

SHIKELLAMY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Sunbury, Pennsylvania  
[www.shikbraves.org](http://www.shikbraves.org)

Regular Board Meeting  
Thursday, November 6, 2014

A work session of the Shikellamy School District Board of Directors was held on Thursday, November 6, 2014 at 7:07 pm at the Island Park Administration Center.

Members Present were: Mrs. Cianflone, Mrs. Garman, Mr. Garman, Mr. Karpinski, Mr. Stepp, Dr. Walter, Mrs. Wiest, & Dr. Hartman

Members Absent were: Mr. Michaels

Student Members Present were: Miss Hummel

Others Present: Attorney Michael Apfelbaum, District Solicitor  
Mr. David Sinopoli, Acting Superintendent/Business Manager  
Mrs. Abbey Walshaw-Wertz, Director of Education  
Mrs. Angela Farronato, Oaklyn Elementary School Principal  
Mr. Doug Benick, Director of Buildings and Grounds  
Mrs. Bethanne Zeigler, Board Recording Secretary

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Hartman explained the procedure for public comment.

Deborah Betz of Sunbury asked for clarification on the policy and procedure when calling the police. She expressed displeasure with the handling of a matter of one of her children and asked everyone to stand up and protect the children of this district.

Noah Fenstermacher, Sunbury PA, spoke to the safety, equal treatment as well as consequences administered to students.

Cathy Fenstermacher, Sunbury PA, expressed concern with the safety of students, behavioral issues, and bullying by adults.

Susan Strawser, Sunbury PA, expressed her displeasure with the current situation with the Superintendent. She spoke to students' right to speak at a public meeting. She expressed concern with the handling of an incident on October 31, 2014. Finally, she raised concern with procedures with regards to a parent volunteer and clearances.

Susan Egan, Northumberland PA, spoke about school safety and grant money available. She expressed displeasure with the administration not pursuing the grant when provided with the information one year ago. She asked the Board of Education to consider the grant when it is available in the future.

Kyle Snyder, Sunbury PA, shared his displeasure with the handling of an incident which occurred on Friday, October 31, 2014.

Courtney Hummel, Northumberland PA, asked everyone to consider coming together to solve the root of the problems in the district. She suggested providing positive solutions and support, rather than ridiculing school leaders and perpetuating the problems.

Dr. Hartman addressed some of the concerns raised. He shared information as it was provided to Mr. Sinopoli by the building principals. On October 31, 2014, Beck elementary school students were ending their Halloween parade. A parent from the back of the parade informed a nearby teacher of two suspicious individuals on bicycles near the Burger King parking lot. One was dressed in a ninja turtle costume. The two individuals did not come towards the students, nor did they come on school grounds, as far as anyone knows. The Beck elementary school principal was instructed to call police if a threat seemed imminent; otherwise see if the two individuals could be spotted. At dismissal, two middle school staff members, while waiting with their student to embark on the bus, noticed two individuals on bikes, at which point, what appeared to be a gun, fell from one of the individual's pocket. At that time, one staff member reported it to the High School administrator. The High School administrator confiscated the b-b gun and confronted the two individuals. In the absence of the assistant High School administrator, Dr. Murphy-Kahn arrived on scene. Both individuals were questioned and the police were called. Unfortunately, the two individuals fled the scene before police arrived. Dr. Hartman reviewed statements by Mr. Jackson, Dr. Murphy-Kahn and others related to the incident. Dr. Hartman made the distinction of Board Policy 218.1, which is specifically written regarding students. We expect the principals and staff to manage the safety of the students. As it was reported, it appears Mr. Jackson took the kind of action a principal is expected to take.

With respect to the High School knowing when to notify police, Dr. Hartman read from an email sent by Ernest Jackson on October 16, 2014 at 1:53 pm, where Mr. Jackson reports that he contacted the police due to a weapons violation. Through this email, it clearly demonstrates Mr. Jackson knows he can call police prior to contacting IPAC. In addition, Dr. Hartman spoke to information shared during a meeting where Mr. Kelley spoke to the principals regarding police calls. There was concern by Sunbury police regarding the number of calls being made to the police that took up the time of the officers. Mr. Kelley told principals they should work to handle a number of items in house. He clearly conveyed to the principals they could call police using the 9-1-1 number, but they were to notify him to let him know the call was placed. During another meeting held on February 6, 2014, discussion regarding what should be publicly shared. Administrators were directed when contacted by the press, items dealing with personnel matters and student matters should be directed to the Superintendent.

