

# GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS *Board of Education*

Regular Meeting – October 24, 2022

## MINUTES

President Shiflett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Superintendent Bill Barnes indicated the presence of **Board Members**: Jon Shiflett, Nicole Shannon, Jarrod Smith, Denise DuFort, Ben Cwayna and Toni Toni Glasscoe. **Members Absent**: Sara Clark Pierson. **Central Office Administrators**: Bill Barnes, Steve Gabriel, Julie Waterbury, Wendy Seida, Kelly Jones, Mark Deschaine, Martez Warren and John Ellsworth. **Others in Attendance**: Anna Rosalin, Tim Totten, Paige Duprest, Alison Walczak, Jill Dayton Fillingham, Leanna Agheneza, Andrea Herrst, Melissa Mazzola, David Logel, Ashley Kuykendoll, Sally Jo Nelson, Kari Smith, Greg Almy, Abby Taylor, Ashley Gilour, Carly Gee, Mark Laforet, Kim Laforet, Jason Devenbaugh, Kristy Welch, John Piper, Allyson McCann, Marlene Promer, Nell Pizzo, John Hubbard, D’Nita Tice, Ashley Oneil, Dawne Velianoff, Danielle Beachnau and Kim Manning

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

**Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the October 24, 2022 Agenda Items, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

### APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

**Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Mrs. DuFort for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the October 24, 2022 Consent Agenda Items, as presented.**

Included on the Consent Agenda was the October 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes and the hiring of Grant Householder and Bryn Hummell.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

### REPORTS

#### **A. Capitol Connections Report**

Dr. Glasscoe provided an overview of Senate Bills 861 and 942 that will provide flexibility in terms of hiring teachers and counselors.

President Shiflett noted this is the last meeting before the election and encouraging the community to take the opportunity to talk to candidates about the importance of public education and what schools mean to the community.

#### **B. Eaton RESA Report**

Mrs. DuFort advised there has been two Eaton RESA meetings since her last report. She shared the Board received presentation from Adult Education and Behavioral Mental Health Services, commended the staff on a clean audit, shared information on the Eaton County School Threat Guidelines, received a presentation from Grand Ledge Public

Schools Student Austin Neely on the Washington Leadership Training Institute that is part of Skills USA and shared highlights from the 2021-2022 Eaton RESA Annual report as it relates to services provided to the district.

**C. Grand Ledge Education Foundation**

Ms. Shannon announced the award of almost \$10,000 in teacher grants noting this large award amount was due to the significant donation from Meijer and the best turnout for their annual fundraiser 5K race. She advised the grantees will be honored on December 1, 2022 in the Beagle Media Center with a Night of Stars where teachers can share how their grant award has made an impact in their students' learning. In closing, she advised to mark your calendars for July 19, 2023 for next year's 5K race.

**D. Governance Committee**

Mr. Smith noted the committee met to continue the review of Neola policies which will be taken up later in tonight's agenda.

**E. Equity Diversity & Inclusion Committee**

Mrs. DuFort advised the Board EDI committee met and received an update from Dr. Barnes regarding the goals of the strategic plan and discussing the importance of incorporating the EDI goals to ensure we maintain focus on the values and vision established under the Strategic Plan.

**F. Bond Update**

Bond Supervisor John Piper provided the board with an update on the status of the current construction projects at the high school and Delta Center.

**G. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Barnes took a moment to recognize the hard work and dedication of the district's PTA's, PTO's and PTIA's and presented each group with a certificate. Additionally, he advised the monthly school reports will begin in November and he will present a safety and security plan update to include reviewing the many grant opportunities. He commended the Grand Ledge High School Marching Band for their outstanding achievements and commenting they have done an outstanding job representing Grand Ledge Public Schools. Lastly, he shared student enrollment is up from what was predicted with over 5,000 students in attendance. Budget updates will be coming as we finalize the numbers for submission to the State.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Smith read the rules for addressing the board.

Tim Totten addressed the board sharing information regarding the CDC adding COVID-19 vaccinations to immunizations requirements.

Kari Smith addressed the board regarding Schools of Choice, students attending school out of the district, a new business Dr. Davenport has announced, questioning how much we are spending on legal fees with regard to the Metcalf Arbitration and expressing concerns regarding the most recent student handbook and the absence of the word religion in the discrimination policy.

