**April 27, 2020**

A special meeting of the Sidney Public Schools Board of Trustees was held Monday, April 27, 2020 at 7:00 PM at the Administration Office, 101 S Central Avenue or via conference call on posted notice by the clerk for the purpose of consideration and actions in regard to re-opening school due to COVID-19 and/or May committee meeting agenda items. Present were Trustees Ben Thogersen, Kelly Dey, Randy Iversen, Craig Steinbeisser, Lisa Gorder and Alex Villegas. Attending via conference call was Trustee David Seitz joining via TEAMS. Also in attendance were Superintendent- Monte Silk, Clerk- Nicole Beyer, High School Principal- Brent Sukut, Assistant High School Principal- Carl Dynneson and Activities Director- Chris Lee.

At 7:00 PM Chairman Thogersen called the meeting to order. In attendance via TEAMS: West Side Principal- Sharri Vandall, Middle School Principal- Kelly Johnson and Special Ed Director- Michelle Monsen. Members of the public participated by conference call.

**Declaration of an Unforeseen Emergency**

- Because of the Governor’s directive allowing local districts to reopen school on May 7, 2020, the Montana School Boards Association is recommending school districts adopt another Declaration of an Unforeseen Emergency pursuant to Sections 20-9-801 through 20-9-806, MCA. This is necessary to protect funding to protect District funding should the Governor not waive the funding penalties for missing hours of school. Currently, the funding penalties are waived only until the reopening of school on May 7, 2020

Mr. Iversen moved to declare an unforeseen emergency within the meaning of that term as set forth in Title 20, Chapter 9, Part 8, to become immediately effective and to continue through June 30, 2020. This motion is based on COVID-19 risks; in recognition that the Governor's waiver of student instruction time will expire on May 7; and in recognition that the Governor's April 22, 2020 Directive implicating Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020 specify that elected school boards and their districts that adopt their own declaration of emergency will continue to receive all state funding, including transportation funding." The motion passed 8 to 0 following a second by Ms. Dey.

**Option to Reopen School on May 7, 2020**

- Discussion regarding this topic began with Mr. Steinbeisser reading a letter from a concerned citizen asking the Trustees to bring students back to school

- Mr. Sukut brought up the difficulty of meeting the Governor’s expectations in a Class A size school district as well as covering classrooms for staff who do not return because of compromised medical conditions

- Mr. Silk reported on the recommendations of Richland County Medical Officer, Jacquelyn Free. Her recommendation is to continue with remote learning

- During this discussion, word was received that both Savage Schools and Billings Schools have opted not to re-open in 2019-2020

- Mrs. Johnson has had contact with parents who will not send their children to school for the rest of the year. This means teachers would resume classroom teaching and still have to maintain remote learning

- Mr. Silk reported that the summer food program would cease if even one student returns to school- school food would need to serve those in school. Mr. Sukut reported school food is serving 250 meals a day

- Mr. Villegas reiterated the difficulty he sees in keeping kids and staff safe. He reported speaking with hospital employees and their concerns about school resuming too soon

- Mr. Thogersen also spoke to concerns about keeping the community safe and the Board’s responsibility to students and staff

Following board discussion, Mr. Iversen moved to not re-open the schools of the District consistent with Governor Bullock’s April 22, 2020 Directive implementing Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020 and guidance for the phased reopening of Montana. The motion passed 8 to 0 following a second by Mr. Villegas.

**Plans for 2020 Graduation**

- A copy of a letter from the Class of 2020 was reviewed. Mr. Dynneson stated his conversations with representatives of the senior class indicate they are not in favor of changing the date, they want to gather together as a class with a traditional walk across the stage but observing social distancing

- Those in attendance provided lots of ideas and feedback and explained the complexity of holding a traditional graduation with the COVID-19 situation

- Seniors Ximena Rosas and Everett Jensen provided input regarding use of the football field

Following this discussion, Mr. Thogersen tabled the discussion until the May Board Meeting encouraging Mr. Sukut and Mr. Dynneson to work with the Class of 2020 to come up with the best celebration possible.

**Worker’s Compensation Risk Management Montana Schools Group Insurance Authority (MSGIA) – Consideration of a Two-Year Contract**

- Mr. Silk presented information about the MSGIA proposal. They provided a quote of about $53,338 for the 2020-2021 school year. The two-year quote versus the one-year quote provides additional services at no cost to the District

Mr. Seitz moved to approve MSGIA as the District’s Worker’s Compensation carrier for 2020-2021 through 2021-2022. The motion passed unanimously following a second by Mr. Iversen.