Dr. Hartman reported he has shared with Mr. Kelley his position; students have the right to speak and they won't be denied the opportunity. As far as the topic of clearances, Dr. Hartman will check into the matter. It is the responsibilities of the administration to ensure those working with the students are properly cleared. Dr. Hartman will speak with Mr. Kelley regarding emergency drills and procedures. There is an emergency plan and Dr. Hartman will find out when it was last updated.

Amanda Hassinger of Sunbury, PA inquired why an automated message was not sent out to parents regarding the October 31, 2014 incident.

Dr. Walter asked for clarification regarding the report of the incident at Beck Elementary. As reported, no gun was confirmed to have been seen at either the Burger King parking lot or the Beck Elementary school.

Dr. Hartman concluded the public comment portion of the meeting sharing there is not one school director who does not have the concern of the students at heart. There is a sincere

desire to have a safe school and work environment for students and staff. He personally believes the vast majority of students are good law abiding students and a vast majority of the employees have the best interest of the students. Those are the people that need to be counted on.

### **POLICY DISCUSSION**

Mrs. Walshaw-Wertz reviewed the policies affected by Chapter IV, as well as the policy related to graduation requirements as discussed at the October 23, 2014 work session. The policies reviewed were as follows:

- 000 - Board Policy/Procedure/Administrative Regulations
- 004 - Membership
- 011 -Board Governance Standards/Code of Conduct
- 100 - Comprehensive Planning
- 217 – Graduation Requirements.

Mrs. Walshaw-Wertz reviewed proposed changes to Board Policy 112 – Guidance Counseling. The only change would be to add the following statement – “be an integral part of the instructional program at all levels of the school district”, as proposed by PSBA.

It was agreed to add these policies to the November 13, 2014 agenda for consideration.

### **2015 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

The proposed meeting schedule was reviewed. After some discussion, Board Members were asked to e-mail Mrs. Zeigler any conflicts with other meetings. The calendar should be firmed up by November 20, 2014 in order to adopt it in December.

### **REVIEW REGULAR BOARD MEETING ACTION ITEMS – MINUTES, BILLS, RESOLUTIONS**

The agenda was reviewed. The general obligation bond sale is scheduled for next Thursday. Ms. Doyle, PFM Representative, and Attorney Moore, Bond Counsel will be in attendance to provide a report next week.

It was noted that two requests forwarded to some Board Members were not included on the agenda. One is a request for a Spirit Club. A message was sent to the athletic director via email informing him there is already a spirit club in place at the high school and the names of the advisors were provided to him. The second request is straight forward regarding a student who wishes to swim on a team.

### **BOARD GOALS**

This topic will be reviewed at the November 25, 2014 work session.

### **OTHER**

After a brief discussion, it was agreed to release a statement regarding the October 31, 2014 incident on the district website and through other media outlets. Mrs. Wiest pointed out there was an incident at Priestley Elementary School where everyone commended the staff for the plan of action. There is a lot of misinformation floating around about some of the

circumstances from the most recent incident. From the reports provided, it appears to be a whole lot better than the conception raised this week.

Dr. Hartman announced the Groundbreaking Ceremony will be held for the new middle school on Monday, November 10, 2014. There will be refreshments following the ceremony at the Northumberland Borough building. The Northumberland Borough has donated the use of the community room for this activity.

Mr. Sinopoli announced the Shikellamy School District Facebook page is up and running and encouraged people to check it out.

Dr. Hartman shared along with himself, Mr. Kelley and Mrs. Zeigler are currently working with officials from the Sunbury Community Hospital and the City of Sunbury to try to address the relationship with the media and directly go to the public with integral things taking place. Each group will share newsletters. Dr. Hartman encouraged the administrators to promote the positive things happening in the district.

Dr. Hartman thanked Miss Hummel for her remarks during public comment, as well as everyone who stayed for the full meeting. He shared it is easy to point out what is wrong, but each of us need to spend more time working on how to solve things. We need citizens, parents, students, staff; everyone to work together.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.