

AUGUST 31, 2020

**HANOVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING**

MINUTES

AUGUST 31, 2020

**Hanover Area Junior/Senior High School
Hanover Township, Pennsylvania
August 31, 2020**

NOTE: Due to the mandated closure of schools, and for the health and safety of individuals, the Board of Education held this Special School Board Meeting using the virtual platform “Zoom”.

Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent, stated this meeting is being recorded live.

A Special Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Hanover Area School District was held using the virtual platform “Zoom”, on Monday, August 31, 2020, at 5:00 P.M. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mr. John J. Mahle, Jr.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO OUR FLAG

ROLL CALL OF DIRECTORS:

PRESENT: John J. Mahle, Jr., President; Stacy Bleich, Vice-President; Joyce Potsko, Treasurer; Rick Stevens, Secretary; Frank Ciavarella, Jr., and Paul Holmgren

ABSENT: Dr. Vic Kopko, Michael Mazur and Matthew Redick

Mr. Rick Stevens, Board Secretary, stated a Quorum was established for the meeting.

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT:

Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent; Attorney Jack Dean, School Solicitor; Mrs. Lisa Kitchen, Administrative Assistant; and a number of citizens.

AUGUST 31, 2020

Mr. John Mahle, Board President, stated on Personnel Recommendations #1 and #2, is there anyone who would like to make any comments from the public; is there anyone from the public who would like to address the two items on Personnel.

Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent, stated if so, please press the raise your hand button.

Steven Rowley thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak on behalf of not only Cross Country but all sports, stating sports are important to many kids in our schools. He went on to say that sports gives the kids something to work for and helps kids want to improve, teaching them hard work and team work. He said sports helps kids make new friends and gain social skills. Steve said, on a more personal note, Cross Country has played an impactful role in his high school years; and he has been running five days a week for almost six years now. He said he and his teammates have been working all summer to prepare for this season. In January of this year, Steven said he received a concussion which lasted for several months. He said when he was cleared in May, he immediately began to train his body to the point where it once was at; running at least five miles a day, six days a week. Steven said he worked so hard in order to be able to go back to States, which he qualified for last year, and he would love to do it again for his senior year. He thanked everyone for this time and he hoped that he has said something that has impacted your vote on this decision. Thank you.

Emalee Woychio stated she was a high school senior and she is speaking on behalf of the Girls Volleyball Team and the Cheer Team; saying on behalf of these Hanover Area student athletes, we deserve to have a fall sports season. She went on to say that the spring sports were cancelled when the schools closed in March, due to the spread of Covid-19 and the unknown factors of the virus. She said it is now the end of August and the doctors and medical personnel have a better understanding of this virus and the data does not support delaying the fall sports season. Emalee said sports are a very important part of high school and some kids rely on sports for scholarships and they give kids a sense of belonging and building confidence. She said sports are a very important part of her life because when she came to Hanover, her freshman year, she didn't know many people; so she joined the Volleyball and Cheer Team. And, she said, over the past three years we became more than just a team; we became a family. She said her Volleyball Team has worked hard over the years learning to cooperate and work together as a team. Emalee said learning to cooperate and teamwork are two essential parts that sports help build and will build a foundation you will need in college

AUGUST 31, 2020

or at work. She said her family of Cheerleaders is one she cannot say enough about; helping to boost morale which we all need during these times and we help spread school pride throughout the school halls as well as on the football fields, wrestling mats, and basketball courts. Emalee said last year they worked so hard and got to go to Disney to cheer on behalf Hanover Area, saying we all remained positive and disciplined and learned that hard work can lead to amazing things. She said these traits are also an important part, not only in Cheer but to carry over in everyday life. Emalee said there are precautions in place to protect all students; our coaches make sure all temperatures are taken prior to the beginning of practice and even before we enter the gym and we are spaced out at least six feet apart and are asked questions like whether we were in contact with anyone or have any symptoms. She said her coaches have our best interest at heart and want to make sure everyone is safe. Emalee said, in closing, not having this last and final year as a senior is not only sad but devastating to her team and her classmates; it's breaking up not only a team, but a family. Thank you.

Seth Strouse stated he was a member of the Hanover Area Football Team; saying he was playing football since he was six years old; and he was on the Varsity Team since he was a freshman. He said, to start, the football team is his second family and we have known each other for quite some time, and it has brought him some of his best memories. He said one of those memories was when they beat GAR; it was a special game to him because it was his first game starting. Seth said out of all his seasons, the only full season he had was his freshman year stating October 19, 2018 was his last full game played because he partially tore up his ligament in his elbow the next week, stating he was devastated. Seth said he had to undergo physical therapy for the next four months and worked on rehabilitating his injury to come back better for his junior year. However, Seth said the first game of his junior season he dislocated his patella tendon and fractured his knee; season over, and once again he was devastated. He said it took six months of physical therapy to rehab his knee; and the whole time he kept telling himself he still has his senior season. Seth said now, from the prior vote, his last chance to have a full season has been taken away from him also; and learning about the vote and losing his senior season; he felt numb. Seth said his team has never been in this position and they were all devastated like he has been in the past; saying he knows this is an extremely difficult decision, but he asked please don't make them endure this heartbreak of losing a season, and him another. He said please don't take his last chance for redemption to have a full season with my teammates. Thank you.

