

REGULAR MEETING

A Regular meeting of the Benzie County Central Board of Education was held Monday, June 5, 2023, in the Board of Education Conference Room.

President Childs called the meeting to order at 7:02pm

Members Present: Mr. Childs, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Gray, Mrs. Gillison, Mr. Smith, Ms. Cota Hill, Mr. Noffsinger

Members Absent: Gloria Stepanovich (non-voting member)

22-23-141 It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the agenda as presented

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Opening Statement:

We are a team. We leave our personal opinions at the door and we are bound by Policy 2302 to faithfully discharge the office of a board member and keep in mind our primary concern is the educational welfare of students focusing on governance and fiduciary obligations of the district including duties of loyalty and care, placing the District's interests above the Board member's personal interests.

22-23-142 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve Consent Grouping items as presented.

A. Minutes: May 8, 2023 Regular | May 17, 2023 Special

B. Business: General Fund Bills – \$2,194,678.32

C. Support Staff Appointments:

- Amber Bright Hughes – Middle School Track & Field Coach
- Jeanett Pritchett – Secondary Counselor effective 23/24
- Jeri Ruble – Secondary Counselor effective 23/24
- Christa Gillison – Crystal Lake Elementary Paraprofessional – 5.5
- Danielle Chaprnka – Elementary Teacher – Lake Ann Elementary 23/24

D. Staff Assignment Changes:

- Robert Pearson – Crystal Lake Elementary Paraprofessional – 5.5 to 6.5
- Michael Hammar – MS/HS Assistant Principal to Mathematics and Chemistry Teacher effective 23/24

E. Leave of Absence:

- NONE

F. Recommendation for Tenure:

- NONE

G. Recommendation for Termination:

- David Parr – Bus Driver – Transportation Department

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

District Impact Team Update: Board of Education Trustee, Matt Smith reported the following:

- **Lake Ann shared a question regarding the end of the year ceremony for 5th grade graduation and how to make it more inclusive.**
 - Traditional practice is teachers present certificates to those students who meet or exceed their projected growth in NWEA.
 - This leaves others behind.
 - How do we find other ways to acknowledge their efforts around NWEA.
- **TCR - presented survey data and began creating a shared definition of instructional coaches and TCRs at Benzie.**
 - How do we implement TCRs and instructional coaching so that teachers find value and it leads to growth in practice?
- **Betsie Valley**
 - discussed the creation of an intervention matrix for reading tied directly to students needs and based on data assessment of skill deficits
 - Developing a training plan for reading to support teachers and leaders who can interpret data and use it to inform instruction and intervention strategies.
- **Data dive into general supervision across the district, looking at how special ed teachers are tracking students' progress in IEP goals. [Brooke Laurent](#) is meeting with principals and special ed teachers for further feedback**
- **The District ELA team continues to look at existing curriculum, and consider new curricula.**
- **Last meeting was spent entirely on the spring NWEA scores.**
 - Seeing very little change in scores.
 - A lot of great discussion.
 - Need to improve core instruction in the classroom.
 - Personally, it shows the need for this Director of Curriculum position we approved and the importance of having the right person in the job.
- **Last DIT Meeting of the year is tomorrow.**
- **Thank you, Brian, and Amiee for allowing me to be a part of the DIT. It has been great to sit in on the meetings. This district is fortunate to have the people that sit on this Team. They are all dedicated individuals who truly care about these students. Can't wait to see the growth next year.**

Student Council Report: Student Council Board of Education Representative, Gloria Stepanovich was not in attendance. She did however share with Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Catina Crossman, that Jessica Whaley will be our Student Council Board of Education Representative for the 2023/24 school year. We would like to thank Gloria for her time and voice while serving on the Board of Education.

Administration Report:

