

**BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 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, September 11, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., pursuant to 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.

PUBLIC HEARING

2023 Additional Appropriation (Dr. Phillips)

Mrs. Wheeldon gaveled out of the regularly scheduled board meeting at 6:33 p.m. and opened the Public Hearing.

Dr. Phillips shared that when the district expects to spend more than the annual board-approved budget, the process to approve an additional appropriation includes a public hearing and publishing notice of that hearing 10 days prior. He noted when the school board passed the 2023 budget the exact payment amounts for the 2022 G.O. Bonds had not been determined. After closing on the bonds, the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) informed BCSC that an additional appropriation during 2023 would be needed to meet the debt obligation. Dr. Phillips noted that the cash available in the Debt Service Fund is more than adequate to meet this need and it will not impact taxpayers in 2023. He shared that a request for additional appropriation will not occur again next year because the payment amounts for the 2023 G.O. Bonds will be available before the budget is advertised. Dr. Phillips noted that the resolution to approve the additional appropriation request is on the agenda for approval.

There were no questions or comments received from the public.

Mrs. Wheeldon gaveled back into the regularly scheduled meeting at 6:35 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS:

Best Practice – Early Childhood (Mrs. Kellie McIntyre and Mrs. Kristin Marshall)

The Program Director of Bright Beginnings Mrs. Marshall opened the presentation noting the growth of the child care program. She shared that the program opened in 2012 with only a few children enrolled and as of today currently serves ages 6 weeks to 3 years of age. The four classrooms of infants and preschool children are at capacity with several families on the waitlist in each classroom. She shared that the center strengthens and supports the entire family by providing affordable, quality, licensed child care for children. The children receive a quality foundation for social, emotional, and cognitive child development, and educational pathways and resources for the personal growth of the parents are made available. The staff on each level work to provide project-based learning based on the child's interests and proficiencies.

The Director of BCSC Pre-K Mrs. Kellie McIntyre provided an overview of the Pre-K program. She shared the growth that has occurred in the program since 2011 and noted that currently there are 305 students enrolled in 14 Pre-K and 3 Early Childhood classrooms housed within 11 buildings across the district. Mrs. McIntyre shared that the BCSC Pre-K program offers the ability to play, learn, and explore each day. She noted that she and her staff are passionate about what they do each day and shared that these students are future BCSC graduates and the future of our community.

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

The target goal is to have 80% of eligible students attending Pre-K.

One of the many benefits for students who have attended Pre-K are that they are entering kindergarten ready to learn. It is noted that BCSC Pre-K graduates follow expectations quickly and are attentive to tasks for a longer period of time.

There is data obtained twice a year through the IDOE assessment iSprout. This data provides both academic and social/emotional pieces that help the district determine what is needed to bridge the gap between Pre-K and kindergarten.

The BCSC Early Childhood and Pre-K teachers have one or more of the following credentials: CDA (Child Development Associate Credential), Associate Degree in Early Childhood, and/or a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education. The teacher assistants within BCSC have the opportunity for education reimbursement through the "TEACH Grant".

The Early Childhood and Pre-K programs host students from the C4 program. Those C4 students receive volunteer and credit hours.

Currently, there are 27 BCSC families on the waitlist for the Bright Beginnings Program. The lack of building space and staffing can often be a reason to cap enrollment.

WHAT

1) School Board Member Reports

Mrs. Wheeldon provided an update on the Public Work Session. She noted the school board reviewed and discussed four policies that are on the board meeting agenda. Those policies are as follows: po 5420, po 5610, po 8400 and po 8510. The committee briefly looked at several policies regarding curriculum selection and will continue that discussion at the next Public Work Session scheduled for Monday, September 25.

Mr. Major provided a Health Trust meeting update. He noted the concerns teachers share regarding the rising cost of health premiums and noted that an outside consultant will be gathering data to help benchmark the district regionally and nationally.

Mr. Stenner provided a District and Facilities Committee meeting update. He shared that at the last meeting, the committee received a building project update on both Parkside Elementary and Schmitt Elementary. Dr. Phillips and Dr. Boezeman led a presentation regarding the future needs of district buildings and the financial possibilities for providing funding for those needs.

Mrs. Wheeldon noted the public input for the Collective Bargaining Public Hearing and shared that formal Collective Bargaining would begin on Wednesday, September 20, 2023.

Mr. Grimes provided a Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation (BCSF) update. He thanked Centra Credit Union for their recent donations and sponsorship opportunities, and noted that the employee campaign for the school foundation will begin this month.

Mr. Schulz provided a CCIC (Corporation Continuous Improvement Council) update. He noted that Dr. Boezeman and Dr. Phillips shared a long-range facilities presentation with the committee and that CEA President Amy London shared the Collective Bargaining timeline. He also noted that the committee reviewed the alignment of senior projects for those students who have transferred between schools.

