

Regular November 2024 Meeting
Monday, November 11, 2024 7:00 PM
High School Media Center

as advertised in the *Pilot-Tribune/Enterprise*
and on fortcalhounschools.org

ROUTINE BUSINESS

--Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM with 3 administrators and 37 visitors. Senior students were present to fulfill their Government class requirement of attending an open, civic meeting.

-Note Nebraska Open Meeting Laws: So noted.

-Excused Absences: There were none

-Roll Call: Mike Bonacci-Present; Josh Christensen-Present; Cassie Kelly-Present; Amanda Schrum-Present; Kelli Shaner-Present; Ted Welchert-Present.

-Approval of Agenda: Moved to approve the agenda as presented. This motion, made by Shaner and seconded by Bonacci, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea

-American Education Week 2024: It is November 18-22 at which time the administration and members will be at the State School Board Convention.

REGULAR AGENDA

-Public Participation: No one asked to address the board.

-Approval of Claims: Moved that the claims for November be approved in the amount of \$118,964.10 from the General Fund, \$168,681.07 from the QCP Fund and \$6,910.11 from Savings & Depreciation. This motion, made by Christensen and seconded by Kelly, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. Mr. Green and Cassie Kelly went through and discussed the bills. Mr. Green explained those pertaining to the high school teachers' lounge; the sidewalk by the wrestling building; tuition being paid to ESU #3/Brook Valley; the State Conference; curriculum for the PLC; Prime Communications for cameras per the replacement schedule; and the QCP bonds.

-Claim for Abe's Trash: Moved that the claim from Abe's Trash be approved in the amount of \$1,730.86. This motion, made by Bonacci and seconded by Kelly, Passed. Josh Christensen: Abstain, Mike Bonacci: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea

-Consent Agenda: Moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. This motion, made by Christensen and seconded by Shaner, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea

-Standing Committee Reports: The committees did not meet.

-Amend Student and Staff Handbooks to Align with New Directives for Cell Phones
Moved that the board of education amend the Student and Staff Handbooks to add the new directives for cell phone usage in the buildings. This motion, made by Kelly and seconded by Christensen. Mr. Green explained this discussion started in July at the Board retreat and the board directed Mr. Green to explore options. Other schools were contacted to see what their policies are and an administrative plan was put in place. It was reviewed with the

Administration, changes were made and then the Unit Leaders and staff again reviewed it. The Board remained informed of the process and policy. The result was shared with the community and parents at conferences. The school's attorneys reviewed it and said the district was in no violations. The only change is no use during passing periods and at lunch. It is almost identical to what is already in the handbook. It will take effect on January 7th which gives 6 weeks to do assemblies and presentations for students and staff to know the exceptions. Both adults and students in attendance and spoke.

Questions and discussions included issues during passing periods and lunch, that Chromebooks will do the same with music and e-mail as a phone, teachers collecting phones at the beginning of class, distractions caused by phones that "go off" in class with one example being once at least 96 times, and that other issues including bullying, etc. happen in all other parts of the building which can lead to anxiety and discipline. Students with IEP's or use music/ear buds for focus will still be able to do this with Chromebooks which have the same capabilities. In some cases parents see it as a lifeline for their students who need to talk to them during trying times in the case of anxiety and/or autism. Punishing the many for acts of a few was questioned as was the safety issue of having phones in the case of an emergency such as incidents where students have been the first to contact law enforcement. Dr. Wemhoff said students need to connect with each other and not be on the phone. One comment was about the inappropriate use of phones by young people in workplaces, such as a hospital. Other comments were that cell phones were an important part of lots of jobs now where instant communication is necessary and we should prepare them for the world they will be entering but can see both sides with bullying and cheating. Comments were made about making all classrooms "phone free" with them being collected before class begins.

Dr. Wemhoff said issues are coming from other parts of the building and "a lot can happen in the 3 minutes" of passing time. Their focus should be to get to class and added that 80-90% of students at lunch are not talking to people as they are on the phone. He has told them to put their phone down and eat their lunch. School is a small part of their day so they can use it before and after. Kids are "living" on them and not focusing on what is happening. Students will still be able to carry them, just not turned on. If they take them out and turn them on they will be disciplined. Mrs. Horstman cited indoor recess and that students were using their chromebooks so their need for technology exists even at the elementary level. Further comments were about understanding not using them in class but lunch and hallways should be permitted. The focus should be on the ones who misuse them. Chromebooks and e-mail as other forms of communication were discussed. Students being here to learn is the #1 thing. This is not a major shift but to focus on face-to-face conversations--turn the phones off and be more engaged.

