



Rocket Express

January 16, 2024

The Rockwood Area Board of School Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 16, 2024.

The minutes of the reorganization and regular meeting on 12/4/2023 were approved.

The agenda and agenda items were approved.

The Board approved the financial and treasurer reports, bills, and budgetary transfers as presented.

Board Recognition:

The following students of the month were recognized by the Board:

December

Maci L. King
Hayden R. Phillippi
Dashja L. Ream
Autumn E. Mowry
Devin W. McCauley
Dylan J. Coho

January

Aleksey D. Schafer
Olivia L. Mcklveen
Matthew W. Truszka
Glenn A. Millin
Natalie L. Gary
Joshua T. Wagner

Mark Bower presented Board members with certificates for School Director Recognition Month and thanked them for their time, dedication, and efforts in supporting the District's students, families, and staff.

New Business:

The Board voted in favor to increase the capitalization threshold from \$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00 effective immediately.

The Board approved the EITC funded "Engineering is Elementary" Proposal for the 2023-2024 school year.

The Board approved the administration to advertise for requests for qualifications for a guaranteed energy savings project.

The Board approved the addition of a line item to the budget for the Safety Committee in the amount of \$10,000.00.

The Board approved the revisions to the Rockwood Area School District Course Selection Guide for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the first reading of the following revisions to the Rockwood Area School District policy manual and voted in favor to eliminate the first reading of revisions to policy 810 –

Transportation:

- 200 Enrollment of Students
- 202 Eligibility of Nonresident Students
- 217 Graduation
- ~~810—Transportation~~

The Board approved the first reading of the following new policy to the Rockwood Area School District policy manual:

- 254 Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Committee Reports:

The Board voted in favor to waive the tuition for the school aged child of employee ID #85 to attend the Rockwood Area School District.

The Board approved a sabbatical leave of absence for restoration of health for the following employee (referenced by employee identification number) beginning the first day of the second semester through the last teacher day of the 2023-2024 school year. Employee ID #34.

The Board voted in favor to add Maggie Hay to the substitute teacher list (Type 06) for the 2023-2024 school year, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board voted in favor to add Katelynn Swank to the substitute teacher list for the 2023-2024 school year, pending completion of all paperwork, and approved her as a long-term substitute elementary teacher.

The Board voted in favor to employ Josie Knopsnyder as a Student Services Support Specialist, funded by the Rockwood Area Mental Health & Safety/Security Grant, effective immediately through 7/31/24, up to 30 hours per week, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board voted in favor to employ Jeremy Romesberg as the bona-fide volunteer head junior high softball coach.

Conference Requests:

The Board approved the following conference requests:

1. School Social Worker PA SAP Conference – State College, PA – 2/25/24, 2/26/24, 2/27/24 – Susan Clark
2. PATTAN ABA Winter Training – Pittsburgh, PA – 1/29/24, 1/30/24, 1/31/24 – Amber Caddy, Megan Berkebile

Field Trip Requests:

The Board approved the following field trip requests:

1. 7th & 8th Grade Laurel Hill State Park – STEELS Standards – Somerset, PA – 4/16/24, 5/2/24 – Leanna Weimer and 40 students
2. Elementary Ski Club – 7 Springs, PA – 1/18/24, 1/25/24, 2/1/24 – Carter Bower, Ben Baker, Jaime Gross and 20-60 students

Use of School Facility Requests:

The Board approved the following use of school facility requests:

1. Rockwood Cheerleading Boosters – Rockwood high school gymnasium – 1/5/24; 6:30 A.M. – 7:40 A.M. – Koval’s fundraiser pick up.
2. Rockwood Soccer Club – Rockwood high school gymnasium – 1/7/24, 1/14/24, 1/21/24, 1/28/24, 2/4/24, 2/18/24, 2/25/24; 2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. – Indoor soccer.
3. Rockwood Youth Baseball League – Rockwood high school and elementary gymnasiums – January through April 2024; dates and times TBD by athletic director – Baseball practices.
4. Rockwood PTO – Rockwood elementary chorus room – 2/29/24 through 3/8/24; 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. – Elementary book fair.
5. Rockwood Youth Football – Rockwood high school cafeteria – 2/27/24, 3/6/24, 3/9/24; 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. (2/27 & 3/6), 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. (3/9) – Registration for youth football league.
6. Rockwood PTO – Rockwood high school cafeteria – 3/8/24; 1:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Little Caesars fundraiser pick up.
7. Rockwood Youth Softball 10U – Rockwood elementary gymnasium – Saturdays beginning 1/20/24 through 4/27/24; 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Youth softball practice.
8. PA DOC Honor Guard at SCI Somerset – Rockwood high school or elementary gymnasium – Date, time, and location to be coordinated with athletic director – Practice for Honor Guard.
9. Rockwood Youth Baseball League – Rockwood elementary cafeteria – 1/9/24; 5:45 P.M. – 8:15 P.M., 1/13/24; 7:45 A.M. – 12:15 P.M. – Youth baseball registration.
10. Rockwood Youth Baseball League – Rockwood elementary gymnasium – Sundays in January through April 2024; 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. – Baseball practices.

Superintendent’s Report:

Mark Bower discussed weather related issues and how they impact the decision to implement school cancellations and delays. He, along with Misty Demchak and Jon Hale, discussed the procedures for Flexible Instruction Days (FID).

Mark Bower expressed his appreciation towards Mrs. Sharon Clapper, Mrs. Allison Shultz, Misty Demchak, PJ Opfar, faculty, and the 65 community and business representatives who sat on panels, for their involvement with the senior project presentations. The district received great feedback, and all students passed!