Kim Laforet addressed the board quoting scripture and referencing it to transgender students noting it is not as simple as fixing the body claiming it is a psychological issue that must be addressed. She supports only teaching reading, writing and arithmetic and noting if Oneil,

Laforet and Devenbaugh are elected to the board the children of the district will not be in danger as bullying is bully and they will not allow it to happen to anyone.

Allison Walczak questioned if the EDI goals were adopted and if so when and if there was an opportunity for parental input.

John Hubbard addressed the board regarding Mrs. Laforet's public comment, questioned how Dr. Barnes is going to negotiate with the Teacher Union as he believes his wife is a teacher in the district and chastising the district on safety protocols.

Dawne Velianoff expressed her appreciation to Dr. Barnes on incorporating new things, questioning student numbers and commenting statistics should not be used in this reference and noting she would like a true reflect of student enrollment K-3. She further asked for clarification on negotiating and if Dr. Barnes' wife is a teacher, does that mean the district will hire more lawyers to do the negotiating commenting many board members have ties to the district. In closing she requesting to know if there are increased costs how it will affect the budget and how it will affect the kids.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Approval of Michigan Merit Curriculum for an Eaton County Youth Facility Student Diploma Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Mr. Smith for Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Michigan Merit Curriculum for an Eaton County Youth Facility Student Diploma, as presented.**

Superintendent Barnes explained the Eaton County Youth Facility currently has two students who have enough credits to receive their diploma. Rather than having to go back to a home district, this will allow the students to receive a diploma from the Eaton County Youth Facility and afford them another opportunity to move on with their lives in a positive way.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Approval of Superintendent's Contract Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Superintendent Contract of Dr. William Barnes, as presented.**

President Shiflett acknowledged the process took longer than anticipated and taking responsibility for the delay noting it is sometimes tough to balance everything in life.

Dr. Glasscoe expressed her appreciation to the time put in to making sure the contract was fair while maintaining responsibility to the community.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**A. 98C UPDATE**

Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services Steve Gabriel provided the board with an update regarding 98C funds noting these are grant funds to address learning loss. He shared the district is unsure of the amount we might be awarded as it will be reflective of how many districts apply and the number of students. He shared the district's intent for these funds is to expand the program piloted at Holbrook last year, with Sylvan Learning Center, to provide tutoring services to students who struggle in math and reading. With our 98C application, the

district is proposing to offer these services at each of our elementary buildings and Hayes Intermediate and would include transportation for the students who take part in this program. He shared the application will be submitted by the end of November and it is the district's intent to move forward with this plan as it is in the best interest of our students.

Dr. Gabriel answered questions from the board noting students will be selected by their teachers and invitations will be sent to the parent/guardian of the student with the option to participate. Furthermore, tutoring is scheduled for one day a week, either before or after school. He commended the work done by Sylvan at Holbrook last year and noted their provided monthly updates on student progress and concluded with a year-end update noting the students showed quite a bit of growth.

**B. BOND PROJECT PRIORITY DISCUSSION**

Dr. Barnes led the board in a discussion regarding remaining bond projects and prioritizing the work to be done. He reminded everyone that 2019 dollars are different than 2022 dollars. He noted he felt it was important to take a pause and bring everyone back to the table to ensure we are moving forward in a manner that maintains the integrity of the bond projects and our commitment to the community. He noted the information included in the board packet shows the big picture. It provides one document created by GMB and Clark Construction that outlines what is left in the bond projects and what the potential cost of those projects. The second document is created by the Central Office Leadership Team in conjunction with Bond Supervisor John Piper and prioritizes each project based on biggest impact, safety and security and educational opportunities. A new Wacousta Elementary Building is top priority and meetings will begin again next week. He noted the development of the Morris property is the last thing on the list. When we look at that property, to have a useable agricultural program, a space for kids to learn, infrastructure, water, sewer, road, we are looking at about \$1.3M. He noted there is currently not enough money in the bond to finish that project. However, he noted through individual conversations with many of the members, he heard the importance of this project and the promise made to the community. He noted no decisions need to be made tonight, but requested the board take some time to look things over, think about it, and at the November meeting we will ask the board to finalize the priority list. In the meantime, the Leadership Team will continue to look at the budget noting that even recently it was realized that on the GMB Budget for roofs, they include some roofs that have already been done. There will be a savings there. Additionally, there will be savings with regard to busses in that they are on the GMB list twice and the price GMB has is significantly higher than the actual cost as seen in quotes CFO Julie Waterbury and Transportation Supervisor Pete Bucholtz received. In closing he noted this is the result of a couple of months of work.