- A. NMSLA – Superintendent Erfourth shared that there is no report, as NMSLA will be held next week. She will report at the June 26 or July 10 Regular meetings.**
- B. 2023/24 Non-Union Contracts - The non-union employee hourly rates and salaries were presented to the Board of Education. There are currently (2) non-union employee additions; both secondary counselors. We are waiting on the hiring of an Assistant Principal, for a total of (3).**
- C. Academic Goals and Benchmark Assessments - Public Act 48 of 2021, Section 98b – Superintendent Erfourth- Superintendent Erfourth shared the following Academic Goals and Benchmark Assessments with the Board of Education Benchmarks.**
- D. MHSAA 2023/24 Membership Resolution for year August 1, 2023 -July 31, 2024 - The membership resolution is the standard yearly resolution that ensures that the Board of Education/Governing Body hereby delegates to the Superintendent or his/her designee(s) the responsibility for the supervision and control of said activities, and hereby accepts the Constitution and By-Laws of said association and adopts as its own the rules, regulations and interpretations (as minimum standards), as published in the current handbook.**
- E. Benzie Technology Services Agreement July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025 – Superintendent Erfourth shared that this is a renewal of our technology service contract for 2.0 technicians. Benzie County Central Schools shall pay North Ed for the services indicated in this Agreement at an estimated annual amount of \$186,351, to be paid quarterly for the 2023- 2024 fiscal year. The estimated annual amount for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is \$194,909.**
- F. Budget Amendment #2 – Director of Finance, Justin Weston – Director of Finance, Justin Weston shared the following:**

The General Fund has changed a lot since the original adoption. We have seen some updates that caused fluctuations. Property value adjustments and pupil numbers have updated since April, adjusting our overall revenues. There is a slight decrease in taxes. We did see an offset in delinquent taxes collected. Earning on investments increased due to our recent investment of our fund equity balance in MILAF. This will increase earnings substantially for next year. We saw sizable increases in 22b of \$239,561, new School Safety Section 97 of \$148,137, and 31aa Mental Health Grant of \$147,772. We also recognized Strong Beginnings with this amendment, adding another \$154,560.

General Fund expenditures increased from \$15,780,033 in the original adoption to \$18,896,268, an increase of \$3,116,235. As we continued to get additional revenues, expenditures followed an upward trajectory. We took care of several projects with our general fund this year to try and reduce our overall fund balance. Some of those expenditures include the new bus approved in May's meeting, two new district vehicles, technology upgrades like cabling and

cameras, and athletic equipment. We saw healthcare increase around 7% as well beginning in January. Overall the General Fund shows excess spending of \$627,564, but we budget high for retirement costs, so those costs are not expected to max out, so we will see some of that cost come back to us, reducing our expected expenditures. We will continue to designate fund equity to our savings categories of athletics, buses/vehicles, curriculum, furniture/equipment, technology, and future capital projects. The plan will be to have \$2,875,000 designated in total, leaving an undesignated balance of \$2,100,867. The total fund balance at the end of the fiscal year will be around \$4,975,867 or 30% of the estimated budget for FY24.

Our food service fund revenue increased slightly due to increased catering and vending revenue. It was discussed that the State of Michigan recently reduced the districts current year 31d lunch funding to \$0.00, also taking 31 revenues from fiscal year 2022. This was due to how district expenditures were reported to the FID. We are in the process of correcting this and will have an opportunity to earn fiscal year 2023 31d fund backing after a review/audit of our FID submission in the Spring of 2024, likely in May. The District did receive a letter from MDE again this year, stating that our fund balance in the Food Service fund was too high, we have an approved plan with MDE to spend these funds down and reduce the balance to under \$200k. It's been hard to do since most of our kitchens are updated and we continue to receive one-time funding from the state. We are working hard to ensure that we don't receive another letter from MDE next year.

Early childhood program grew in staff due to the infant/toddler room at Crystal Lake. There were also additional pre-school teachers this year. We also have funds set to purchase new playground equipment at both Lake Ann and Homestead Hills. We also have a Social Worker on staff, these costs are shared between the General Fund and Strong Beginnings. The NES will reimburse the District from some of these expenses, reducing our cost. The fund started with \$142,110 at the start of FY23, and will end at approximately \$40,748 this year.

We started the year off with \$1,520,699 in our sinking fund. We levied \$876,851 giving us \$2,397,550. We plan to expend \$41,061 this year, leaving us with a balance of \$2,356,489. We have invested a balance of \$1,500,000 in a Certificate of Deposit that will mature in October 2023. At this point, funds will be available for projects as bond items begin to wind down.

The Activity Fund started with a fund balance of \$156,587 and should come in around \$166,587 for the end of FY23. Revenues are mainly driven by community sponsors, ticket sales, club dues/fees, and fundraising. Expenditures are driven by expenses that directly benefit students which ranges from tournament fees, supplies, equipment, and Prom activities.

