

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION MEETING
January 18, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on January 18, 2024, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

ROLL CALL: Terry Butler asked Board Members to log in. The following Board Members and Administrators were present or absent as noted:

Board Members Present:

Terry D. Butler
Rikki A. Guthrie
Sandra J. Hillan
Frank Porras
Karen J. Robbins
Donald H. Rogers
Stuart B. Schultz
Madelyn Burton, HHS student representative
Angelina Sanchez, HHS student representative

Administrators Present:

Peggy Buffington
Bob Glover
Christopher N. King
William J. Longer
Jonathan Mock
Tim Krieg

EXECUTIVE SESSION: President Butler indicated that the Board did not meet in executive session, but they did meet in a work session and Board of Finance meeting prior to the regular session meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Terry Butler, President, called the meeting to order around 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: President Butler led everyone present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

AUDIENCE: The following were present in the audience:

Bradley Keehn, Joan Martin School and Hobart Middle School parent
Jo Bonner, Branch Manager, Lake County Public Library, Hobart Branch

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stuart Schultz moved that the Board approve the regular session minutes of January 11, 2024. Rikki Guthrie seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Bob Glover, Business Manager, presented the following for the Board's consideration and recommended approval:

- Vouchers for January 18, 2024 – Madelyn Burton and Angelina Sanchez, HHS student representatives, shared the reading of the accounts payable voucher summary with Madelyn Burton reading the first portion and Angelina Sanchez the last portion, as follows:

School Education Fund \$830,999.19
Operating Referendum Fund \$212,767.79
Debt Service Fund \$3,845,576.69
Exempt Capital Referendum Fund \$890,500.00
School Operations Fund \$297,978.88
Construction Fund 701 \$16,659.53
Construction Projects \$16,297.12
School Lunch \$49,004.66
Textbook Rental Fund \$63,712.15
Self-Insurance Fund \$391,802.95
Community Gifts and Donations \$1,507.00
Building Brickies \$1,575.81
Hobart Educational Foundation \$31.98
Pope Family Donation Fund \$135.00
SAFE Supporting Addiction Free \$160.00
Career and Technical Performance Grant \$5,275.00
Title II Part A FY 2024 \$8,443.74
Explore, Engage, Experience \$10,849.78
ESSER III \$37,901.79
Clearing Accounts \$471,378.33
Self-Insurance Clearing \$74,822.86
Clearing/Flexible Benefits AF \$52,596.18
Clearing/Insurance Account \$6,078.21

Credit Card Fee Clearing \$00.00

for vouchers totaling \$7,286,054.64 with a transfer of \$1,005,497.00 from the Operating Referendum Fund for repayment of tax warrants. The December 2023 payroll distribution by Dawn Powers, the school corporation's treasurer, was \$2,157,880.91.

Frank Porras moved and Karen Robbins seconded that the Board approve payment of the vouchers for January 18, 2024. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

In addition, Mr. Glover indicated that the Board received copies of the following monthly budget reports, dated December 31, 2023, in their electronic Board packet: Analysis by Object, Estimated Revenue by Account, Summary of Receipts and Expenditures, and Summary of Balances by Account-Object.

COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: President Terry Butler asked for comments on the listed agenda items. There were none.

PERSONNEL: Jonathan Mock, Director of Human Resources and Compliance, indicated “the smallest Personnel Report of the year” was included in the electronic meeting packet for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Mock recommended approval and requested Board action.

Donald Rogers moved that the Board approve the Personnel Report as presented. Frank Porras seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

The approved personnel items are as follows:

Resignation –

Christina Zecevich, Veterans @ Mundell/instructional aide, effective January 15, 2024

Request for Leave of Absence –

Judy Connell, Liberty School/aide-student supervisor, unpaid medical leave, effective January 13 until on or about March 13, 2024

RESOLUTION: School Counselor Appreciation Day: Resolution No. 2024-1 was presented for the Board's consideration. The resolution pertained to National School Counseling Week, which is February 5-9 and designated February 7 as School Counselor Appreciation Day. President Butler asked Mr. Keehn, audience member, and Attorney Longer if it was acceptable for the Secretary to only read the title of the resolution, and both agreed that it was.

Secretary Sandra Hillan read the title of Resolution 2024-1 aloud, as follows:

Resolution No. 2024-1
School Counselor Appreciation Day

President Butler asked for Board action and a roll call vote.

Karen Robbins moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-1 designating February 7 as School Counselor Appreciation Day. Seconded by Stuart Schultz. Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Nay – No one. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2024-1, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

Resolution No. 2024-1
School Counselor Appreciation Day

Whereas, National School Counseling Week has been designated as February 5 through 9, 2024, and

Whereas, school counselors are employed in public and private schools to help students reach their full potential, and

Whereas, school counselors are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development, and

Whereas, school counselors help parents focus on ways to further the educational, personal and social growth of their children, and

Whereas, school counselors work with teachers and other educators to help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves, and

Whereas, school counselors seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs and help students become productive members of society, and

Whereas, comprehensive developmental school counseling programs are considered an integral part of the educational process that enables all students to achieve success in school,

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that February 7, 2024, be designated as *School Counselor Appreciation Day*.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE: President Terry Butler indicated that a list of Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Statements for 2024 and the 2024 Uniform Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements for Frank Porras, Stuart Schultz, Peggy Buffington, and Kacey Allen were included with the electronic meeting information. The Employee Disclosures of Conflict are as follows:

- Frank Porras' wife is an aide at Hobart Middle School.
- Stuart Schultz' wife is an assistant at the Media Resource Center.
- Peggy Buffington serves on the Board of St. Mary Medical Center.
- Kacey Allen's husband is a teacher at Veterans School @ Mundell.

Mr. Butler requested Board action.

Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board accept the disclosure statements and direct the Superintendent file the documents with the State Board of Accounts and the Lake County Clerk. Seconded by Karen Robbins.

In the discussion, Peggy Buffington indicated that she serves on the Board of St. Mary Medical Center and has since 2008 and receives no financial compensation. However, the school district has contracts with St. Mary's and was why the disclosure statement was filed every year. Stuart Schultz inquired whether the Board members who have filed statements should abstain from voting. Mr. Longer indicated they did not need to abstain and could vote.

Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

BOARD DELEGATES AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS: President Terry Butler indicated he was delaying the Board delegate/committee assignments for the 2024 calendar year. He asked the Board members to contact him if they wanted to change an assignment and what they would prefer for this year, and if possible, he would try to accommodate their wishes.

The list of assignments to be filled is as follows:

- Negotiations
- Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative (NISEC)
- ISBA Voting Delegate
- School City of Hobart Educational Foundation Board of Directors
- Insurance Committee
- Policy Committee
- Student Handbook Committee
- Hobart Park Board
- Student Representatives
- Facilities Naming Committee
- The Hobart Redevelopment Commission is not a school board appointment this year.

UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS: The Board received the following information, and Dr. Buffington highlighted the information:

School Information – weekly agendas from all schools, except the middle school.

Upcoming Activities/Events – the latest list of upcoming activities/events.

January 19 – Pre-K through 8th Grade Parent-Teacher Conferences

Dr. Buffington said, “It remains to be seen” if there will be live conferences tomorrow, but everything was in place to have all them online if needed. She noted the overnight lake effect snow forecast would be a determining factor. Mr. Butler noted that the high school was scheduled for school tomorrow, but no school was planned for elementary and middle school students due to parent-teacher conferences.

January 23 – Hobart University Parent Night, Board Room at Hobart High School, 6-7:00 pm

Dr. Buffington said this was an opportunity for everyone to learn about Hobart University at the high school and what it has to offer children in the school district with its College and Careers Program. Graduates can earn one year of college credit, two years, or an associate degree, and numerous types of certifications for various careers by the time they graduate. She noted that Madelyn Burton, Board student representative, was a great example, and Madelyn indicated that she would have 101 college credits when she graduates. Dr. Buffington noted that a bachelor degree requires 120 credit hours. She mentioned the investment parents would have in offsetting college costs for their children.

February 7- School Counselor Appreciation Day

March 2 – JROTC Annual Mattress Sale, HHS Great Hall, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

April 10 – Brickie Makers & Innovators Showcase

Karen Robbins asked Dr. Buffington to think about having the showcase after April 15 so she would be able to attend. She has seen the pictures, heard people talk about it, but has not had the opportunity to enjoy it. Dr. Buffington said this was a favorite activity for her because she enjoys seeing the creativity of the students. It shows what they are doing outside of the school day at home. Dr. Buffington commented she would look into it. If she was not able to adjust the date this year, she would try to do so next year.