Mr. Smith noted that as a member of the Board Bond Advisory Committee he appreciates the foresight to take a "time out". He noted the Morris Property is important and he believes it is important to find a way. He reflected on discussion in the Bond Committee expressing prioritizing the new Wacousta and items falling down the list that are more of a remodel nature and additional amenities that can wait. He commented this information includes a lot of consideration and a lot of work.

Dr. Glasscoe expressed her personal appreciation to the work noting that as the new member of the board she sometimes felt like she was slowing down progress. This, however, provides her the detail she needs because she wasn't here from the beginning. She appreciates always being validated in her questions as a fresh set of eyes, or experience from other places. But more important, the taxpayers provided us with this money and it is a big responsibility and

she commends the leadership to keeping that in mind noting we have good stewards. She noted she is proud, relieved and believes we are on the right track.

Mrs. DuFort echoed Dr. Glasscoe commending Dr. Barnes for being diligent in his work and expressing her appreciation for the additional work the leadership team has put into this. She notes this reflects our reality but maintains our commitment to the support provided our stakeholders and provide clarity moving forward.

Mr. Cwayna noted he believes this could have been worse and he is surprised it isn't. He supported Wacousta being a priority and noting he wants to see something on the Morris property and hopes it won't be just a double wide, but if that is what we have to do that's what we have to do.

Dr. Barnes clarified the \$1.3M noted would provide a site with a barn-style classroom space with electricity, water, sewer and a drive/road/parking.

Mr. Cwayna expressed his appreciation for the forethought in doing this review and standing on it could be a lot worse.

Ms. Shannon noted she agrees with everything Mr. Cwayna said commenting Wacousta is a priority and noting a promise was made to the community with regard to the Dave & Betty Morris property and this gets us closer to that promise. She supports safety and security, absolutely, and traffic flow mediation to alleviate safety concerns.

**C. NEOLA BOARD POLICIES: 1000 ADMINISTRATION – 1<sup>ST</sup> READING**

**Motion by President Shiflett, seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to waive the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of NEOLA Policies 1000 Administration. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Smith noted the Governance Committee met and reviewed the second batch of Neola policies which are now before the full board for discussion. He noted the committee will continue to meet to work through the policies and bring each individual section back to the full board for review and consideration. After the board has made it through all of the policies, the full board will vote on implementing the new Neola Policies.

A detailed discussion among the members addressed questions, concerns, or suggestions brought forward by members. The Governance Committee will meet to ensure all matters discussed are appropriately addressed before the final approval.

**COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD**

Dr. Gabriel congratulated Dr. Barnes on his contract settlement and noted that in his 33-years in public education has worked for and with dozens of superintendents, eight just in his time with the district, and he has never worked with a Superintendent that is so hands on, so involved, so focused on academic achievement and instruction as is Dr. Barnes, commenting it is refreshing and he is confident the district is in good hands. He congratulated the band noting their most recent accomplishment over the weekend was the highest scored ever achieved.

Dr. Barnes thank Dr. Gabriel and thanked the board for the process in developing his contract. He noted he appreciated the conversation and the way it was handled and he thanked the board for the opportunity to lead the district. In response to questions during public comment he noted that

in the Student Handbooks, the section on harassment does have religion included and it was also included in board policy that was reviewed tonight. Health Education and Reproductive Health are required classes through state law and the district follows state law. With regard to the EDI Goals, these have not been approved by the board but it was an important conversation to ensure we align any goals with the Board approved Strategic Plan. Before any goals are implemented, they will come to the board. With regard to safety and security, we do keep buildings locked down and secure during the school day. After school may be a little different and offers an opportunity for a door to propped open, it happens. With regard to any contract, the Board approves all employee group contracts. Contracts are between the employee group and the Board of Education, not the Superintendent. The Board has a negotiations team just like the employee groups have a negotiations team. No employee contract is approved by the Superintendent; they are approved by the Board of Education.