Coming up on June 26th, 2023, we need to approve millage rate on form L-4029. We will have a resolution calling for the Headlee Renewal, the Non-Homestead Operating Millage that is scheduled to end in November 2024. We are bringing it to voters early in hopes for an approval with no financial interruptions. It Must be

approved to be filed with the District's election coordinator by August 15, 2023. We will present the Budget for fiscal year 2024. Finally, there will be an update on Bond.

G. MS/HS Handbook Update – Assistant Principal, Michael Hammar – Assistant Principal Hammar shared that the MS/HS handbook was aligned with our Thrun polices last year, and as a result, there are just a few highlighted changes:

- **Pg. 18 Curriculum/Graduation Area Requirements – Social Studies Credit from 3.5 to 3.0. Physical Education Credit from 1 to .5 credit.**
- **Pg. 19 Exam Exemption Policy – This policy was once based solely on grades. Attendance is now a factor.**
- **Pg. 27 Offenses Defined – Behaviors have been categorized together and linked to our Thrun Policies.**
- **Pg. 36 Student Code of Conduct –Leveled system rather than progressive; Level A, Level B, Level C and Level D. Level System is new for 2023/24.**
- **Pg. 37 Behavior Modification Strategy – Level B directed to Counseling support, Level C referred to the Assistant Principal, Level D results in suspensions, long-term suspensions, expulsions.**
- **Pg. 38 Acceptable Use Violations – 1st, 2nd, and 3rd offenses and consequences for internet, network, and computer violations.**
- **Pg. 53 Acceptable Use Policy – This policy has been updated and is Thrun Policy based.**

H. Benzie Academy Handbook Update – Lead Teacher, Elaine Taghon and Counselor, Rebecca Kik – The Benzie Academy Handbook was revamped in 2021/22, and as a result, there are minimal changes. Together, Mrs. Taghon and Mrs. Kik shared the Benzie Academy upcoming events, highlights, and handbook updates.

Upcoming Events:

- Building Tomorrow Event: Thursday, October 5, 2023
- Crystal Mountain Career Expo for 12th grade students: Tuesday, October 31, 2023
- Skilled Trades Panel: November
- CMU and Ferris State College Trip-Tuesday, October 10, 2023
- Career Counseling: Newton's Road Career Investigator Northwest Michigan

Academy Highlights:

- 11 students walking in graduation, 2-4 students who should finish by 6/13
- 3-5 possible graduates by end of 1st semester 23-24 School Year, of current students
- Updates to our new truancy policy and parent/student/staff contract- No Contact/No Work after 5-10 business days, name goes to Truancy.
- 95% of SAT participation

A monthly calendar on the website for parents to access at any time

Handbook Updates:

- High school grade level is assigned by number of credits the students earn
- 2 weeks of no-call and no-work will result in the student being put in for truancy
- Dances/Events-consistently making progress towards graduation, in attendance regularly with little to no disciplinary issues

I. Resignations:

- **Aimee Eggleston – 6th/8th Science Teacher**
- **Michael Hammar – Middle/High School Assistant Principal**
- **Patrick Mangan – 2nd Grade – Lake Ann Elementary**

J. Retirements:

- **NONE**

Board of Education/Committee Reports –**A. Buildings and Grounds Committee –****1. Bond Project Updates –Board of Education President, Brian Childs shared Homestead Hills Elementary Update as provided by Senior Field Manager, Chris Kuhl from the Wolgast Corporation:**

- AJ's Excavating to start grading/install stone at Main lot and drop off loop Tuesday
- Elmer's will be on site 6-13 to 6-16 to fine grade and lay base course of Asphalt
- AJ's Excavating to connect well to building this week
- Exterior doors Shipped 6-5
- Metal panels will be onsite tomorrow
- Wood beams are shipping Thursday

Unit 100

- Miscellaneous finishes

Unit 200

- Pulling wire and finishing up electrical panels
- Install LVT at media center and staff lounge
- Drop ceiling tile in corridor and office after inspections Thursday

Unit 300

- Painting bulkheads at Dinning/commons
- Start ceiling grid at dinning/commons this week
- Finish up grouting tile at gang bathrooms
- Install ceiling grid at corridors around dining area
- Install light fixtures

Unit 400

- Finish up base install at classrooms
- Start installing lockers in corridor
- Installing plumbing fixtures at bathrooms
- Drop ceiling tile in corridors after inspection on Thursday
- Added casework will be on site first week of July

