

The New Castle Community School Board of Trustees met in the Boardroom at the Community Education Center located at 322 Elliott Avenue, New Castle, IN 47362 on December 14, 2020.

**Board Members Present:** Cory Bennett, Member; Jennifer Blackford, Member; Travis Callaway, President; Nan Polk, Secretary; and Kim Williamson, Vice President

**Central Office Administrators Present:** Jena Schmidt, Human Resource Director – Virtually: Matthew Shoemaker, Superintendent; Lisa Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Greg Crider, Attorney; Megan Bell, Chief Financial Officer; Sherri Bergum, Curriculum Director

**Also Present:** Approximately 21 community members both in person and virtual.

- I. Call to Order-by President Travis Callaway at 7:08 pm
  - A. Roll Call - All members present
  - B. Approval of Minutes: Regular Session – November 9, 2020 – Cory Bennett moved to approve the minutes as presented with a second by Jennifer Blackford. With no discussion, motion carried 5-0.
  - C. Approval of Agenda – Dr. Shoemaker stated there were no changes on the posted agenda. Nan Polk moved to approve the agenda as presented with a second by Kim Williamson. With no discussion, motion carried 5-0.
  
- II. Communications/Routine Consent Items/Regularly Recurring Reports/Other
  - A. Public Questions and Comments on Agenda Items – No comments
  - B. Routine Consent Items: Approval of Reports: Travel; Monthly Personnel; Bill Lists #67179 through #67350; Payroll Claims and Donations; and Field Trip Requests – Cory Bennett moved to approve reports as presented with a second by Jennifer Blackford. With no further discussion motion carried 5-0.
  - C. Submission of Monthly Corporation Extra-Curricular Receipts and Disbursements and Fund Reports - no action necessary.
  
- III. New Business
  - A. Fanning & Howey Report – No report was given.
  - B. \*Approval of Support Staff Stipends – Dr. Shoemaker asked to approve a \$500 one time stipend for support staff who are eligible for health benefits and \$150 for those support staff employees who are not eligible for health benefits. Nan Polk moved to approve as presented with a second by Cory Bennett. With no further discussion, motion carried 5-0.
  - C. \*Extend Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) through January 31, 2021 – Dr. Shoemaker asked for approval to extend this Federal Act. He stated the FFCRA is likely to be extended when Federal leadership changes and this extension would eliminate the need to go back and provide retroactive benefits to eligible employees. Jennifer Blackford moved to approve the extension as presented with a second by Kim Williamson. With no further discussion, motion carried 5-0.

- D. \*Approval of 2021-2022 School Calendar – Dr. Shoemaker stated there are several neighboring corporations who establish their school calendar around New Castle. Dr. Shoemaker gave a brief explanation of the calendar and then asked for approval. Cory Bennett moved to approve the calendar as presented with a second by Nan Polk. With no further discussion, motion carried 5-0.
- E. \*Approval of E-Rate Category 1 – Dustin Chew gave a brief explanation of the quotes he received. He also stated the corporation will be eligible to receive a 90% E-Rate discount this year. His recommendation is to approve Metronet. Nan Polk moved to approve as presented with a second by Kim Williamson. After a brief discussion, motion carried 5-0.
- F. COVID-19 Update – Dr. Shoemaker stated he will provide this update during his comments.

IV. Buildings & Grounds – Lisa Smith, Assistant Superintendent gave a report on the following:

- A. Report given by Dr. Matthew Shoemaker during Superintendent's report.

V. Superintendent Report – Updates presented by Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Shoemaker.

- A. Middle School – He reported the gymnasium walls are up. A meeting is scheduled tomorrow with Fanning & Howey to discuss kitchen designs so they will be ready for the bidding process in January. He also reported Fanning and Howey will be at the January Board meeting to provide updates.
- B. Pool Update – The pool is expected to be completed by the end of this week. It will take approximately two days to fill and three to five days to heat and stabilize with chemicals. The pool should be ready for the next home meet on January 5, 2021.
- C. COVID Update – A brief explanation was given regarding the school closure for the week of December 14, 2020. Dr. Shoemaker stated the Health Department, in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID19, required all schools in Henry County to go virtual the two weeks following Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks. That left the week of December 14th to be decided by each corporation. In order to make this decision, Dr. Shoemaker collaborated with the Henry County Health Department as well as the Health Advisory committee that meets every two weeks. With current county numbers climbing, and the lack of staffing within the schools due to COVID, the decision was made for students to remain virtual. Therefore, virtual instruction will be the sole instructional platform through January 19, 2021. He also reiterated that there are many benefits of brick and mortar over virtual education. However, the corporation's virtual program is structured to keep students engaged and it is the best option at this time.
- D. Good News! – Dr. Shoemaker wanted to tell of the many good things that are happening during our virtual learning. Our staff members are calling students, visiting student homes, and keeping in close communication with our kids. Schools are also sponsoring socially distant events such as Holiday Drive-By's, Spirit Weeks, and special virtual programs. The corporation continues to reach out to students and staff continues to be creative in finding ways to keep students and families engaged. A big thank you was also expressed to teachers who despite testing positive or having a positive case in their residence, still want to teach our students. Their dedication and resilience is to be commended!

- E. School Counselor – An update was requested and Dr. Shoemaker stated there have been lots of changes over the last three years. In a time when the corporation has seen a decrease in funds of over \$1.3 million and staff reductions of 61 employees, three staffing areas have been increased. Those include School Counselors, Social Workers and the School Resource Officers.
- F. IASP Rising Stars-Class of 2022 – New Castle has four students identified for this achievement – Congratulations to Dillon Bergum, Matthew Gerth, Madelyn Meek and Dawson Scott.
- G. Thank you to Kim Williamson for his service – Dr. Shoemaker stated he was thankful for the accomplishments and for his dedication and service to our corporation during his time on the School Board. He was presented with a piece of the field house and a plaque.

VI. Budget – Megan Bell, Chief Financial Officer, gave information relating to budget items.

- A. Report on Transfer from Education Fund to Operations Fund for November Expenditures - \$257,900 – Jennifer Blackford moved to approve the transfer as recommended with a second by Nan Polk. With no discussion, motion carried 5-0.
- B. \*Transfer from Education Fund to Operations Fund for anticipated December Expenditures – Megan Bell asked for approval of anticipated expenditures not to \$225,000. This will allow the corporation to stay within the 15% allowable by the state. Jennifer Blackford moved to approve as presented with a second by Cory Bennett. Motion carried 5-0.

VII. Public Questions & Comments – The meeting is open for comments.

- A. Nan Polk – Expressed her interest in remaining as the Legislative Liaison for the upcoming year. A brief discussion regarding best practice to relay information to Board Members occurred.
- B. Cory Bennett – Wanted to state his thanks to Kim for his dedication and assistance over the last few years. He stated Kim was a key person to help him work through his Board responsibilities.
- C. Travis Callaway – Echoes the statements from Cory Bennett. He wanted to express his gratitude for Kim and his service. He stated their common goal is the vision for New Castle Schools and Kim's love of God, his wife, kids and this community. He was privileged to serve with Kim on the Board.
- D. Kim Williamson – In his parting comments, Kim thanked each of the Board Members individually for their service to the school and students of New Castle. He also thanked Liz Whitmer and Dr. Shoemaker for their service to this corporation. He appreciated the community for allowing him to serve. He congratulated Jaci Hadsell and stated she will be a great Board Member. He wanted to thank the staff for going above and beyond in doing what is best for kids.

VIII. Adjournment – With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

President:

Minutes of Public Meeting  
December 14, 2020

Vice President:

Secretary: