



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S FEB. 9 MEETING *(conducted in-person & remotely via Webex)*

- **BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION** — Superintendent Michael Cornell noted that board member Robbin List was recently profiled in an Erie County Association of School Boards (ECASB) article. Mr. List serves on the ECASB Executive Board. Mr. Cornell said that Mr. List brings a variety of perspectives to his role at Hamburg and empathizes with many constituent groups, having served as an educator for 26 years, Principal for 10 years, teachers association President and West Seneca Central School Board President/member. His lifelong goals are to be an advocate for children and to promote public education. Mr. List also received an ECASB 2020 Medallion Award, and board member David Yoviene, a 2020 Shining Star Award.
- **2021-22 BUDGET** — Federal aid to schools is more important than ever, Mr. Cornell said as the board held its first budget work session of the year. A first round of federal relief funding intended to be a lifeline for schools was instead absorbed by the state. The next round must be fully directed to school districts or there will be devastating impacts on school budgets, Mr. Cornell said. In her presentation to the board, Assistant Superintendent Barbara Sporyz discussed key factors affecting the 2021-22 budget, fund balance/reserves, the tax levy limit and estimated revenue. The district started the current school year with \$2.4 million in unassigned fund balance, while the amount in reserves is close to past years. It's projected that the upcoming budget will allocate \$4.2 million from fund balance/reserves as revenue, similar to the current year. The statewide "tax cap" is 1.23%, the lowest permissible levy increase (money districts can raise from property taxes) since 2016. Hamburg's tax levy limit with exclusions is 1.94%. School officials are also concerned about the way in which the Governor's state budget proposal combines services aid categories, making it uncertain if these expenses will be reimbursed as they traditionally have been. There is no indication yet if the state will require the public budget vote to be held by absentee ballot only, as it was last year due to the pandemic.
- **BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY 2020** — With the latest Building Condition Survey in-hand, the district has a list of priorities to consider as the next capital improvement project is formulated. The survey is required every five years by the state and identifies and prioritizes aspects/spaces of the physical plant that represent health and safety issues because they are in disrepair or have outlived their useful lives. The survey identified \$19 million worth of potential construction in the six schools. Some of the repairs will be handled in-house while others could be included in upcoming capital projects. Consultant Tim Mertzluft of Gordon W. Jones Associates Architects, who was present with Matt Sikora of Turner Construction, commended the district for being vigilant in addressing mandated code items and health/safety issues in recent years.
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Mr. Cornell reported that about 50 fully remote students returned to in-person instruction for the second half of the year. The district will remain in the hybrid learning model until the NYS Education Department allows a return to 5-day per week in-person learning. Schools are no longer required to conduct COVID testing and are prepared to assist with vaccinations if asked by public health officials. Some school activities are resuming: the High School Bulldog Corner Store has reopened and "high risk" sports are under way with no spectators allowed. In view of the upcoming mid-winter recess, families have been sent a message regarding regulations for out-of-state travel.
- **TENURE GRANTED** — Tenure was granted to Lindsay Ferry, school counselor at Boston Valley Elementary, effective March 30.
- **RETIREMENTS** — The board accepted the following retirements: Carol DeLellis, COTA, Boston Valley Elementary, 18 years of service, effective Feb. 13; Laura Ejbisz, Food Service helper, High School, 20 years. And, effective July 1: Kristin Pawlaczyk, teacher aide, Charlotte Avenue Elementary, 28 years; Margaret Ryan, teacher, Boston Valley Elementary, 35 years; Catherine Sullivan, teacher, Middle School, 24 years; Mary Lou Zeis, teacher, Union Pleasant Elementary, 22 years.
- **PERSONNEL** — Laura Ejbisz was appointed as a cafeteria monitor at Union Pleasant Elementary.
- **PUBLIC COMMENT** — A speaker raised a concern about the Response to Intervention process.
- **NEXT MEETING** — Tuesday, March 9 (budget work session at 6 p.m./regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.)

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Feb. 10, 2021