, 2020
- B. Gift Agreements

- \$2,700.00 from Northfield Raider Touchdown Club for the Hudl software
- \$2,000.00 from Northfield Booster Club, Inc. for the stadium Pixellot camera
- \$1,910.00 from Pat Lamb and Ele Hansen Charitable Fund of Northfield Shares for two scholarships
- \$1,000.00 from Kevin & Nanette Rodgers to Sibley Elementary School
- \$1,000.00 from Kevin & Nanette Rodgers to Northfield Middle School
- \$1,000.00 from Kevin & Nanette Rodgers to Northfield Area Learning Center

C. ALC Co-Curricular Overnight Field Trip for 2020-2021

ALC teachers Cheryl Mathison and Eric McDonald requested Board approval for a co-curricular overnight trip for the 2020-2021 school year.

D. Personnel

a) Appointments

1. Elisabeth Alderks, Assistant Speech Coach-Virtual hourly 2-3 days/week for High School Activities, beginning 12/7/2020.
2. Theresa Bauman, 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute First Grade Portage Teacher, beginning 5/3/2021-6/10/2021; MA, Step 10
3. Scott Haley, Assistant Girls Hockey Coach for 2 hours/day for 5 days/week at the High School, beginning 1/4/2021 or when activities resume; Level E, Step 5
4. Claire Little, Assistant Alpine Ski Coach for 2 hours/day 5 days/week at the High School, beginning 1/4/2021. Level G, Step 1
5. Updated Elisabeth Alderks, Assistant Speech Coach-Virtual hourly 2-3 days/week for High School Activities, beginning 1/4/2021.
6. Community Education Winter/Spring 2021 Brochure Instructors, See attached.

b) Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment

1. Pamela Charlton, Grade 1 Teacher at Bridgewater, add Building Literacy Team Lead at Bridgewater, effective 12/4/2020-6/10/2021. Stipend \$750
2. Matt Crase, Long Term Substitute Special Ed Teacher-Short call sub at the daily sub rate at the High School, change to 1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Special Ed Teacher, effective 12/1/2020-1/29/2021; BA, Step 1
3. Betsy McLaughlin, Grade 4 Teacher at Greenvale Park, add Building Literacy Team Lead at Greenvale Park, effective 12/4/2020-6/10/2021. Stipend \$750
4. April Ostermann, Grade 5 Teacher at Sibley, add Building Literacy Team Lead at Sibley, effective 12/4/2020-6/10/2021. Stipend \$750
5. Mackenzie Schewe, KidVentures Site Assistant on call as needed, add EarlyVentures Assistant Teacher for 10 hours/week at the NCEC, effective 11/23/2020.
6. Allison Sweeney, Grade 3 Teacher at Sibley, add MTSS Tier 1 Grant District Lead at Sibley, effective 12/4/2020-6/10/2021. Stipend \$1,500
7. Linda Wicklund, CNA1 for 3.75 hours/day at the High School, change to on call with the High School, effective through the return from distance learning

c) Leave of Absence

1. Rebecca Lorang, EL Specialist at the Middle School, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective on or about 4/2/2021-through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
2. Armando Martinez Rosas, Custodian Engineer at Sibley, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective 12/8/2020-12/21/2020.
3. Ashley Opatrny, EA at Greenvale Park, Updated Leave of Absence effective 12/4/2020 through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
4. Karrie Van Zuilen, EA at NCEC, Leave of Absence, effective 11/24/2020 -students return to building.
5. Linda Wicklund, CNA at the High School, Leave of Absence, effective 12/2/2020-students return to building.
6. Kyle Roth, Teacher at NCEC, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective 1/11/2021-1/26/2021.

d) Retirements/Resignations/Terminations

1. Sarah Woodcock, Early Ventures Teacher at Longfellow, termination of employment effective 12/2/2020.

e) Seniority Lists

The Board approved the 2020-2021 Principal/Assistant Principals Seniority List and the 2020-2021 Teacher Seniority List.

f) Grievance Appeal

1. Deny grievance 2020-01. There was no contract violation and there was just cause for the discipline.

## VII. Superintendent's Report

### A. Items for Individual Action

1. FY 2020 Audit. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Hardy, the Board approved the 2019-2020 audit as presented. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
2. Policies 404, 409, 413 and 415. On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Baraniak, the Board approved modifications to policies 404, 409, 413 and 415 as presented. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
3. Northfield High School Raider Mascot. On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Baraniak, the Board directed Northfield High School administration to complete a process that will offer the Board up to four options for refreshing the Raider team mascot. Conceptual designs centered on the community's defeat of the James-Younger gang will be given the strongest consideration but other designs are welcome. The designs must be free from weaponry and simple to reproduce. Unless there are unavoidable delays, the Board will review the submitted options no later than March 1, 2021. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
4. Certify Final 2020 Payable 2021 Tax Levy. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Bararniak, the Board certified to County Auditors the 2020 Payable 2021 Final Certified Levy Limitation and Certification Report in the amount of \$20,313,043.39. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.
5. Fiscal Year 2020-2021 General Fund Budget Revision. On a motion by Iverson, seconded by Hardy, the Board approved the following revisions to the FY21 general fund budget. The adopted general fund revenue and expenditure budget for FY21 was \$57,860,302 and \$60,727,299 respectively. The recommended revised budget for FY21 is revenues of \$58,184,370 and expenditures of \$60,073,958. The major factors contributing to these changes include coronavirus relief funding (CRF), decline in enrollment from projected, impacts of the pandemic as well as a detailed analysis of the final audited data from FY20. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

Chair Pritchard asked for a motion to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Stratmoen, the board voted to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

## VIII. Items for Information

- A. Enrollment Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed the December enrollment report.
- B. Construction Update #38. Superintendent Hillmann updated the Board on the District's construction projects.

## IX. Future Meetings

- A. Monday, January 11, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Organizational Board Meeting followed by the Regular Board Meeting
- B. Monday, January 25, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting

Chair Pritchard shared prepared comments and celebrated the service and accomplishments of two outgoing school board members Dr. Ellen Iverson and Dr. Rob Hardy. Superintendent Dr. Matt Hillmann and each board member were invited to share comments.

## X. Adjournment

On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Iverson, the Board approved adjournment by roll call at 10:09 p.m. Voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Goerwitz, Hardy, Iverson, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

Noel Stratmoen  
School Board Clerk