

**Minutes of the August 9, 2021  
Regular School Board Meeting  
Starmont Community School District Board of Directors**

**1. Call to Order Regular School Board Meeting**

The Starmont Community School District Board held its regular board meeting on Monday, August 9, 2021, at the High School Conference Room. President Uhlenkamp called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Members present: Julie Uhlenkamp, Douglas Puffett, Kevin Powell, Tony Recker, Darren West. Administration present: Superintendent, Gary Benda; Secondary Principal, Shauna Koppenhaver; Elementary Principal, Heath Hesse; Business Manager/Board Secretary, Robyn Hosch.

**2. Receive Communications and Visitors (Including Board Members)**

Marcia Powell was present to explain the TAG program and how her experience can help enhance Starmont's TAG program. There is a high number of students per grade who have been identified as TAG students; therefore, there is a high need to have a strong TAG program and especially implementing changes at the secondary level.

**3. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approve Agenda
- b. Approve Minutes – July 12, 2021
- c. Approve Monthly Financial Reports
- d. Approve Monthly Bills- Uhlenkamp mentioned the special education tuition payments and also the payout of the school improvement projects, such as Prairie Road Builders and Dave's Complete Construction. The check reconciliations looked good.

**Hiring:**

1. Kathleen Sweet transferring to part-time Art Teacher and part-time TLC Coordinator for the 2021-22 school year- no change in salary or benefits
2. Rhys Evans as Athletic Trainer- \$300 per season
3. Bob Pope as MS Volleyball Coach- \$2,295.30
4. Janet Becker as Robotics Coach- 2 seasons at \$1,300 per season (\$2,600 total)
5. Vincent Otdoerfer as Strength & Conditioning Coach- \$5,200 per year
6. Annette Rubin as HS Musical Sponsor- \$1,475 per year
7. Randi Burns as Volunteer Cross Country Coach and School Therapist at \$75 per hour
8. Dennis Augustine as Volunteer Football Coach
9. Roger Gifford as Volunteer Cross Country Coach

Powell requested the hiring of the TAG position be pulled out separately from the consent agenda due to a conflict of interest. Motion by Puffett to approve the consent agenda with the exception of pulling the hiring of the TAG teacher out for separate consideration, Recker seconded, motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Puffett to remove from the table the hiring of Marcia Powell as TAG teacher, Recker seconded, Powell abstained due to conflict of interest, motion carried 4-0. Motion by Puffett to approve the hiring of Marcia Powell as TAG teacher at 75% time, West seconded, Powell abstained due to conflict of interest, motion carried 4-0.

**4. Review and Consider Approving PTO's Request for Open House and Other Pre-COVID Programs That Benefit Students and Families**

PTO Treasurer, Caitlin Klett, was present to ask permission to continue as normal the recurrent PTO social events, such as the ice cream social at the open house, Grandparents' Day luncheons, Donuts with Dads, parent-children dances, and holiday parties with parents included. Benda mentioned that the CDC and IDPH do not have any restrictions in place preventing these gatherings from happening. Puffett agreed to the ice cream social but to have the stand located at open areas and to check with the principals

on any further gatherings. He also suggested limiting attendance and incorporating rotations as necessary. Uhlenkamp agreed and asked to keep COVID-19 rates in mind and adjust accordingly. Powell asked for contact tracing to occur if there would be someone present with an active infection. Motion by Puffett to approve the ice cream social and leave the rest of the gatherings to the discretion of administration, Powell seconded, motion carried 5-0.

#### **5. Review and Consider Approving Tuition Reimbursement for Art Teacher (Rae McTaggart) in Preparation for Employment in Future Years**

Benda has asked if the Board would be willing to pay for 25%-100% of the tuition costs, only up to 2 years of schooling, of a prospective art teacher for the district. In order to receive this tuition reimbursement, this person would have to contract with Starmont for 5 years; otherwise, they pay back 20% of that tuition payment made on behalf of the district for every year of the 5 years that they did not fulfill their contract. Hosch reminded the Board of the auditor's disapproval of this due to this expenditure lacking public purpose and the attorney's advice to gain auditor approval first. Hosch publicly opposed the use of funds for these types of purposes due to these, as well as many other, concerns.