Parents can call or e-mail the teachers or school offices as one way to be in contact. All classrooms have phones and there are phones in the offices. This is not punishment as there is data on what is going on with phones is definitely having an effect on mental health. The high amount of inappropriate behavior has a ripple effect on a lot of things. When it was suggested this was not a problem at Fort Calhoun, President Schrum said there is a lot of disciplinary issues that take place and because of confidentiality issues and laws, are not common knowledge. The administration feels it an issue and the board supports that position.

Business and work communications were discussed and Mr. Green said the #1 responsibility is school, not running a business while you're supposed to be in class. Management skills need to be in place regarding outside contacts. Calling the office should be the avenue for information/messages and e-mailing teachers for class related information.

Kelli Shaner thanked them all for their comments and questions remembering a time when school work or reading a book filled the time. We all need to get back to face-to-face with people. There is a phone and an intercom in every room, and phones and personnel in the offices. She is in support of the change as it will be a huge "getting back to communication". Josh Christensen thanked all for the great comments. A final question was asked regarding what constituted an emergency. Passed.

Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea

-Resolution 2025-1 - Updating Staff on WCB Accounts: Moved that the board of education pass Resolution #2025-1 to add Lilly Gossman to the WCB accounts as the Girls Wrestling Coach. This motion, made by Kelly and seconded by Bonacci, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. All coaches have accounts and this is necessary to have one for her.

-2023-24 Audit: Moved that the audit of all funds for 2023-24 be approved as presented. This motion, made by Shaner and seconded by Christensen, Passed. Mike Bonacci: Yea, Josh Christensen: Yea, Cassie Kelly: Yea, Amanda Schrum: Yea, Kelli Shaner: Yea, Ted Welchert: Yea. An audit is done yearly and all things were good. There were recommendations as there have been in past years for more staff and segregation of duties. Board members examine and get explanations of the bills prior to the meetings. Cassie Kelly said she is doing this as part of our checks and balances.

-Superintendent's Evaluation: President Schrum explained that per NASB recommendation, this has been moved to November and the vote on his contract will be done in December. The evaluations showed he has been upholding our goals, working with budgets for solutions to reduce taxes, giving good information about what is happening in the Legislature, keeping the board informed and not exceeding our tax dollars. Overall, he does a good job and she thanked him.

-Board Member Reports: Mike Bonacci said its good to see the buildings so full with activities; and Amanda Schrum gave congratulations to Football, Softball and Cross Country for making State competitions. She also reminded the members of the upcoming State Convention.

-Administrator Reports: Dr. Wemhoff reported on participation at Parent Teacher Conferences with 70% of our students represented; and being in our 4th year of MTSS which is a support system for remediation, mental health, and communications. A graph was presented showing a decrease in students on the ineligibility list adding the current one is the best one ever after the end of a sports season. In addition, ESU #3 will also be here presenting professional development. He gave a thank you to Mrs. Hernandez for the POPP Lock In which had the highest number of participants to date. All had a good time. He spoke of the Veterans Program where CJ Bolen did an amazing job, and Addie Benoit's "Taps" was the best he's ever heard. The Junior High students went to Lincoln for a Sportsmanship Summit at UNL with student athlete speakers; our E-Sports team again qualified for State; and Fort Calhoun has 4 All State Band members chosen. He also highlighted upcoming events including Choir, Band, Drama, and Thanksgiving.

Mrs. Horstman: Reported on quarterly celebrations and planning to continue them; thanked the students who were interviewed for the visitation; the great job Mrs. Roberts is doing with HAL including starting a school paper; and elementary Student Council members. Elementary conferences reached 99% of their students; the Science committee will be piloting curricular materials; celebrating Inclusion Days; and the upcoming Thanksgiving Feast. Science committee members will be visiting surrounding districts to see how Amplify Science is taught in order to gain a better understanding of its programs, and Preschool paras will be attending a Bootcamp at ESU. Mr. Schleifer was supervising an event and his report is attached for review.

-Superintendent Report: Mr. Green reported on board goals and progress on the Wrestling Building addition. Negotiations are underway and another meeting will take place. The External Visit went very well. They had great things to say about Fort Calhoun including our commitment to mental health including MTSS and PBIS, and the family atmosphere that is in our buildings. Mr. Green gave kudos to all students, staff and community as the team was very impressed with how we do things. Their comment was Fort Calhoun is “unique to anything they’ve ever seen”. Applications are being taken and interviews are being held for the positions that are open. If any members need a ride to the State Convention let him know.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Schrum declared the meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.