

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
SENECA TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL, DISTRICT 160, SENECA, IL

A regular meeting of the Seneca Township High School Board of Education was held on November 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Secretary, Rich Hamilton called the meeting to order with roll call.

1. ROLL CALL: Present: Johnson, Hamilton, Eltrevoog, Biros
Absent: Frye, Olson, Yandell

Others present: Superintendent Dan Stecken, Principal Michael Coughlin, Dean of Students Mark Giertz, Recording Secretary Nadine Maierhofer, Faculty Member/Nurse Taylor Neurohr, and Student of the Month winners with family and friends.

2. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS AND VISITORS

Student award winners were recognized.

Cory Yandell stepped in at 6:07pm.

3. SUCCESS AT SHS

Superintendent, Dan Stecken, mentioned he would like to recognize Matt Houchin this month. Matt is not only our full-time sub (97% of the time) and he is also very busy with our video board on game nights. The system is very complex and what Matt has done with this is very impressive.

4. INVESTMENT REPORT

Dr. Stecken reviewed the Investment Report. Secretary Rich Hamilton stated that the Investment Report would stand approved as presented, subject to audit.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Dr. Stecken reviewed the Financial Dashboards.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

In Rob Maierhofer's absence Dr. Stecken gave the Treasurer's Report. Secretary Hamilton stated that the Treasurer's Report would stand approved subject to audit.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Minutes, dated October 16, 2024

Dr. Stecken stated he received no additions or corrections to the minutes.
Secretary Hamilton stated minutes would stand approved as presented.

8. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Dr. Stecken briefly reviewed the accounts payable. Secretary Hamilton asked for a motion to approve the Accounts Payable as presented.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded Tiffany Biros to approve the Accounts Payable as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Johnson, Yandell, Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton
Nays:
Motion Carried

Sara Olson stepped in at 6:15 pm.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

10. EDUCATIONAL ITEM

School Nurse/Faculty Member, Taylor Neurohr, spoke on the College and Career Pathway for Health Science and Technology. The pathway requirement was put into law recently, requiring, at minimum that the district needed to have one Pathway created by July 2025, another by 2027, and at least another in 2031.

The framework for the program is divided into three areas: Professional Learning where they will interact with classmates/school and the public. Career-Focused Instruction would be "skill" opportunities that could consist of teeth brushing, in/out of a wheelchair, shaving, anatomy tablets, working with new AED's. The final step would be Pathway Endorsement of which ours include: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Introduction to Nutrition, and Terminology of the Health Field, a total possibility of 14 IVCC Dual Credit course hours, all taught by Nurse Neurohr. In this area they also have to have 2 team based challenges and a work based learning field experience.

Incentives for students to take this program, or any other that we may offer here at SHS could include, but not limited to: Tuition waivers, automatically advancing to the finalist stage for scholarships and participation in the Educate and Engage program; or offers a \$100 credit to students who earn a CCPE, which can be used for books or tuition at some colleges.

Truly this program and pathway are great benefits to the students of Seneca High School, who, after completion, will have this Pathway Endorsement on their final transcript and high school diploma. Mr. Coughlin shared that the administration is exploring its second pathway this school year in the public service sector.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No Committee Reports were presented at this time.

12. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Finance Report

1. 2025 - 2026 Budget

Dr. Stecken mentioned there were 4 attachments in the packet: Budget Timeline, Budget Notes, Budget Spreadsheet by Fund Balance and Long Form Spreadsheet Budget. He referred to this budget as a BIG PICTURE budget and went over some budget items from CSBO Gould. As of now, this budget is balanced.

2. 2024 Levy

Dr. Stecken stated that there were 4 Levy attachments in the packet: Levy Timeline, Levy Rate History, and the Truth in Taxation Form. This year we will ask for less than 5% (4.85% to be exact) which would keep us out of the "black box" truth in taxation territory. Dr. Stecken explained that recent assessment escalations from the township and county assessor's, even with a lowered district property tax rate, raised the district revenues. If we lower our rate to \$1.70838 then the levy "ask for" will be reduced significantly. With us keeping this year at \$1.70838 and the increased assessments, we should not need the "black box" ask for number to be as high as in the past eight years, where a black box, truth in taxation hearing and advertisement was necessary.

After we file our levy in December, we await the preliminary extension in early April. We then abate and return the abated extension document to the two county clerks. If we abate to \$1.70838 like last year, it would leave a 4-cent surplus, which would be used exclusively to pay for the gymnasium debt certificates.

The December 2024 levy will represent a 4.85% increase based on last year's actual collections; we will not hold a "Truth in Taxation" hearing before our December regular Board of Education meeting, and after the Budget Hearing meeting. Without the need for a black box, there will be no need to advertise it in the paper using the infamous "Black Box."

3. Turf Project Pay App 2

Dr. Stecken mentioned that this is our 2nd pay application for the turf project. He stated that the pay apps for ATG Ram Turf are a little shorter than compared to the Pay Apps that SMC would generate with the gymnasium project. This 2nd payment is for \$275,684.40 which will put us at about 36% completion paid to date.

A motion was made by Jason Eltrevoog and seconded Rich Hamilton to approve the Turf Project Pay App 2 as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Eltrevoog, Hamilton, Johnson, Olson, Yandell, Biros
Nays:
Motion Carried

4. Debt Certificate Payment

Dr. Stecken informed the Board that last October we were notified that our gymnasium addition debt certificate manager was changing to BOK Financial. There were no terms or condition changes from the roughly \$5 million debt certificates. Last year at this time our first payment was due on 12/1/2023 for \$535,484; which consisted of principal, interest, and an annual fee. Here this December we will have a payment for principal, interest, as well as one additional payment for interest annually.

