

Transcription of the Regular Meeting of April 1, 2020

BOARD MEETING: Regular
DATE: Wednesday, April 1, 2020
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
PLACE: Zoom Meeting

Members Present:	Robert Brautigam	Kelley Louthan
	Joseph Callaghan	Steven Mark
	Carter Chapman	Gail Musnicki
	Jacob Hall	Maura Sullivan
	Thomas Hawks	

Members Absent:

Also Present: Matthew Frahm, Jeffrey Black and Pamela Claes.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Give it just a second, we are recording and Jake I will turn it over to you.

Board President Jacob Hall: We are out of executive session at this point. We're going to do our best here. We are going to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, or probably for cameras, we'll just stay seated, but here we go.

All present: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Board President Jacob Hall: Hey, we made it. Matt, you may have to help me out here, because I can see who I can see but for public comment, do we have anybody who has joined that I can't currently see?

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: I don't believe we have any members of the public tonight, I think we have all nine board members, myself, Pam Claes, our district clerk, and Dr. Black our business official. That's the group we have with us, if someone joins then I will welcome them to the meeting. With all the different communications that are going out right now, if there are community members or folks who would like to be in attendance who have questions or comments, they can feel free to send me an email or give me a call or make a post on social media and we will reach back out to make sure we're in touch with them.

Board President Jacob Hall: Any points of interest as we go around here looking at things.

Board Member Gail Musnicki: Really, not much going on.

Board Member Kelly Louthan: I just wanted to commend Matt and our great teachers and staff at the school for doing a great job and getting things together. Just on a note that may be helpful Matt for Naples, one of the things we're dealing with in Corning is some teachers have chosen to do Zoom but now we are doing primarily Google meet which is part of the Google Suite which I think we might have in our district and that complies with the state education law 2D with regards to technology privacy, and that Google has pretty much signed off on across the board at the state level and making that Google meet is more of a private secure connection and that might be something we should explore as a district, it may be a better option than Zoom.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Absolutely, that is a really good point for a couple of different reasons. One is the Education Law 2D that we've talked about at different points this year. The privacy, I don't know if you have heard or read about Zoom bombing, where people will find access to a zoom meeting and click on a link and will and will sometimes jump in with inappropriate comments or messages and then also just being really aware of different privacy concerns especially based on age of children. So Annika participates in what is called a GTG. GTG has regular meetings and has a very active list serve that is essentially the tech directors from the region and they are looking at all of this stuff right now. So certainly Google meet and Zoom and a lot of tech platforms and I know that folks in our region as well as different districts in the area around the state are working with zoom and other companies to make sure they are compliant and things are safe. Actually I was just talking with our labor leader of our faculty today and also with Anneke, so those are things that we have been talking and will continue to talk about so I appreciate you bringing that up. This is just a really interesting time where we want to be creative and innovative in order to make sure that learning continues and connect with kids, and we also want to make sure that it's done in a safe and responsible way for our students and also for our faculty and staff so that's a really good point.

Board Member Maura Sullivan: I just want to give a little props on the creative note, it was pretty awesome to see that the play is accessible through television so that's really nice that it's out there for people who weren't able to get tickets to see it and also the story hour is on Facebook as well, I think our staff is being really creative and proactive about getting things out there for the community.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Thanks Maura

Board Member Kelly Louthan: Just another piece, not knowing how long this is going to last, in terms of creativity, maybe just kind of when we go to bed at night in these coming days just continue to think about if this goes until graduation, how we can make things like that a very special occasion an event. I would really hope things don't go that long but just plan for the worst and expect the best I think at this point. I know a lot of families have reached out to me that have seniors and just are a little heartbroken, kind of reading the tea leaves at this point and just how

