

April 16, 2020 Board Meeting

In Attendance

Board members: **Ted Bachtold, Dana Kafer, Lori Schahrer, Mark Slagel, Brian Plenert and John Wilken**; administrators: **Paula Crane, Tonya Dieken, and Lisa Bounds**; Prairie Central employees: **Angie Kratochvil, Nicole Joiner, Katie Ricketts, Caren Appel and Kelly Honegger**; Press: **Kent Casson**.

Guests: **None**

Comments (Public) **None**

Comments (Visitors Arranged in Advance) **None**

Minutes

The Board approved minutes of the March 17, 2020 regular meeting and the April 6, 2020 special meeting.

Consent

The Board approved the consent agenda, which included an activity fund report, bills (current/interim), a cafeteria report, financial reports, County Sales Facility Tax Report, investment schedule, and treasurer's report.

Superintendent's Report: The Board heard from Superintendent Crane on the following topics:

- Distance Learning Update: This is going extremely well given the circumstances that we have to work with. We met with the district leadership team including our teacher leaders at the beginning to discuss how this would look. They determined guidelines for expectations of time spent on each subject, according to the grade level/developmental level of the kids. Teachers have been using a variety of ways to reach kids. We have had varied levels of participation, however our percentage of kids participating has been better than many districts. This is most likely due to the personal contacts our teachers have been making. We are aware the gap will widen, but that hopefully it will be a great learning opportunity for all of us. There have been many detailed decisions that have had to be made, especially at the High School level where credits count toward graduation, etc. Different grade level bands have decided on different methods to assess student work, including pass/incomplete and grades of 1 or 5, etc. Students will need to be assessed when they return to school for teachers to know how much "slide" took place, and how we will address gaps.
- Graduation/Senior Banquets, etc: We are remaining hopeful that we will be back in May, but the reality is that this is a slim possibility. The High School has been brainstorming ways to make graduation a meaningful experience for our seniors, who deserve to be honored for their accomplishments. Many ideas have been discussed including a virtual graduation by having a video produced which would include speeches and students' pictures in caps and gowns, etc. The HS staff would like to make it as "real" as possible given the tight parameters that have been given to us.
- Meal distribution is going very well. It took a while to get it "tweaked" to where the café staff feels comfortable with the process. It is a great deal of work with a limited staff. We have had paraprofessionals and teachers who have graciously been willing to help with meal distribution as well. The café staff has worked hard and made many changes to get it to the smooth-running process that it is today. Currently, we are

preparing meals out of the JH, PCE, and the HS, and serving from all buildings except the JH. The HS is preparing 276 lunches, PCE is preparing 123 lunches and the JH is preparing 173 lunches daily, along with the same number of breakfasts each day. This number has leveled off a bit, however it does continue to rise. This means our café staff is distributing over 5,700 meals each week!

- We have distributed technology to many families, and this process continues as well. So far, we have loaned out 75 iPads and 456 Chromebooks. We have our hotspots up and running at PCP East and West, PCJH, and PCHS. Colin has been working with Maxwire to provide free internet to families of students who cannot afford internet in their homes. This is actually Prairie Central bandwidth, being delivered by Maxwire, who is donating their time and hardware to this cause. Maxwire will install the internet into households in need. We will seek out families in need, beginning with the families of our students who qualify for free lunch.
- There are many unanswered questions about how COVID-19 will affect our budget for next year. What we know right now is that tax collection will be delayed in both Livingston and McLean Counties. This means this money will be delayed in reaching us as well. Under normal circumstances, we would receive early tax money from McLean County, which is in this year's budget. We will not be anticipating this money for this fiscal year. This will require a budget amendment. We also know that our CSFT (1% sales tax) revenue will fall sharply over the next few months, and for an unknown period of time thereafter. It is difficult to predict how quickly this will rebound. We have been relying heavily on this revenue for completing projects throughout the district which have been long overdue. Our future project plan will be "on hold" until we get an idea of where we are financially. A third given is that interest rates have been lowered and we will not generate the anticipated income on investments that is reflected in our current budget. What we do *not* know is how the state's financial situation will affect the amount of funding we receive for next school year (which begins July 1). The governor has already indicated that his proposed budget is "off the table", and he will start over. There have been many scenarios discussed, the best case being that we end up with the same amount of funding that we received this year. The worst case could be a significant decline. Because we are a "Tier II" school financially (Tier I being the most in need, Tier IV being the most financially stable), we will not be the first to have funds cut, however the deeper the cuts the more likely we will be effected by this. As this is a large portion of our revenue, we will watch this closely. Luckily, we have had a few good years in succession, and will most likely be able to weather the storm, although we won't come out in the same shape we went in.
- We will receive money through the federal government's CARES Act, however we have not yet been made aware of when this money will arrive or how it can be used. We will continue to keep updated on this situation.
- The roofing projects will begin sooner than anticipated. The project will begin in Chenoa as early as Monday, with the hopes of getting all four roof sections (including HS) finished well before the start of school next year.
- Mike has had all utilities disconnected from the concession stand at the football field in Forrest in anticipation of the demolition of that building, which is dilapidated and posing a hazard. Current plans are to demolish and remove the building soon.
- The pandemic has created an interesting situation for us in that we have contracted for fuel that we will not be able to use within the contracted time due to school closure. The fuel was contracted at a much higher price than the current price. Although details will need to be worked out, there is an opportunity to buy out of part of the contract. More information is needed to make a decision on what path is best for the district.

Old Business

- No old business

New Business

- The board approved to a partnership with Maxwire to provide free internet service to our families most in need.
- Calendar change options were discussed for the end of this year. The administration would like to use some of the last school days for collaboration time to begin planning for next school year, and the reintegration/transition of students. Meetings will be held with both K-6 and 7-12 teacher leaders to help with these decisions.
- The board agreed to cease all field trips for the remainder of the school year, and to follow recommendations from the CDC and Illinois Governor regarding summer activities.
- The board voted to continue as we have this year with “Previously Cut Stipends”. They will not add the positions of 7th grade softball and baseball and freshmen volleyball and basketball coaches, as well as drumline for the 2020-21 school year. This will be revisited in one year.
- The board approved membership for Prairie Central High School in the Illinois High School Association for the 2020-21 school year.
- The board approved the “PC Rates, Fees and Costs” schedule for the 2020-21 school year.
- Changes for the PC Elementary and PC Junior High student handbooks were approved.

Personnel

Following executive session under 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), the Board:

- Accepted the resignation of Emily Soto, JH Cheer Coach, effective the end of the 2019-20 school year.
- Accepted the resignation of Anna Steidinger, PCP East café worker, effective the end of the 2019-20 school year.
- Terminated Nick Kubiak, custodian, effective immediately.
- The board approved the “Remote Learning Job Expectations” document as agreed upon by the board and PCEA.

Adjourn

The Board adjourned at 9:51 pm.