He stated that it is our anticipation to pay off the balance of this project within our 5-year Constellation agreement, as early as three years in or as long as the full debt certificate note agreement, depending upon future financial implications.

A motion was made by Rich Hamilton and seconded Cory Yandell to approve the Debt Certificate Payment to BOK Financial as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Hamilton, Johnson, Olson, Yandell, Biros, Eltrevoog
Nays:
Motion Carried

5. Track Resurface Pay Apps

Dr. Stecken stated that in their packet was the completed pay applications for the track resurfacing project. There are two pay apps, one for track re-surfacing and one for track repairs. We were able to charge the majority of the project to our TORT fund for safety improvements and protections in the resurface. He added that with the volume of usage our track receives, he hopes that this last resurface will last 5-7 years before we have to do a complete regrade of the asphalt, track surface, and install a new product.

A motion was made by Tiffany Biros and seconded Cory Yandell to approve the Track Resurface Pay Application as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton, Johnson, Olson, Yandell

Nays:

Motion Carried

B. Personnel Report

1. Updated Co-Curricular List

Dr. Stecken stated there are no anticipated updates to the 2024-25 co-curricular list. Yet there were two potential letters of resignation for the end of the 24-25 school year; RISE Sponsor, Blake Slutz; and Student Council Sponsor, Nick Kirkton.

2. Hire IT Systems Administrator Mr. Brandon Lomeli

Dr. Stecken stated we had several applicants and interviewed two finalists. Mr. Lomeli had more experience and certifications than his competitor. He is a recent grad of VCC and a veteran of their help desk, Mr. Lomeli will be a nice addition to our IT Department.

3. FMLA Request Mrs. Rebecca Liberatore

Dr. Stecken stated that Rebecca has submitted an FMLA request as she prepares for the birth of her first child.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded Rich Hamilton to approve the Personnel Report as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Johnson, Olson, Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton, Yandell

Nays:

Motion Carried

C. Building, Grounds & Transportation

1. Building Update

Dr. Stecken mentioned that Jim Harsted's busy fall schedule is now over they are moving into winter. They have been winterizing various areas outside of the school and getting ready for snow tomorrow.

He also stated in this section of the packet you will find our ROE Annual Inspection Certificate with zero findings.

The last thing in this section is a certificate of Completion for the Health, Life, Safety Elevator Project.

2. Turf Project Update

Dr. Stecken mentioned that included in their update are pictures of the fields from 11/1/2024. There is one change order for additional concrete flatwork around the scope of the project that we chose to add to improve the spaces around the diamonds. The last few weeks of rain impeded the rock drainage and compaction process work.

D. ISBE Report Card Designation

Dr. Stecken mentioned that annually ISBE conducts a review of each district and provides a school report card. Again, this year, Seneca High School earned a "Commendable" status.

E. Summer School

Dr. Stecken informed the Board of the summer school courses we will offer, pending student enrollment: World History (1st semester, fall semester), Driver's Education; Dual Credit Speech (instructor dependent and would be offered in the 2nd semester); and Summer Credit Recovery. First semester session this year will run June 2 - June 20 (with no school on June 19). Second semester classes are from July 7 - July 25th. All classes will run from 7:30am to Noon. Driver's Education Classroom will run from June 2 - June 27th 7:30am - 9:30am. The enrollment and teacher availability will determine the final schedule.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded Tiffany Biros to approve Summer School 2025 as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Johnson, Olson, Yandell, Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton

Nays:

Motion Carried .

F. Executive Session

Dr. Stecken stated there will be no Executive Session.

13. PRINCIPAL/DEAN OF STUDENTS

A. Illinois State Scholars

Principal, Mike Coughlin, presented the list of 15 seniors that were named Illinois State Scholars this school year. He said he was proud of the entire

group, they represented the senior class well and the award was based on class rank and SAT scores.

B. Parent/Teacher Conferences

Mr. Coughlin informed the Board that we had 151 (43%) students represented at our 24-25 Curriculum Night and 192 (51%) report cards picked up at Parent/Teacher Conferences. Compared to area district participation at the secondary level, these numbers are exemplary. While we would always love to have near 100% parent participation, we know that these numbers are quite good. He is very grateful to the Board for dropping the registration fees for parents that attend tall three of our parent/student events.

C. Future Teacher Day Conference

Mr. Coughlin mentioned that there were 19 students that attended the Illinois State Future Teacher Conference. They were able to attend various sessions about being an educator, tailored specifically to their interest in the field. After lunch, students ended the day with two chosen sessions depending on interest.

14. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION AND FOIA REPORT

Dr. Stecken stated there was a "Thank You" from the MVK Food Bank, from our Penny War Donation and a letter from the Peg Davis Foundation informing us of the cancellation of the CACTUS Program held at West Campus. He continued mentioning a very lengthy FOIA request from Maribeth Wilson, Reporter with News Tribune, requesting revenue/expense statements for the past 5 years; requesting more detailed information that could be found in our AFR and ASA. Dr. Stecken also spoke about the what appears to be "Artificial Intelligence" generated FOIA requests from Mr. Owen Wang of the Illinois Valley Times (not The Times of Ottawa). Dr. Stecken explained his research and work as Starved Rock Region Superintendent of IASA and demanding more credible human proof of Mr. Owen Wang without receiving any response. Nonetheless, the FOIA requests of Mrs. Wilson have been fulfilled, minus one requesting school safety information from Mr. Wang. Lastly there were five messages from the State Superintendent as supplemental readings.

15. ACTION ITEMS AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no action item after the executive session.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Ronald E Zup
President, Board of Education

12-18-24
Date

Rail Hamelton
Secretary, Board of Education

12/18/24
Date