COMMENTS: From the audience, Jo Bonner, the Branch Manager for the Hobart library, was present and said she did not have anything in particular to share with the Board, but she presented 1,000 eclipse sunglasses for the upcoming eclipse in April. Dr. Buffington thanked her but noted she was not sure how the district would be handling the eclipse. The insurance company gave a stern warning about the liability involved. In the past, some people who did not heed warnings damaged or lost their eye sight. She thought parental waivers would have to be signed for the students wearing the glasses. The last time there was an eclipse, students did not go outside. Dr. Buffington indicated, “It was her job to protect the kids.” Bradley Keehn appreciated the recognition of the counselors. He noted the importance for students to have someone like a teacher or counselor they are able to talk with other than their parents. He was asked for his opinion about discussion at the work session. He commented that he likes smaller class sizes, and as far as taxes were concerned, he does not have a problem paying more for the schools. He did not feel that way about state and federal taxes and felt more value was received at the local level. He was thanked, and it was noted that was not true for everyone.

From the administration, Peggy Buffington told the Board the last week and a half had been interesting “trying to figure out the weather.” She said it was hard to please everyone and as far as tomorrow, the weather was still 50/50. She noted that keeping people safe was of prime importance. She said she could not make a decision until later, possibly not till morning because of the projected lake effect snow. She extended her appreciation to Jo Bonner for coming to the meeting and bringing the eclipse sunglasses. Dr. Buffington also appreciated the partnership the district has with the library and mentioned their Read-A-Thon that had just began. She said the city and our maintenance and grounds crew have done a great job. She noted the Mayor also consulted with her. She said other considerations that needed to be done are checking to make sure the schools don’t have any issues, and that the buses are able to get around the city. Bob Glover agreed that everyone did a great job with the weather related issues. He appreciated all that Dawn Powers and Judy Henry did with the Board of Finance information and said they are “doing a great job.” Tim Krieg was thankful for the cooperation and leadership in the district. He commented on the parent night for Hobart University on January 23 and said everyone should come and learn about the great opportunities for students to earn many dual credits. He was glad to be in the district.

From the Board, Don Rogers thanked the administration for all of the work that was done to provide the information the Board received at the work session. Karen Robbins thanked everyone on the opposite side for all they do and told Dr. Buffington that she cannot please everyone when it comes to closing school. She said the food pantry was open on Tuesday but said the weather was awful. Mrs. Robbins thanked the ELC for the poster, gifts, and donuts. Stu Schultz asked Dr. Buffington how the roof was at Veterans School. She indicated that it

“appears to be okay.” Madelyn Burton thanked everyone for everything they do, and she appreciated the recognition of school counselors. She noted that she emailed her counselor at 11:30 pm about something, and she responded that they could meet the next day. She did not realize what time it was when she sent her email, but she did appreciate her quick response. Madelyn said her counselor helped her navigate the courses to take all the way through high school. Angelina Zepeda also appreciated the counselor recognition and valued the amount of effort of all of the counselors, especially at the elementary schools. Sandi Hillan expressed her appreciation for counselors and mentioned that their skill sets have evolved and changed through the years. She extended her appreciation to the Early Learning Center for their gifts. Rikki Guthrie thanked the Early Learning Center for remembering them and said it was thoughtful of them to do so. She noted it was not easy for Dr. Buffington to make the school closing decisions with everything that she has to consider. She told Dr. Buffington that she appreciated her and her consideration for keeping children safe. Mrs. Guthrie extended her congratulations to Joanna Cantu on placing 4th at the state wrestling competition. Terry Butler said that the boys wrestling team were the champions of the Northwest Crossroads Conference. He asked Mr. Porras where the wrestling sectional would be, and he responded that it would be held at Portage. It was confirmed that the regional would be held here at the high school. Mr. Butler thanked everyone for all of the work they did for the work session. He commented that he had to come back to the high school last evening, and he complimented and extended his appreciation to the custodial staff for their assistance.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 7:31 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next regular session meeting is February 1, 2024.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: February 1, 2024