

**BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023 MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Board of School Trustees of the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation was held in the Terrace Room of the Administration Building, Columbus, Indiana, on Monday, November 13, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., under notice having been duly given to the media and to all members of the Board in accordance with the rules of the Board.

On call of the roll, the members of the Board were shown to be present or absent as follows:

Present:                       Mrs. Nikki Wheeldon, President  
                                     Mr. Rich Stenner, Vice President  
                                     Mr. Todd Grimes, Secretary  
                                     Mr. Jason Major, Member  
                                     Mr. Logan Schulz, Member  
                                     Mr. Pat Bryant, Member  
                                     Mr. Dale Nowlin, Member

Administration:             Dr. Jim Roberts, Superintendent  
                                     Dr. Chad Phillips, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services  
                                     Dr. Gina Pleak, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
                                     Dr. Brett Boezeman, Director of Operations  
                                     Dr. Laura Hack, Director of Elementary Education  
                                     Mr. Charles Edwards, Director of Secondary Education  
                                     Mrs. Jessica Vogel, Director of Special Education  
                                     Mrs. Megan Shaff, Director of Title Services

Attorney:                     Mr. Michael McIver, School Attorney

The business meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mrs. Wheeldon, the President, opened the board meeting at 6:31 p.m.

**RECOGNITIONS:**

Assistant CNHS Boys Tennis Coach Mr. Robin Cain highlighted the accomplishments of the tennis season. He noted this to be the 6<sup>th</sup> straight trip to the State Finals for the boy's tennis team, and the second consecutive season the doubles team of seniors Anvay Atram and Amrit Kar finished runners-up at the IHSAA State Individual Boys Tennis Tournament. They were joined by IHSAA State Singles runner-up junior Hank Linn. Coach Cain noted that all three of the students were named to the All-State Academic First Team again this year.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

Mrs. Wheeldon gaveled out of the regularly scheduled meeting and into the Public Hearing at 6:38 p.m.

### **2023 Additional Appropriations (Dr. Phillips)**

Dr. Phillips noted that the Public Hearing is a requirement at any time there is a need to spend over the board-approved appropriated amount for the calendar year. He presented the additional appropriation requests and reviewed the revenues that are anticipated to be collected during the calendar year.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board.

The total amount of the Robots4Autism Grant will be appropriated through the Education Fund. For this reason, the grant is required to be board approved.

There were no comments received from the public.

### **First Preliminary Determination Hearing for Lease Rental Bonds (Dr. Phillips/Dr. Boezeman)**

Dr. Phillips noted that this is the first of two required Public Hearings, and the next one will be on Monday, December 11. Dr. Boezeman reviewed the projects and the timeline and noted the facility guiding values and principles the district abides by in project decision-making. He presented a high-level scope of the recommended projects and noted that these projects could be completed without an increase in the tax rate. The proposed facility improvements would include renovation of elementary classroom learning spaces, new construction of a twelfth elementary school, renovation to Northside Middle School, an equipment update at Central Middle School, expansion of the C4 programs, and PE/extra-curricular areas to meet the demand. Dr. Boezeman noted that these funds can only be used for construction projects and not for employee salaries or benefits.

Mr. Jim Funk from CSO Architects presented the highest improvement needs for each building and the best use of dollars throughout the district, noting most of the improvement needs to be on the elementary side. Dr. Boezeman shared building details and noted the scope of needs in each of the district buildings.

Mr. Funk reviewed an improvement checklist for each school and the cost associated with each project, noting security and the high priority of effectively keeping everyone safe.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board.

There are several ways accessibility needs are met at both Smith Elementary and Mt. Healthy Elementary, one way being the students are placed in a specific classroom to avoid accessibility barriers.

The recommendation is to have a Wellness Center in each elementary building.

If the building administrator intends to allow parents to eat with their students, the renovations will allow enough space to accommodate parents at lunchtime.

The one-on-one attention gives the staff the opportunity to focus on each student individually.

The program material is funded through sponsor donations and fundraisers. The part-time staff is paid through BCSC funds.

## **WHAT**

### **1) School Board Member Reports**

Mrs. Wheeldon provided a policy update and noted the board continues to discuss changes to PO 2510, PO 2520, and PO 9130.

Mr. Grimes noted he and other board members will be attending the ISBA regional meeting. He provided a BCSF update noting that the school foundation will participate in the Festival of Lights Parade on Saturday, December 2.

Mr. Schulz provided a CCIC update. He noted at the last meeting updates were heard regarding facility renovations, the CEA agreement, Professional Development Day, and the upcoming wellness initiative. He shared that the Education Hall of Fame selection committee will be meeting on Thursday to determine the 2024 recipient.

Mr. Nowlin gave an IUPUC Advisory Board update, noting discussion was held around specific certifications that are available through the university.

### **2) Cabinet Reports**

- **NEOLA Policy Revision Recommendations – Special Update July 2023**

Dr. Roberts reviewed the recommendations and noted some of the changes are based on newly passed legislation that will go into effect January 1, 2024. The board will continue to review these policies with a possible approval at the December 11, 2023 board meeting.