Ms. Shannon wished Mrs. DuFort a happy birthday. She thanked Mrs. Waterbury for being proactive with regard to the budget. She expressed her appreciation to our PTO, PTA, and PTIAs. She noted she probably did make some facial expressions during Mrs. Laforet's comments and she believed the comments were out of place in this context and felt that they were directed specifically to our LGBTQIA+ students and she feels that Grand Ledge is a great place for our students to be who they are and to be supported. She was disappointed to hear those comments and again, felt it was out of place in this context. She thanked Dr. Barnes for the updated FAQ's noting she was able to share the link to this page on a social media post to eliminate a negative narrative about a specific book being in our libraries noting the complete list of all books contained in the GLPS school libraries is on the FAQ page.

Dr. Barnes noted Director of Communications John Ellsworth is his partner on the FAQ page and expressing his appreciation to Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. Smith sent kudos to the football team for their share in the conference title noting there have been some exciting games this season and now the playoffs are on the way. He further clarified that student count is not statistics. Student count are the student who are here and our numbers look good. If new students want to come to this district, that is exciting. But commenting, students are way more than a number, and there is value in this district.

Mr. Cwayna congratulated Dr. Barnes and expressed his appreciation for how he has jumped into the job. He noted he followed, with interest, the band's success on Facebook. And in closing he noted he appreciated Mr. Walczak's question and believes that the EDI recommendations must be debated and discussed before those are worked into aligning with the Strategic Plan.

Mrs. DuFort noted today is the Indian celebration of Diwali, similar to our New Year's Eve. She shared she was able to attend a Diwali celebration a couple years ago and is excited to see a growing population in our schools. She congratulated the Marching band and expressed her appreciation to the parent groups noting she tries to attend those meeting when her schedule permits. In closing, she reminded everyone to vote November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Glasscoe noted the FAQ's are excellent and that everyone has a responsibility to ensure that correct information is in the community; it is not just the responsibility of the board, Superintendent and staff. She commented on a parent communication with regard to how they feel students with special needs or those who learn differently are not being included in considerations with regard to equity, diversity and inclusion noting the parent's belief this part of the student population is not getting as much consideration. EDI is more than gender and more than race. In closing she shared she recently attending the Autism Conference held in Nashville commenting it was a great seminar.

**CLOSED SESSION – Attorney / Client Privilege**

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to move into Closed Session for the purpose of receiving Confidential Attorney / Client Privileged Communication, as per Section 8(1)(e) of the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mr. Smith	<u>YES</u>	Dr. Glasscoe	<u>YES</u>
Mrs. DuFort	<u>YES</u>	President Shiflett	<u>YES</u>
Mr. Cwayna	<u>YES</u>	Ms. Shannon	<u>YES</u>

The motion carried at 8:15 p.m.

**RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION**

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:43 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AUTHORIZATION**

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to authorize District legal counsel to negotiate and sign a settlement agreement in the matter of the Metcalf Arbitration for an amount not to exceed the value of Brian Metcalf's employment contract.

**Roll Call Vote:**

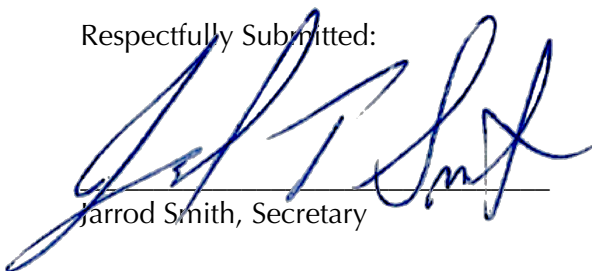
Mrs. DuFort	<u>YES</u>	President Shiflett	<u>YES</u>
Mr. Cwayna	<u>NO</u>	Ms. Shannon	<u>YES</u>
Dr. Glasscoe	<u>YES</u>	Mr. Smith	<u>YES</u>

The motion carried.

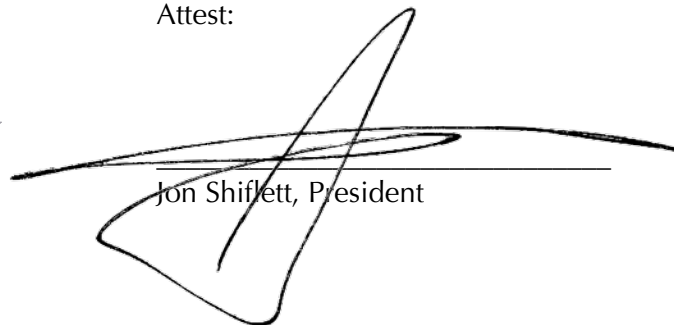
**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Jarrod Smith, Secretary

Attest:

  
Jon Shiflett, President