we can maybe be creative and think about what that can look like. Obviously that's a long way down the road but I just wanted to plant a seed.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: They're a long way down the road but we always joke that when you come back from spring break it's a blink until you get to the end of the year. It just goes so fast even though you have two and a half months after break, and so our original spring break was supposed to be this coming week, so on one hand it seems like there potentially is a bunch of time left but we also know it will move really quickly. I was talking to Bill Murphy, who is one of senior class advisors, on my way home yesterday and shared that same sentiment. This is a really special time of year when you're talking about senior trips and marching band and Academic awards and Athletic awards and the Senior/Parent banquet, Prom and all these different events that really make a Naples student experience and even the thought of not having those or having to really modify them is pretty painful, and I didn't even mention graduation in that mix. And so we're right there with you and starting to think about how we can give students back some of those experience if those student events were canceled. At this point we have canceled all school activities through April 14th; the governor has extended the closure through April 14th. I think if you talk to most people around the state, just based on current data and current trends, I think it would be pretty difficult to come back on April 15th. But I think it does make sense, it's sort of extending gradually based on the most recent information so I'll keep you updated on that. We have not done much modification to school events in school trips after the middle of April but I'll keep you posted as we continue talking about those things and the situation evolves. I have a couple of other quick covid-19 updates, but are there any other questions or comments from people? These are great, things you're thinking about and things you're hearing about I think are great to share. So just a couple of updates for folks, one, I would just echo the sentiment that our faculty and staff have really gone above and beyond, they're doing a great job connecting with students, they're doing it in some fun and creative ways, and some serious ways, and it's not a surprise as we work with an incredible group of people so they deserve tremendous kudos for the work that they're doing. Right now, just like I mentioned, we are closed through April 14th and will wait for further guidance from the governor as to whether or not that will be extended. We did receive word at the beginning of this week that because we have been out of school, that schools would need to use their vacation time, their holiday time as learning time in order to be able to secure a waiver for 180 days. We know this is really important for us, we depend on state aid and so we need to make sure that a) Our kids are learning; but b) We are meeting that obligation as a public school and so we will have learning experiences continue through next week in part so that we can secure that waiver and we can make sure we're not putting state aid at risk for the district because we know that impacts really important experiences and programs for our kids. Again we continue to put together and engage kids in different learning opportunities, people are sharing them in creative ways, in addition to having phone calls and emails and social media posts, we are trying to leverage zoom in some creative ways and other different platforms. We're also trying to use Facebook live and I would

say if you have any ideas feel free to pass them along. Really right now we're saying we'll give anything a shot if it helps people feel more connected or helps to convey a sense of transparency. It might be something for the board to think about if you would ever want to be a part of a Facebook live facilitated conversation or something like that, to provide an update for the community or to do something fun. It certainly could be an option as we come up and move further into budget season. Speaking of budget season, and Dr. Black is going to talk a little more about that tonight, I had forwarded an email to you early in the week that School Board elections and budget votes had been suspended until at least June 1st, and so we are still looking at the details in terms of posting timelines and board petitions and all those different sorts of things, but it has pushed back at least by about two weeks the traditional budget vote and School Board elections. So, those are just a couple quick updates, I've tried to make sure that anytime a communication goes out to faculty and staff or to community, that I pass a copy along to you so that you can make sure to have current information, and again I just really appreciate people following a pretty scary issue continues to evolve by the day. All right, any last questions on the health crisis and how we are approaching it here at school? Okay. So the second real significant update tonight is to talk a little bit about school budget and you may have heard that the governor has been able to hit the April 1st deadline every other year that he has been in office and committed to making sure that happens this year as well. The current state, the financial situation in New York, has been scary, pretty daunting, and so Dr. Black has been taking a preliminary look at state aid runs. Something that is different right now is that not only do we anticipate some decreased projections for next year, but the governor is also talking about sort of reassessing budget amounts on a quarterly basis based on the actual availability of Revenue. And so that is something that is a little bit scary when you think about our budget, we put it together for a year. We don't need X number of second grade classrooms for just the first half of the year; you need them for the whole year. We don't need French just for the first quarter; we need it for the whole year. So that's something that is pretty scary, but we also know there is obviously awareness that communities across New York State and the country are really hurting right now. So Jeff, maybe if you would be willing to talk with the board a little bit about our budgeting process here and also what you are hearing from the state level.

Interim School Business Administrator Jeffrey Black: Okay, well it was an interesting year to get started here. As you know, we started out with some really lofty goals. There were some things that were happening at the state and federal level that were asking us to kind of really take a look at how the budget was structured because of new reporting requirements and so on. We did a lot of that, we got kind of in the middle of that and kind of wished that we had held our ground a little bit longer, maybe for another year, but we are in that process now so we're moving forward. With that being said, when you see line items in the budget this year things might look a little bit funky. There's a couple of reasons for that, we did a lot of budgetary transfers in the current year, moving money from one budget code to meet expenses in another budget code. Chris Brautigam and I worked hard at trying to understand where the expenses