2. Construction Update – Board of Education Treasurer, Scott Gray shared that there was no update.**B. Policy Committee – Superintendent Erfourth shared that the Policy Committee met to discuss the implementation of Thrun Retainer Client – Policy Student and Employee Handbooks. The Policy committee also reviewed the MS/HS Handbook that was presented earlier this evening by Assistant Principal, Michael Hammar.****C. Finance Committee –Board of Education Vice-President, Jason Barnard, shared there was no additional update, other than Director of Finance, Justin Weston's Budget Amendment #2 presentation.****D. Educational Foundation – Board of Education Trustee Lori-Cota Hill shared that the committee met a couple of weeks ago, and have made the decision to**

dissolve and merge into the Grand Traverse Regional Foundation. As the Benzie Central Educational Foundation stands now, they are big enough for state reporting and mandates, but not large enough to hire somebody to handle that task and responsibility. They feel confident with this move, as they already have a strong connection with the Grand Traverse Foundation. Existing funds will transfer to them for Benzie Central students. This process could take up to six months.

- E. Liaison/Curriculum – Board of Education Trustee Lori Cota Hill shared that there are concerns regarding the re-testing on state assessments at Lake Ann Elementary. In addition, there were questions around whether or not the Director of Curriculum position was needed.
- F. Negotiations – Superintendent Erfourth shared that teacher contracts are required by state law (MCL 380.1250) to include a merit-based incentive. The merit-based pay cannot be bargained but needs to be in the contract. Here is the proposed language:

The parties agree in this LOA to the following terms:

- Benzie County Central Schools will offer a merit-based pay incentive.
- For the remainder of the 22-24 contract, the following applies:
 - If a teacher ends the school year with an effective rating they will receive an additional \$150 stipend in their classroom budget for the following school year.
 - If a teacher ends the school year with a highly effective rating, they will receive an additional \$250 stipend in their classroom budget for the following school year.
- This LOA shall expire June 30, 2024. The District is not obligated to provide additional compensation.

Audience Participation (Agenda Items Only) – NONE

Discussion Topics:

1. Benzie Central Bus Garage – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: We received an offer (attached) for the bus garage building and playground parcel (all one piece). The offer is from agent, Kari King, and is for \$150,000. Here is the response from Kirk Hearld regarding the offer: *First, the letter of intent seems reasonable, so long as the purchase price is “fair”. (It doesn’t have to be “fair market value,” but you do have to engage in fair “value for value” transactions to avoid “granting state credit” in violation of the Michigan Constitution.) You should also verify that the building was not improved pursuant to any outstanding bonded indebtedness. If it was, you should discuss with your finance attorney to make sure we are not violating any private use restrictions. If you would like me to put together a formal purchase agreement, with attachments (e.g., warranty deed, etc.), please let me know. Trustee, Lori Co did a title search and found that there was a deed restriction regarding alcohol and tobacco, however, an opinion letter from 1951 stated they did not believe the restriction*

was enforceable. Lori recommends a survey for the bus garage and Crystal Lake properties. The Board of Education has decided to explore the RFP process. No action will take place until October 2023 at the earliest.

2. **Crystal Lake Elementary – Superintendent Erfourth shared the following: We have an offer from Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center. After discussion with the property committee, there was a thought of possibly converting the new addition at Crystal Lake Elementary into apartments for staff housing or at least one unit be available for staff. This would require us to look into this further. Vice-President, Jason Barnard, has spoken to the County and there are funds available to help with demolition. One thought was to possibly make a counter offer of not selling all of the lots at Crystal Lake Elementary but keeping the existing main entrance and parking in front of the new entrance. Then we could sell off the remaining lots. A survey would need to be completed. Here is information from Kirk Herald: *Second, as for the apartments, would this be within the existing school (i.e., the old high school proposed for purchase)? There would be legal concerns, which would likely vary depending on your particular facts. For example, you can't simply use public funds for a private benefit (e.g., buying or subsidizing an employees' residence); however, you may be able to provide housing as an optional fringe benefit. You would want to discuss any such arrangement with the Association to confirm a consistent understanding. Even assuming this is acceptable, you would have "typical" landlord-tenant issues, such as insurance, damages, security deposits, eviction, quiet enjoyment, etc., as well as a few additional issues related to the use of school property, such as the use of alcohol, tobacco, weapons, etc. There could also be tax issues, including the school's property being placed back on the tax rolls (if used for a private purpose for more than 2 years) or, from the teacher's standpoint, the provision of low-cost housing as a fringe benefit could be considered taxable income, so there could be individual tax consequences for the teacher.***