Motion by Puffett to approve 50% tuition reimbursement for up to 2 years of college education of a future, employee or non-employee art teacher as long as they are taking 13 credit hours per semester, Powell seconded, Uhlenkamp opposed, motion carried 4-1. Puffett advised that all approvals or denials of future requests of this nature be left to the discretion of the Superintendent and the Board and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

#### **6. Review and Consider Approving 2021-22 Starmont Return to Learn Plan**

Benda reviewed the minor changes to the Return to Learn Plan. Motion by West to approve the presented 2021-22 Starmont Return to Learn Plan, Recker seconded, motion carried 5-0.

#### **7. Review and Consider Approving Starmont's CASA Application for Use of ESSER III Funds**

Motion by Puffett to approve Starmont's CASA application for the use of ESSER III funding in the amount of \$772,358, Powell seconded, motion carried 5-0.

#### **8. Review and Consider Approving a Bid for a New Oven**

Motion by Powell to accept the oven bid from Weber's Plumbing, Heating & AC in the amount of \$8,302, Puffett seconded, motion carried 5-0.

#### **9. Review and Consider Approving 2021-22 NICC Concurrent Enrollment Contract**

Motion by Puffett to approve the presented 2021-22 NICC concurrent enrollment contract, Recker seconded, motion carried 5-0.

#### **10. Elementary Principal's Report**

The new elementary principal, Heath Hesse, was present to report that he has been setting up individual staff meetings and learning what has been going well in the district and how he can support the staff.

#### **11. MS/HS Principal's Report/Activities Director's Report**

Koppenhaver shared her revised goals for the upcoming school year and stated she has been working on the implementing the new computer science class and Spanish curriculum with a vacant teaching spot.

#### **12. Review and Consider Approving Online Spanish and the Potential for In-Person Spanish at West Central for the 2021-2022 School Year**

Koppenhaver shared that she has been working all summer to fill the vacant Spanish teaching position; however, the interviews have not gone well. She understands that online learning is not the best option

for the students, but with no applicants, the school does not have a choice. Benda offered the possibility of sharing a teacher with West Central; however, Koppenhaver expressed concerns with travel time and the abruptness that would cause in class scheduling. Motion by Powell to approve the Logra Spanish program at \$285/student/semester in the 2021-2022 school year, West seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**13. Review and Consider Approving Board Policies: 203.3, 206.1, 206.2, 213213.1, 302.5, 303.6, 401.14 (NEW), 412.3, 501.14, 501.15, 502.3, 502.3R1 (NEW), 504.3 (RESCIND), 504R1 (RESCIND), 505.5, 603.6, 604.1, 606.2, 701.2, 711.2, 711.2R2 (RESCIND), 803.1, 804.6 (NEW), 804.6R1 (NEW), 905.3 (NEW)**

Motion by Puffett to approve the second reading of the aforementioned board policies, Powell seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**14. Review and Consider Approving Annual FFA Convention Trip**

Motion by Puffett to approve the annual FFA convention trip to Indianapolis, IN October 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, West seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**15. Review and Consider Approving 2021-22 Starmont CSD Student Chromebook Handbook**

Benda noted that there were no changes except dates. Motion by Puffett to approve the presented 2021-22 Starmont CSD Student Chromebook Handbook, Powell seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**16. Review and Consider Approving Changing Superintendent's Disability Insurance to Match Salary of Superintendent's Contract**

Hosch explained that her and Cristen Bockenstedt met with their National Insurance Services representative a few weeks ago, and Megan Ware explained that most other districts she insures have it in their policy that the disability insurance matches the superintendent's salary. Hosch is inquiring if the district should make this change, too. Motion by Puffett to change the superintendent's disability insurance to continually match the salary, Recker seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**17. Superintendent's Report**

Benda gave updates on the boiler project and also on the shortage of bus drivers to begin the school year. He is still working on a plan with the Transportation Director on logistics. Hosch followed up on the July board meeting question on whether or not nutrition funds can be used to pay for students' snack milk, and the Department of Education has stated this is not an allowable use of funds. She also called for any public measures to be put on the November election ballot, and there were none.

**18. Adjourn**

The next board goal-setting meeting will be held at the West Central media center on August 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. The next regular board meeting will be on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 PM in the HS Conference Room. Motion by Powell to adjourn, West seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

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Julie Uhlenkamp, Board President

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Robyn Hosch, SBO/Board Secretary