really lie and putting money for next year's budget into the appropriate account codes. A lot of that has to do with the renegotiation of contracts. You did that last year with non-instructional employees, shifting some payroll up and we were able to save a lot of money in benefits and so now the money has kind of moved over there, it started this year with the salary increases and so on. So, there are some things there that might look a little bit different. As you look at line items you might say wow, why did that go down 10% and that go up 10%? It's because we are trying to get things expended out of the correct codes. Expenses this year, you know, as soon as this whole crisis started to take place we started to think about what are the things that are must-haves and what are the things that are optional and maybe we put on the table, if need be, and I'll get to what state aid and revenues look like in a second. I had a talk with our group in the past about the bus purchasing process. We do have about \$100,000 extra in the budget to stay on our bus schedule this year for purchasing the two buses. I don't know how everyone feels about that. Getting off that bus schedule means that you could negatively impact your maintenance schedules as the older are around and they are the most expensive to take care of and to run. If you don't buy buses in a given year, then you don't generate Transportation Aid on that purchase in the following year. So if we spend \$200,000 in bus purchase we get about \$130,000 back in the following year in aid. So if you get off that cycle then you have to start it back up again and you are causing some fluctuations and some swings in your budget. So right now we have the bus purchases in there, and we're also keeping in mind that we don't know when we'll be back to school and if we don't go back to school we will have put about 40% less miles on our buses this year than in a normal year and how does that impact the bus purchasing schedule as well overall. You did significantly reduce costs. That came to bear when we got our renewals on health insurance. The new plan that the CSEA members are on is enabling you to hold down your health insurance budget code significantly. And as we did say, there were some one year expenditures over in payroll because of the negotiation, in order to get the health insurance you had to give some things up. Some of those are just one year hits so I think that's really helping the overall budget because you were able to hold the benefits section down quite a bit. The other section of the benefits that has held pretty stable is the teachers' retirement system and the employee's retirement system. For next year, fortunately the amount that the district contributes is based on percentage of salaries paid and has already been set so it won't change for next year but hold on to your hats for the year after because the retirement systems both rely on investments and when the stock market goes haywire like it did in 2008 and is doing so again right now, it got some significant increases in the district amount of contribution. Next year we are okay, but what's going to happen after that will really be up for grabs depending on kind or what happens with how fast things bounce back. It didn't bounce back right away last time and it took several years of significant increases in each school district's contribution to the Retirement Systems to get the Retirement Systems back on track. Special education, we just have to keep a contingency in there. You've probably heard this probably a thousand times from Matt and other folks that you just never know who is going to arrive on your doorstep in a given year. So we budget for everyone we have plus extra students because we are bound to either have someone in

house who needs to get into a more restrictive or expensive program and/or a transient population that may move in and out. When they move in, sometimes it may cost up to \$100,000 for a program and transportation and related services, so we have to have extra money in there for that. We are budgeting for supplies and materials for the teachers as normal right now. That's a small portion of the budget and we'll make adjustments backwards if needed. We said to get the things that you need and we'll work from there, if things really go south in some of these we may hold off on making all of the supplies and materials purchases right off the bat, looking at maybe scaling those things as we know more about the actuality of revenue coming in and or actual revenue cuts. I'm going to switch over and talk about revenues just for a second. We did get our numbers, but we didn't get them until about 3:45 p.m. this afternoon and then we had a 4:30 facilities meeting, so I had about half an hour to take a look at them. I did put a little bit of a spreadsheet together. What the governor did, and he didn't have a lot of time to work on this either obviously, he has a team but they're being pulled in many ways. They just said we're going to take our General Aid called Foundation Aid and leave it flat; they are doing away with all the crazy things they were going to do with the formulas for BOCES excess cost, private cost, private excess cost, hardware, textbook and transportation aid. They are going to let the formulas run for another year, those are based on prior year expenses or on enrollments. Our BOCES Aid is down a hundred and fifty-seven thousand dollars right now because BOCES is reporting that our spending is down significantly, but I anticipate that our BOCES aid will actually go up when their next report goes in. Building aid is going up significantly, by \$364,000, and that sounds great and it's going to make our overall aid look really good, we're going to go up \$242,000 overall because there are decreases in some other areas, but we have to remember that the reason we are getting more building aid is because we are incurring new debt. So we're going to be making larger debt payments to our mortgage which is going up at the same time. So that has pretty much offset that \$364,000 increase in expense and debt service. Everything else has stayed the same, and then what the governor did was to do his normal wacky stuff. At the bottom of the aid run he put in what's called the pandemic adjustment, he took out \$224,000 of state aid and then he put in a line called Federal restoration and he put back \$224,000, exactly the same amount, so it is a net wash of zero. So what he is saying there is that we do not have the money but we're going to use our federal stimulus money, divided out by some formula which we don't know how we ended up with that number. We'll know at some point what it was based on, but he took \$224,000 that was previously going to be in Foundation Aid and other aids, took it away and then said we're making that up with a restoration money coming back from the federal government's stimulus package. As Matt mentioned there is the caveat that there could be quarterly adjustments to this. As revenues come in they are going to know more and they are going to be talking to us about what is happening in Wall Street, what's happening with all the bonuses and all that stuff that comes a little bit later. They are very hesitant to make any promises right now, so we have to keep that in mind as we build our budget. We're 95% done in terms of building the budget right now, we have those contingency items set all along in the budget that can be left there or subtracted, and that will be discussions