- **First Reading of New Policy - Payment Methods for School-Sponsored Events**

Dr. Roberts noted this is a new policy drafted by Mr. Major.

- **High School Teams Update (Mr. Edwards)**

Mr. Edwards provided a quarterly update on the newly-developed cohort team model. He reviewed the goals of the restructuring model and noted the immediate results of teaming. He shared that communication has significantly improved with regular staff meetings and phone calls with parents. This change has encouraged faster feedback, follow-up with classroom teachers, and an increase in student attendance. Through the cohort structure, teachers and staff can look at student information in different and consistent ways and respond proactively. The cohort model allows the needed structure and accountability for staff members.

Mr. Edwards shared updates from teachers and stories of students advocating for themselves and noted that discipline and failing grades are down. The cohort knows which students are credit deficient and in danger of not graduating and have developed a plan for each student. He noted that he feels confident that this model is making an immediate impact for students.

The next steps include working to align both CEHS and CNHS and yet allow the two schools' different personalities to be visible, continue to collect meaningful data, and define roles within the cohort. Mr. Edwards noted that as long as we work on the process we will continue to get better.

The following information was given in response to questions from the Board:

The cohorts report data weekly on the common sheet. This feedback is used to continue to identify needs and develop students.

A survey will be developed to gather parent input regarding the cohort model.

The 2024 data indicates that students are pursuing the general diploma.

### **BREAK**

Mrs. Wheeldon gaveled out of the regularly scheduled board meeting for a five minute break at 8:47 p.m. and gaveled back into the regularly scheduled meeting at 8:52 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following individuals signed in to provide Public Comment:

1. Denise Morris
2. Mary Mills
3. Amy Menefee
4. Leigh Britt
5. Jackie Tallent
6. Merle Milhoan
7. Suzy Milhoan
8. David Spencer
9. Eric Grow
10. Barb Day
11. Kermet Merl Key

#### **3) Requests for Approval - Old Business (Dr. Roberts)**

a. Minutes of the Executive Session of October 23, 2023, the Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of October 23, 2023, the Minutes of the Public Work Session of October 30, 2023, and the Minutes of the Special School Board Meeting of October 30, 2023.

Mr. Grime made a motion to approve Old Business item 3)a and the motion was seconded by Mr. Major.

At the December meeting the board will be asked to approve a project resolution of \$306M. This is a ceiling amount and includes inflation assumptions.

The completion timeline is the year 2030, with each project being board-approved separately.

The recent demographic study indicated an increase in population on the west side of the district and a decrease in population on the east side of the district. A decision on how to populate the new elementary school without reducing the capacity of the other elementary schools will be determined in the next steps. The building process will take roughly 3 years, with a year to design and two years to build. This will allow time for conversations to determine who populates the new building.

Dr. Phillips introduced Mr. Mike Schumaker from Stifel Public Finance. Mr. Schumaker shared the process of financing for the proposed facility improvements. He reviewed outstanding debt on current bonds that have been issued and how it corresponds to the current tax rate. He noted that keeping the tax rate just under a dollar allows for the capacity to continue to complete projects. He shared the bond issuing schedule per year, payment and tax rate schedule, and the maximum legal parameters.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board.

A tax rate can only be levied under certain factors: The Operation Fund, taxpayer-approved Operating Referendum, and issuing debt to pay for Capital Spending.

Dr. Phillips reviewed the next step in the process would be the required second Public Hearing at the December 11 board meeting. If the board requests to lower the ceiling amount, the bond council will need to make those changes, revise the project resolutions, and note the change in a public notice posting before board approval. Dr. Boezeman shared that if board approval is received, the next steps operationally would be to move to begin the construction process of the twelfth elementary. The board will see the contract and bidding information before any decision-making.

The following individuals provided Public Comments regarding the First Preliminary Determination Hearing for Lease Rental Bonds:

1. Charles Doup
2. Kristin Munn
3. Karla Kregg
4. Eric Grow
5. Charles Goodlove
6. Denise Morris
7. Kernet Merl Key

Dr. Phillips noted that bonds are issued with both borrowing money and with the capital referendum process. The difference is whether the bonds are paid through tax caps or outside of

the tax caps. The people who would see a difference in their tax bill would be those parcels above the tax caps if the project were to be approved through a referendum. If the project is approved without a referendum, borrowing for the recommended projects would not sacrifice the opportunity as a district or a community to offer a referendum in years to come and would not raise taxes for nearly 12,000 taxing parcels. The proposal to approve the projects without a referendum protects the ability to successfully renew the Operating Referendum prior to 2029.

It is not permissible to use bond proceeds to pay staff members except for possible construction project manager position(s).

Mrs. Wheeldon gaveled back into the regular scheduled meeting at 7:54 p.m.