**Renewal of EBMS Health and Dental Insurance for 2020-2021**

- EBMS presented rates at about a 14% increase for the coming year. They presented both one-year and three-year rates were provided with less than a 1% difference between them

- Clerk Beyer presented a table with premium breakdown between employer/employee; an estimated cost increase for the District for the 2020-2021 school year and premiums comparisons between the two years

- Due to the inability to have an Insurance Committee meeting prior to tonight, this topic was tabled until the regular May Board Meeting

**Clerk’s Financial Reports for the Month of March**

- The Revenue/Expenditure Reports, Fund Balance Report and County Investment Reports were reviewed

- Trustees were provided with a copy of the allowed uses for the federal CARES Act funds with estimates of $117,295.87 elementary and $26,721.72 for the high school to be received

- Mr. Silk reviewed the available funding sources for upcoming projects at both the high school and elementary level reminding Trustees that less oil money is on the horizon due to the downturn in the oil industry economy

**Approval of the Middle School Gym Kitchen Area**

- Due to the re-scheduling of the committee meetings to tonight, no quotes were available. Mr. Silk anticipates that he will have them next week

**Consideration Of Suspension Of District Policy 1310 Due To The Need To Enact Policies Following One Reading**

- Suspension of Policy 1310 (Adoption and Amendment of Policies) exclusive to the adoption of policies 1902. Policy 1310 governs policy adoption including the suspension of policies

- This action would provide the Trustees the ability to adopt the following Board Policy with one reading:

Policy 1902 – Alternative Grading – Allows the use of Pass/Fail grading system

Mr. Iversen moved to suspend District Policy 1310 for the limited purpose of considering adopting Policies 1902- 1912. The motion is exclusive to the consideration of Policies 1902-1912 at the meeting held April 27, 2020 and will not apply to other meetings or topics. The motion passed unanimously following a second by Mr. Steinbeisser.

**Consideration of Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) Model Policies 1902-1912**

- Mr. Silk briefly reviewed the temporary COVID-19 policies prepared by MTSBA stating that only Policy 1902 was necessary for consideration as the Trustees had elected to continue with remote learning and not return to school for 2019-2020

- Policy 1902 Alternative Grading addresses conversion of letter grades to Pass/Fail

Mr. Steinbeisser moved to adopt Policy 1902 after one reading as permitted by the motion authorizing the limited suspension of Policy 1310. The purpose of adopting Policy 1902 after one reading to establish an emergency policy framework and implementing OPI guidance on transportation funds and the use of distance learning. The motion passed 8 to 0 following a second by Mr. Marker.

**New Hires**

- Sophia Eckness- 2020-2021 Grade 1 Teacher

- Weslie Zoanni – Speech Aide re-hire following resignation

- Amber Pust – 2020-2021 Grade 2 Teacher (re-hire following resignation)

Mr. Villegas moved to approve the new hires listed above pending results of background checks and fingerprint clearances. Mrs. Gorder seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Consideration of Renewal of Winter Coaches** (Ms. Dey had to leave at this time)

Activities Director, Chris Lee, presented the following 2020-2021 winter coaching renewals:

***Speech and Drama:*** Head Coach: Gail Staffanson; Assistant Coaches: Christy Pierce and Hunter Gordon

***Wrestling:*** Head Coach: Guy Melby; Assistant Coaches: Ty Graves and Nick Lonski; MS Coaches: Shane Gorder and Josh Prevost

***Girls Basketball:*** Head Coach: Dan Peters; Assistant Coaches: Harry Owezarek and Zak Leader; MS Coaches: Marie Holler, Emily Keegan, Stacey McNally; Elementary Coaches: Emily Keegan and David Huskamp

***Boys Basketball:*** Head Coach: Chad Quilling; Assistant Coaches: James Meisel and Shane Monsen; MS Coaches: Jordan Mayer, Marcus Mayer and Sandy Sullivan; Elementary Coaches: Quinn McGlothlin and Sean Montgomery

***Cheer/Dance:*** Head Coach: Katie Dasinger; Middle Schools: Raelee Henline and Brittany Brown

Mr. Lee reported on each of the winter program seasons, the improvements made as well as trends seen in the student surveys. They met with each coach individually presenting three positives and three negatives and discussing suggested program changes/improvements. Mr. Lee asked that the renewals be placed on the regular May Board Meeting agenda and that any questions or concerns be brought to him before then.

Mr. Lee also passed out a memo from MHSA regarding the addition of Girls Wrestling and options for meeting Title IX. His recommendation going forward would be to add Girls Wrestling, check to see if Sidney meets the proportionality test for girls/boys sports participants and wait to offer Power Lifting. If Sidney does not offer Girls Wrestling as a separate sport, girls will not be allowed to compete in wresling at all.

Trustees suggested that Power Lifting be offered first as a club sport to verify interest. Mr. Lee inquired as to the possibility of utilizing some of the intramural salary to support this sport. Trustees agreed that could be a possibility.

Mr. Lee reminded Trustees that this coming year would be busy in his department with Class C District and Divisional Basketball tournaments as well as State Speech and Drama and and Divisional Wrestling.

Chairman Thogersen provided an opportunity for Community Comment on non-agenda items: NONE

With no further business to come before the Trustees, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

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Board Chair

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Attest:

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District Clerk