that we will have with a budget committee here, the finance committee going forward, and we will still have to have the proposal to you fairly quickly if we are going to put the budget out June 1st. As Matt mentioned that is the earliest date, if that happens it just gives us a 15-day additional window to kind of get things wrapped up, so we will have to have time with that group and then come back with our final proposals.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: So in terms of what to expect, so, to take a little bit more time to just digest the numbers to finish up our expenditure side of the budget and really digest and understand the revenue side, to take a look at how that is going to impact programming and services for next year, so I think there is just an understanding that a handful of potential additions or expansions that we had maybe considered, we will probably just have to push pause at this point in time and look pretty carefully at different things. And then perhaps reach out to our budget committee to see if we can hold a zoom meeting to talk in a little more detail about what that means before coming back to the board. And again we do have a bit of additional time just by moving the budget vote date and the School Board elections. So, any questions for Jeff about kind of where we are in the budget process or thinking a little bit about the state and the information that came out today?

Interim School Business Administrator Jeffrey Black: I'll just mention one other thing quickly our preliminary budget where it is now, which is a draft form, and of course there are contingencies in there and items that could be taken out as we are further able to evaluate revenue. We are at a \$477,000 year to year increase which is a 2.3% increase at this point. We're talking about the buses; we're talking about any other things that could potentially be put on hold. It takes about two hundred and six thousand dollars of expenditure to drop that down by 1% to 1.3% say for example. So, just to kind of give you a frame of reference, if you pull out \$20,000 you are going to drop the budget one tenth of 1%. Every dollar counts but we are dealing with some pretty significant numbers here.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Just maybe a final note and really looking at the board's role in this, we know that a board is responsible for the two most important things that the community has, their kids and their money, and it's really a fine balance. We want to make sure that the kids are having the types of opportunities and experiences that are going to be rewarding in themselves, but also position them for success when they leave us, but we need to do it in a financially responsible way. We know that the tax dollars that people send our way our hard-earned, every single one of them, and so wanting to make sure that we are living within our means and I think just to have confidence that this leadership team that are board education, that Mitch Ball who is now up at Gates Chili, and Dr. Black who has taken his spot, have all helped the district live within its means, so to not provide programs and services and staffing levels that are irresponsible if negative things happen here in our community at the state level, or federal level, and so we'll have to see what the details look like. It really is important as the board

makes decisions over periods of time and years to make sure that we are doing what's best for kids in a way that our community can afford financially, and so I think a credit to this group, certainly to Mitch and certainly to Jeff, have taken that to heart in recent years and hopefully we're positioned to weather the financial storm in front of us.

Interim School Business Administrator Jeffrey Black: I will say, I can't get into detail, but there was good planning ahead of this. You can't plan for this, but things are well in place here, you aren't working on a shoestring, you had good contingencies in place, your funds are there to have a good opportunity to weather this without really impacting kids terribly, there might be some changes that have to be made, but we'll see how that goes.

Board Member Kelly Louthan: Well, Jeff, we're really fortunate to have you, thank you again for doing this and being with us.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: I'm having to support him in most ways Kelly, I'm doing the bulk other work and he's helping out when he can, but you know, he's keeping some of the paperwork in order. (Laughter).

Interim School Business Administrator Jeffrey Black: I tell you what, Matt is like a cat, and he knows more than he lets on. (Laughter)

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: I give Jeff a tough time, when I talked to him at Thanksgiving, it was, "I think you can do this job probably 3 days a week and probably do some of it off site from home.", at least I was honest about half of that, he's doing a good chunk of it at home. We have a good team in place. So Jake, really for updates tonight I just wanted to talk a little bit about Covid-19 and talk a little bit about the budget, but more than anything just making sure we're doing a trial run with the zoom meetings, the virtual meetings, to make sure things are in place if we want to start scheduling some more detailed virtual interactions and meetings.