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

#### **Best Practice – Book Buddies (Mrs. Gretchen Tregoning)**

Program Director Mrs. Gretchen Tregoning gave a brief history of Book Buddies noting that the program began in 2006 for 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade students, and in 2011 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students were added to the program. She shared the mission of the program is to have all 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students who are in the program reading on grade level by the end of the school year.

Program Assistant Mrs. Kelly Weed shared a testimony of her experience with Book Buddies and recognized the site supervisors, their responsibilities, and the process for identifying students who will be in the program. She acknowledged the building administrators at each of the buildings who provide workspace for the volunteers. She noted that at the heart of the program are the community volunteers who donate their time from late August until mid-April to the program.

Mrs. Nicole Wiltrout, site supervisor at Schmitt Elementary, provided the program student numbers. She shared that currently there are 155 students in the program: 107 of those students are 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade students and 43 of them are 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders. She noted that students are selected based on test data and teacher recommendations. The program is designed to serve students who are indicating they are 6 months to 12 months behind grade level.

Mrs. Emma Jensen, site supervisor at CSA Lincoln campus, reviewed the timeline of what occurs with the volunteer and the student within a 30-minute session. She shared that students read, work on sight words, and end the session with a word study game. Mrs. Jensen shared the unique virtual opportunity the program has in partnership with Indiana University to provide a field study experience for education students. There are students within BCSC who also volunteer in the program, and two of those students shared their own personal, positive experiences with the program.

Mrs. Tregoning shared the impact of the Book Buddies program and noted a few of the goals for the program to be: continue to recruit volunteers, serve all students on the waiting list, fulfill the mission, and continue to fund program expenses through fundraising and community partnerships.

The following information was given in response to questions from the Board:

Upon a call to vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**4) Requests for Approval - New Business (Dr. Roberts)**

- c. Field Trips and Professional Leaves (Dr. Hack/Mr. Edwards)
- d. Supplemental Contracts (Dr. Phillips)
- e. School Fundraisers (Dr. Hack/Mr. Edwards)
- f. Claims and Payroll (Dr. Phillips)
- g. Resolution for Additional Appropriation (Dr. Phillips)
- h. Approval of the 2024 Health Trust Officers – John Green, Chair, and Jesse Shoaf, Vice Chair (Dr. Phillips)
- i. Approval of the Contract with Maxwell as CMc for Schmitt (Dr. Boezeman)
- j. Approval of Classified Special Contracts and Administration Salary Increase (Dr. Pleak)
- k. Approval of the Robots4Autism Grant Award (Mrs. Vogel)
- l. Approval of the Special Education Paraprofessional Training Grant (Mrs. Vogel)
- m. Permission to Renew the Agreement to join the Indiana Bond Bank Budgeting Program (Dr. Boezeman)

Dr. Roberts provided additional detail and requested approval of items 4) c-m

Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve New Business items 4) c-m and the motion was seconded by Mr. Schulz.

Upon a call to vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**5) Human Resources Recommendations (Dr. Pleak)**

Dr. Pleak requested approval of the Human Resources Recommendations as presented.

Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve the Human Resources Recommendations, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Bryant.

Upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**6) Additional Human Resources Recommendations (Dr. Pleak)**

Dr. Pleak requested approval of the Additional Human Resources Recommendations

Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve the Additional Human Resources Recommendations, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Schulz.

Upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**BOARD INPUT AND REVIEW**

Mr. Nowlin thanked those involved with the Book Buddies presentation and those within the community who volunteer with the program. He thanked the Taylorsville Elementary staff

for hosting a building tour and noted that the building signs within and outside the school were in Spanish and English. He shared that Taylorsville has an active food pantry for its students and their families and thanked those who helped make that opportunity possible.

Mr. Schulz thanked Mr. Boezeman for identifying the facility needs in each of the district buildings. He thanked those involved in the Book Buddies presentation and shared his appreciation for the program.

Mr. Grimes thanked the public for attending and those who provided public comments. He thanked Mrs. Tregoning and her staff for the Book Buddies presentation. He recognized all 11 elementary schools for earning Purple Star recognition.

Mrs. Wheeldon noted her appreciation of public interaction with board agenda topics.

Mr. Stenner thanked those involved in the meeting presentations, noting the Book Buddies program, and the experts who answered questions about finance and budgeting.

Mr. Major thanked Dr. Boezeman for his time in answering facility renovation questions. He thanked BCSC Veterans and the individuals involved with preparation of the Veterans Day programs within the school district.

Mr. Bryant thanked the staff of Book Buddies for their presentation and continuous efforts and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

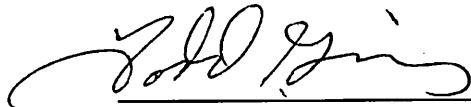
#### **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Public Work Session, December 4, 2023, 6:00 p.m.  
Administration Building, Boardroom

Executive Session, December 11, 2023, 5:00 p.m.  
Administration Building, Boardroom

Regular Scheduled School Board Meeting, December 11, 2023, 6:30 p.m.  
Administration Building, Terrace Room

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

 Secretary

Attest:  President