Mark Bower informed board members that there is an opening on the IU8 Board of Directors if any board member is interested in the position.

Mark Bower advised the Board that the PCCD School Safety and Security Committee announced the FY 2023-24 School Safety Grant solicitation process is now open. The district is expecting to receive \$108,137.00 of funding for mental health, which would be used to continue after-school and summer programs for students. Additionally, \$30,000.00 of the grant would be available for school safety and security. These funds would be used to support the School Police Officer position, as well as upgrades to the district's security system.

Mark Bower reviewed changes to the 2023 School Code, which included items related to substitute teachers, classroom monitors, school facilities, school safety, and funding.

Mark Bower presented the Board with two options to consider for the 2024-2025 school year calendar. Consideration to approve a school calendar will be placed on the February board agenda.

Mark Bower discussed Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) funding. The district received a \$500.00 donation from DBH Konhaus and a donation in the amount of \$7,500.00 from Wheeler Fleet Solutions. These funds are used to support student programs and college in high school courses. The support from these businesses is greatly appreciated.

Mark Bower and Board members discussed the idea of receiving electronic board agenda packets and information, in lieu of paper documents. Laptops were distributed to Board members to be used during their terms in office. If the Board wishes to continue receiving district information electronically, the administration will explore software that can make the electronic process flow more efficiently.

Discussion was held in regards to an in-house cyber school program. The consensus of the Board was to encourage students and families to engage in a brick-and-mortar education, allowing students to receive a higher quality of education.

Jon Hale thanked the Board for supporting the elementary ski club program.

Jon Hale advised the Board that the end of the grading period is ending. He is working with teachers to identify students that are in need of supports and facilitating meetings with parents.

Jon Hale informed the Board that the Rocket Power Hour program is going well and elementary student attendance is outstanding.

Jon Hale recognized and congratulated students for being selected to compete in the All County Art contest. Several district elementary students placed and received ribbons.

Jon Hale informed the Board that he, Mark Bower, and Jordan Svonavec will participate in a meeting with the EADS Group to begin discussion related to plans and designs for the elementary playground project.

Jon Hale advised the Board that bus safety and behavior lessons will be presented to elementary students on January 17. These lessons focus on student safety around the bus, appropriate behavior while on the bus, and general bus rules.

Jon Hale outlined the elementary events and trainings that took place during the January 15th Teacher In-Service Day.

Jon Hale informed the Board that preparation for mid-year benchmarks are taking place. Students are completing assessments and testing. Results are used to identify the strengths and needs of students.

Nicholas Buterbaugh informed the Board that the winter sports recognition event went well. The students seemed to really enjoy it.

Nicholas Buterbaugh advised the Board that he, and the district, received a great deal of positive feedback from those who attended the Richard "Dick" Stoner Memorial event. The family was very touched by the memorialization and honoring of Dick's life for his service, support, and dedication to the district, students, and families for so many years.

Nicholas Buterbaugh shared with the Board that approximately 11 students are interested in participating in the track and field co-op.

Nicholas Buterbaugh informed the Board that the athletic department is looking into holding weekend tournaments for junior high and junior varsity baseball and softball teams.

Nicholas Buterbaugh advised the Board that the gym usage schedule is very full, including the use of the gyms on the weekends.

Nicholas Buterbaugh updated the Board on winter sports programs, which include basketball and independent swimming. He recognized and congratulated several student athletes for their personal accomplishments and wished them luck in achieving their goals.

Nicholas Buterbaugh expressed his concerns for the decreased number of students interested in participating in junior high softball.

Nicholas Buterbaugh informed the Board that the athletic department has two vacant coaching positions; assistant junior high softball coach and assistant varsity baseball coach.

Megan Hetrick advised the Board that the Special Education Plan is due in June. She intends to post the plan for a 28-day review this week so it can be considered for approval at the February Board meeting.

Megan Hetrick noted that the next R&W Café will be held on January 26.

Megan Hetrick commented that the senior project presentations went very well. She recognized Mrs. Allison Shultz, Mrs. Sharon Clapper, Misty Demchak, and others for their involvement and for doing such a great job.

Megan Hetrick thanked the Board for supporting CBI. The high school students will participate in an outing at the end of January to go bowling. She also thanked the Board for supporting PATTAN training for the high school life skills classroom.

Misty Demchak informed the Board that Mrs. Weimer and FFA students attended the Farm Show on January 8. She recognized and congratulated five students who received their Keystone Degree.

Misty Demchak recognized and thanked Mrs. Sharon Clapper, Mrs. Allison Shultz, teachers, and community members for their participation with the senior project presentations. Mrs. Clapper did a fantastic job coordinating the community members, and the students did a great job presenting.

Misty Demchak thanked the cheerleaders and Nicholas Buterbaugh for coordinating the winter pep rally for winter athlete recognition. All winter athletes were recognized.

Misty Demchak informed the Board that high school students will be completing mid-term exams this week.

Misty Demchak recognized and thanked Nicholas Buterbaugh for organizing the Dick Stoner Memorial event.

Jordan Svonavec distributed and reviewed the audit report from Kotzan CPA & Associates, P.C. for the year ended June 30, 2023.

Jordan Svonavec informed the Board that the number of students purchasing breakfast, as part of the district's breakfast program, has increased. He is working with the cafeteria's general manager to provide various options for students.

Disclaimer: This document is only a summary of the above listed meeting and is not an official copy of the school board meeting minutes.