Board President Jacob Hall: I appreciate it Matt, you know, we've said we really appreciate everything our staff is doing but, Matt and Jeff, thank you for everything you guys are doing. I know you guys are working super hard in putting all this stuff together, so a special thank you to you guys as well with everything you have going on. We are very confident in the team we have in place, so thank you very much.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Great group, thanks Jake.

Board President Jacob Hall: We do have a facilities committee report.

2nd Vice President Robert Brautigam: Yes we met earlier today just before this meeting, and basically, I don't have a big report for you because we sent spent 90% of the time going over what potential Capital work would be in the future, reviewing the building condition survey (BCS) with Vic Tomaselli and Kurt Vader of SEI with us as their company did the last BCS. And as you know, because of the way the state changed doing the BCS, ours isn't up for many, many years but we can't just wait for that, so we spent a lot of time just recognizing what had been brought to our attention before and just kind of high really high level explanations of what each of those things entail and real round numbers, just to give us an idea so that we can then go to budgeting as far as what kind of money do we have. At this point we are just trying to see what work is there and how does it align with debt that is drops off and so forth. We just spent a lot of time because there was a lot of information on the BCS to go through. We also did talk about the old bus garage teardown; right now it's on hold because the state has deemed that type of work non-essential. Some of the preliminary work has been done such as disconnecting the power; they were able to shut the water off so that has been done; there are some things that have to be done first before the garage can be torn down so NYSEG would have to come out and support a utility pole that is currently being supported by the bus garage itself but NYSEG has also been told by the state that that is non-essential so that is also on hold; it's still in the plans, it's just that we're waiting to get through this. Chad also mentioned that the pond work over at the new bus garage and some of the other outdoor work that we couldn't do when it was cold is still scheduled for later this spring, we'll just have to see how that falls out. That was pretty much all we talked about today. Any questions?

Board Member Gail Musnicki: Can I ask a question Rob? What on the BCS were some of the major things besides the auditorium that we might put in our heads for the future?

2nd Vice President Robert Brautigam: Major, I would say would kind of depends on the extent of what we want to do, but things on the list are the elementary cafeteria and kitchen, the elementary classrooms, heaters and that type of thing. There are a lot of things on there, way more stuff on there than you would have money to spend to do and that's just where we're trying to see what there is and we'll have to go from there.

Board Member Gail Musnicki: Okay, thanks.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Gail, I'll pass along a kind of rough document that we've been working off of, just sort of a collection of our thoughts all linked up to the BCS. I'll forward that to you later on this week.

Board Member Gail Musnicki: Okay, thank you

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Just a quick note, the last time the facilities committee met we had planned on taking today to do a walking tour of the district and getting into all these spaces with our facilities committee and design team and what a difference a month makes! Because of social distancing and the fact that most of our instructional spaces are sealed off right now after a deep clean. The group also is looking at a meeting early on next week with the facilities committee just to pick up where our conversation left off today just not wanting too much time to go by before we continue the conversation. Gail I'll share that information with you, and just knowing that the facilities committee is going to connect again in the next few days.

Board Member Gail Musnicki: Ok

Board President Jacob Hall: Any other questions for the facilities committee before we move on? Alright, with that we go ahead and move into the business portion of our meeting as best we can. At this point I'd be looking for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 18th meeting as presented. I have Steve as the first and Maura for a second. Any discussion? All those in favor, aye, All those opposed? The motion is passed.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: So I might recommend this, just looking at Maura and Tom, maybe they need to turn their microphones on so we can accurately record votes one way or the other. And Tom, you may want a little bit of sunscreen just on the back of your head with the palm tree. Let me see if I can unmute you, there we go, sorry Jake.

Board President Jacob Hall: That's all right. Next I will be looking for a motion to approve the following business resolution in regards to our vote workers as presented. I have Gail for the first with Rob is our second. Any discussion? All those in favor? Aye, Any opposed? None All right, that motion is passed.

Next I'll be looking for a motion to approve the following consent agenda items as presented. I have Carter for the first with Steve as the second. Any discussion? All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? The motion is carried.

Our first official Zoom meeting at this point, I'll be looking for a motion to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. I think I heard Kelly for the first with Tom as our second. Any discussion? All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? They're being none, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you everybody, stay safe.

Superintendent Matthew Frahm: Stay healthy, be well.