Mr. Nowlin provided a CYD (Council for Youth Development) update. He noted the many ongoing workshops and activities available to the youth within the community and the workshops available to parents, teachers, and counselors who work with youth. He highlighted the activities around the district "Spark Week". Those activities and additional CYD information can be found at www.cydbartholomew.org.

2) Cabinet Reports

Long Range Facility Update (Dr. Boezeman)

Dr. Boezeman reviewed the facility limitations within the district. He noted that renovations are needed at elementary buildings, demographic changes on the west side of town, and academic changes to accommodate additional classes. He provided the dates, times, and locations where stakeholders can provide feedback and learn financial options and strategies for the projects. He noted that the public recommendations will be shared with the board at the October 30 Strategic Planning Session.

2024 Budget Work Session (Dr. Phillips)

Dr. Phillips noted that this was an informal budget work session, and at the next regularly scheduled board meeting, September 25, there would be a Public Hearing for the 2024 Budget. The school board will be asked to approve the budget at the regularly scheduled board meeting in October. Dr. Phillips reviewed the Budget Summary and noted that the proposed increase to the 2024 Budget is 4.7% over the 2023 calendar year budget. He shared the following changes to the proposed budget: a 5.4% increase in salary/benefit expenditures (which includes added positions); the elimination of textbook fees for families; a one-time 8% inflation adjustment to school, classroom and department supply budgets; investment in facility maintenance; and the anticipation that the tax rate in 2024 will not change.

He reviewed the revenue assumptions for the Education Fund and noted the Average Daily Membership (ADM) to be down due primarily to a larger-than-average 2023 senior class and a relatively normal average incoming kindergarten class. He explained how the funding is calculated for ADM estimates and provided details on how virtual students are funded. He estimated the fall ADM count to be 11,330. He shared that the district is down 101 students from this same time last year and predicted the district would decrease by 150 students from the fall to the spring of 2024. This number includes 330 CVP students for which the district only receives 85% of the state tuition support per pupil. Dr. Phillips noted the revenue increases are from state support (including NESP), higher interest earned, and the transfer from the Operating Referendum for curricular materials.

Dr. Phillips noted that while the Education Fund calendar budget is up 6% for 2024, some of this is due to expenditures that have shifted to this fund for the 2023-24 school year. The shift in funds is due to the new legislation that passed in the spring. The first change is the non-English speaking grant that used to be a standalone program paying for three certified teachers and ten classified staff. This grant will now be integrated into the Education Fund. The second expenditure that shifts to the Education Fund is the non-textbook curricular material fees. These were course fees that helped supply classrooms and labs with the consumable materials that students needed for class.

He noted other changes to the proposed budget to be salaries and benefits due to new positions and increases for this current school year and the 2024-2025 school year and a decrease in professional services due to the selection of a lower cost platform for CVP students. Other changes include an increase in supplies to reflect the 8% inflation adjustment and the addition of curricular material expenses to the Education Fund. He shared that as the district continues to recruit, hire, and retain classified staff there has been an increase in transfers to the Operation Fund to reflect the increase in salaries and benefits. The employees directly tied to the classroom are paid from the Education Fund, which accounts for 95% of the budget for their salary and benefits.

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

Through the Academic Performance Grant, a student who qualifies to graduate early can earn revenue back to the district based on the certifications or degrees earned.

The expenditures moved to the Operations Fund from the Education Fund are utilities, insurance, custodial services, school resource officers, and some administration costs. The expenditures moving back to the Education Fund are technology related to the classroom, technology employees, software, hardware, and AV equipment. The net change in the CPF (Operations) Budget is +\$8,574,809 which is 9.1% of the Education Fund budget. By law, we are limited to transferring up to 15% from the Education Fund.

The local property tax assessment cycle determines the district's budget year.

Dr. Phillips reviewed the Operations Fund Revenue Assumptions. He anticipates the revenue to be up 9.4% which includes a deduction of \$3.0M in tax cap losses from the total. He noted that the driving force for revenue is the legislative established Maximum Levy. He shared that the 4% increase in the Maximum Levy and the 4% increase this year in assessed value will keep the 2023 operational tax rate near the same rate.

He noted the salaries reflect the 6% increase implemented this past July and the estimated 4% that could occur the following July. The decrease in professional services is a result of being able to fully staff custodial services. In 2023, nearly \$600k was budgeted for temporary agency custodians, with the only \$200k budgeted in 2024. Property and liability insurance are increasing nationally as a result of inflation/property values as well as the increase in major, weather-related events. The increase in software cost reflects some inflation, but also the addition of some software that was once purchased with federal COVID relief funds will now need to be purchased through the Operations Fund. The cost of electricity is expected to decline slightly in 2024, unencumbered funds from the end of 2023 will allow for this one-time decrease. Dr. Phillips noted while we are still budgeting \$2.7M in building improvements, it is estimated some of the projects from the 2024 budget will be mostly at the elementary level. He shared that at this point the Operations Fund budget is balanced and noted the district started 2023 with just over \$14M in reserves. This represents just over 40% of the annual budget and allows for two one-time projects to address urgent needs. The first is to allow Dr. Boezeman and his team to address HVAC and roofing needs both from a preventative maintenance and replacement perspective. The second project is to replace the lights and scoreboards at both the CNHS and CEHS football/track facilities.