Kirk also had suggested potential changes to the original BWAC offer: I have reviewed the proposed Option to Purchase and have several comments and observations, which you'll see in the margins of the attached document (which is also attorney-client privileged). Of particular note:

- ***An option is a separate agreement from the purchase itself – meaning, the \$5,000 option payment is to keep the property off the market for the option period, it is not an earnest money deposit (as proposed in Para 4 of the agreement). In other words, the \$5,000 payment is the district's regardless of whether the property is purchased.***
- ***The language regarding exercising the option is a bit clunky (Para 5). I would propose an Option Agreement that also includes the purchase terms, so there is no misunderstanding about the reasonableness of terms to be subsequently negotiated.***
- ***The agreement refers to a deed restriction (e.g., community purpose), but then describes a remedy that is not consistent with a deed restriction. More particularly, a violated deed restriction results in the property's title returning to the seller (either automatically or via court action). This document is effectively creating a second option, that requires the seller to buy the property back at the***

purchase price (meaning there is no risk to buyer to comply with the deed restriction).

- *Para 9 requires the seller to reduce the purchase price to fit the buyer's desires, which is not how it works. The buyer either decides that it wants the property in its existing condition or that it doesn't want the property at all.*

The Board of Education has decided to explore the RFP process. No action will take place until October 2023 at the earliest.

Action Topics:

22-23-143 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Smith to approve the 2023/24 Non-Union Contracts.

Ayes: 7

Motion Carried

22-23-144 It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve the Academic Goals and Benchmark Assessments – Public Act 48 of 2021, Section 98b –

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

22-23-145 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Gray to approve the MHSAA 2023/24 Membership Resolution for year, August 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

22-23-146 It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Barnard to approve the Benzie Technology Services Agreement -July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

22-23-147 It was moved by Mr. Gray and supported by Mr. Noffsinger to approve Budget Amendment #2.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

22-23-148 It was moved by Mr. Barnard and supported by Mr. Gray to approve the Letter of Agreement- Merit Based Pay - Effective/Highly Effective Bonus

Ayes: 6

Abstain: 1

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Audience Participation (Open Topics): – Shane Iverson, 912 Orchard Street Benzonia, addressed the Board of Education. He shared that he is the secretary for the village of Benzonia Planning Commission. He pointed out the 2020 master plan for Benzonia was to support the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center as they feel it is an asset to the community.

Bill Kennis, 962 Michigan Ave., Benzonia addressed the Board of Education. Bill shared that he is the Project Manager for the Benzie Wellness and Aquatic Center, and their plan has been to raise 20 million dollars to build this community center as they feel it is the best use of that property. He feels this is going to hurt them, and is a huge setback if the Board of Education waits until October to decide. BWAU may be forced to find a different property. Bill concluded that he was saddened by this, but thanked the Board for their consideration.

Wanda Schreiner, 1261 Michigan Ave., Frankfort addressed the Board of Education. She shared that she is the individual giving free swimming lessons to students through the Benzie Aquatic and Wellness Center. To date, there are (22) students signed up, and encourages others to please do so.

Diane Tracy, 1926 Ness Rd., Frankfort addressed the Board of Education. She agreed that we need affordable housing and child care in Benzie County, but feels strongly that the community center they are proposing would be an asset for every age group and socio-economic status, and could save the community in a robust manner. She expressed that if they were not able to fundraise right now with their seasonal residents, that it would have a great impact on the BWAC.

Board Communication: Discussion to move the June 25 Special Board of Education Retreat to 6:00 PM on June 26, one hour prior to the regularly scheduled Budget Hearing. If additional time is needed the Board of Education may finish the Special meeting immediately following the regularly scheduled meeting.

Announcements:

- 2023 Commencement was a great success
- June 13 – Early Release – Last Day of School
- June 25 – Board of Education Retreat 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
(NOW JUNE 26 at 6:00 PM)
- June 26 – Regular Board Meeting – Budget Hearing – 7:00 PM

22-23-149 It was moved by Mr. Noffsinger and supported by Mr. Barnard to adjourn the regular meeting 9:38 pm.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion Carried

Secretary, Board of Education

Please note that June 5, 2023 Regular Board Minutes are subject for approval on July 10, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Catina M. Crossman

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Board of Education Administrative Assistant

Pupil Accounting Specialist

Benzie County Central Schools