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

The BCSC school district is part of ESCRFT (Educational Service Centers Risk Funding Trust) to obtain the best property and liability insurance rates.

Dr. Phillips noted that the Bus Replacement Fund is budgeted to replace 10 buses at an approximate cost of \$1.7M. In 2024, buses will be purchased using the Operations Fund (\$1.M3) and the Operating Referendum Fund (\$463k).

Debt Service Fund will decrease by about 6% due to bonds expiring in the 2024 calendar year.

Dr. Phillips summarized the 2024 Budget and recommended a transfer from the Operating Referendum Fund to the Education Fund for the curricular materials. He noted that the district is collecting more dollars each year in the Operating Referendum than we are spending each budget year.

The Rainy Day balance of \$6.274M would roughly cover two payrolls.

The IDOE suggested school districts delay the adoption of math and science materials until the new standards are in place. This delay will help the curricular materials fund recover from the cost of adopting math this year (\$2.5M).

At the beginning of the year cash balances were higher due to lower expenditures in utilities, fuel, and overtime during the COVID-19 months. The DLGF has looked at cash balances throughout the state districts. They have asked us to identify the dollars allotted for future capital improvements and are making certain that districts have a plan for the cash balances.

The funds supported by local property taxes include Operations, both Debt Service Funds, and the Operating Referendum Fund.

The timeline for the 2024 Budget approval is as follows: Public Hearing - September 25, 2023; Adoption Vote - October 23, 2023; DLGF Approval - by January 1, 2024.

The future of property taxes in the state is the biggest long-term concern. Property taxes are the most reliable and critical part to providing stable services in school districts and the community.

The Education, Operations, and Operating Referendum Funds have the flexibility to move line items.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following individuals provided comments on topics other than an agenda item: Jahon Hobbeheydar, Mark Niemoeller, Rachel Hunt, Sandy Watts, David Spencer, Adeline Hearn, Sonny Currier, Steve Jasper, Brittany Hewitt, Karla Craig, Kathy Oren, Nancy Merbitz, Johnnie Edwards, Barb Wills, Steve Wills.

HOW

- 3) Requests for Approval - Old Business (Dr. Roberts)**
 - a. Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of August 21, 2023 (Dr. Roberts)
 - b. NEOLA Policy Recommendations – po 5610 and po 8400

Dr. Roberts requested approval of items 3) a-b.

Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve Old Business items 3) a-b and the motion was seconded by Mr. Major.

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 regarding the Vaping Settlement (Dr. Phillips)
- h. Resolution regarding the 2023 Additional Appropriation (Dr. Phillips)

Dr. Roberts shared additional information on the reviewed items and requested approval of items 4) c-h.

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

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. Major.

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

BOARD INPUT AND REVIEW

Mr. Nowlin gave commendations to Columbus North Band Director Mr. Keith Burton and Columbus East Band Director Ms. Casey Mitchell, their staff, students, and band parents for recent outstanding and well-organized marching band performances. He noted how thrilled he was to see the high schools working together on such a quality program and to showcase the talent and hard work of the high school band students. He also provided commendations to C4 teacher Mr. Darin Johnson and the Exhibit Columbus High School Design Team on their outstanding contributions to the installations downtown and their presentations explaining their installation and the design process. He noted the students have done an impressive job representing C4 and BCSC.

Mr. Schulz commended Dr. Gene Hack and his team for their collaborative efforts with the Bar-Con Building Project, the CNHS staff for receiving the Excellence in College Readiness Award and he gave commendations to Dr. Roberts for his recent Indiana Wellness Volunteer of the Year Award from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. He thanked Mrs. Brittany Hewitt for sharing with the board during Public Comments.

Mr. Grimes thanked Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Marshall for their Best Practice presentation regarding BCSC Early Childhood and those community members who attended the Public Work Session. He noted the need for volunteers in the Book Buddies program.

Mrs. Wheeldon shared her sincere thanks for the opportunity to serve on the board. She thanked those who provided public comments.

Mr. Stenner thanked the speakers and those who provided public comment this evening.

Mr. Major provided commendations to the district coaches, directors, mentors, and teachers who give their time to support after-school activities and thanked the bus drivers and building custodians for the late hours they work after the conclusion of extra-curricular events.

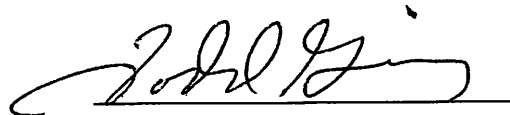
Mr. Bryant thanked Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Marshall for the Early Childhood presentation and those who provided public comments.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Public Work Session, September 25, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
Administration Building, Boardroom

Regular Board Meeting, September 25, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
Administration Building, Terrace Room

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

 Secretary

Attest:  President