AUGUST 31, 2020

Kyleen McCance thanked everyone for the chance to speak on behalf of the Hanover Area Golf Team. She said she was a junior; but today was not about her or her previous accomplishments; today is about the Golf Team. She said this year was a year of promise and the culture of the Golf Team has changed; and their numbers are on an all-time high. Kyleen said this was the year they could have put their stamp in the Hanover history books; saying you all heard the story of the 90's State Football Team, she thinks they deserve the chance to do the same thing. Each week, she said, done safely, she played in the East Coast Golf Tournament Schedule all summer with 150 to 200 players. With the Covid-19 rules in place, she said it remained a success. Kyleen then asked everyone to please think about that saying the athletes needs this; we bleed blue and white, don't you. Thank you.

Cael Davis stated he was a senior on the Boys Soccer Team, and said it would be awful if the seniors didn't have an athletic season. He said they are willing to do whatever is asked of them and whatever it takes to have some type of season. He said the coaches will have other senior classes; but we will only have one senior year. He said there is already so much that they have already lost; hearts were broken and tears were shed. Cael said they were told to try and stay in shape, practice drills and not to give up. He said many collegian spring sports athletes will be granted another year of eligibility; but what about the high school seniors who will not go on to the next level, they will not have the opportunity provided to them. Cael said in this day and age we are being taught about toughness, perseverance, and grip; if we are shut down, I ask you, what are you teaching us about grip and resiliency; what about perseverance in the face of adversary. He said these are teachable moments and we can be taught that when things get tough, we can continue to try and overcome the obstacles in our path. Cael said whatever anyone's view of normal is, is not coming back; but we must continue to move forward, learn to adapt, and not live in fear. He said please give them the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities and to do whatever it takes to press on saying this fall sports season should not be cancelled without at least letting us try. Thank you.

Kaitlyn Downey said she was a senior representing Girls Tennis Team, saying she was a player since the seventh grade. She said during the summer voluntary workouts they had no issues; they had their temperature taken and wore masks when they were not participating in physical activity, social distancing, and used their own equipment. She went on to say that Tennis is a non-contact sport and you are never within six feet

AUGUST 31, 2020

from your opponent. Other precautions were also followed, she said, such as wiping down rackets and water bottles, having only one person change the score cards, and not having any handshakes before or after each match; which are ways to keep our tennis team and other teams in the conference safe. Kaitlyn stated she hopes they take her points into considerations when deciding on their vote. Thank you.

Madi Osborne stated she was a senior at Hanover Area and she is representing the Girls Soccer Team. She said as a senior achieving high grades is at the top of her goals for this school year; however finishing her final soccer season falls not too far behind. She said she began playing soccer when she was five years old and since then she has never missed a single season. She said soccer has always been a huge part of her life. Madi went on to say that her first goal, her first of many off-side calls, and even her first concussion all took place on a soccer field. So, she said, the thought of not playing in her final season is devastating. Madi said some people would say it's just one year without a season; as a senior it isn't just one year without a season; and for me and so many other people, it's so much more than that. She said many of the players have been playing the sport their entire lives and experienced previous senior nights; and shouldn't we deserve the same opportunity to experience our very own senior night. Madi said she has already missed out on so many things in her junior year, why make our senior year any worse than it is already going to be. She said the past year their coach has been working hard and the team has been working together and communicating on the field; and she strongly believes that this is the redemption season for Hanover Girls Soccer and are ready and determined to compete against our opponents. Unfortunately, she said, since this is her senior year, she may never be a part of proving this if this were to be cancelled. Thank you.

Alicia Orzechowski said she is a senior this year and she is here on behalf of the Cross Country and Cheer Team; and was asking for their consideration to have fall sports. She went on to say, as everyone knows, the PIAA has let sports take place with certain precautions and we as student athletes believe that we can complete the season safely. Alicia stated that sports are valuable to us and to our community and teaches us discipline, socialization, team work, and as a stress management for some. She said we look to you as leaders and quoted the late Eddie Robinson who was a college football coach, "Leadership, like coaching, is fighting for the hearts and souls of men and getting them to believe in you". And as our leaders, she said, we believe in you; please believe in us. Thank you and please consider letting us seniors participate in our sports one last time. Thank you.

AUGUST 31, 2020

Riley Corbett stated she was a junior and speaking on behalf of Field Hockey. She said as a junior she hopes to continue her athletic career in college and the junior year is a very important year for the recruiting process. She said if this year is taken from her fellow athletes and her, they will not have the opportunity to get the statistics and videos that the college coaches rely on during the recruiting process and without this information they will be behind other athletes trying to be recruited and could lose interest from coaches and opportunities to play in college. Riley said this summer she was able to continue practicing for months and she went to a tournament where everyone was social distancing and wearing masks. She said there were no issues with this event with twenty-five teams and close families from many different locations, were able to safely compete. She said field hockey was not a contact sport and all of the players are at a safe distance from each other and we do not share equipment in field hockey and use our own hockey stick. Riley said when voluntary conditioning was being held in the summer, our coach did everything required to keep not only her players but herself safe; taking everyone's temperature before practice and gave everyone their own hockey equipment and everyone got their own section of the fence to keep everybody safe. She said, as a team, we have shown that safety is important to us and we just want the opportunity to represent our school, to compete for college scholarships, and to give our seniors one last chance to play in a hockey uniform. Thank you.

Kim Mission stated her daughter, Jessica, is a senior varsity Cheerleader in Hanover. She said she was here today asking for a chance for her daughter and her friends to finish out their career at Hanover Area as normal as they possibly can; doing the things they loved and worked so hard for, for the last three plus years. She said she was confident that with the parents along with the coaches; they can do this in a safe manner and follow all prodigal set up. Mrs. Mission stated as a parent she was willing to take all the risks for her daughter to do what she loves and she thinks that the reward is worth it. Thank you for your time.

Laura Owens stated she just wanted to comment that she really hopes that you take into consideration the plausible aspect of these sports. She said as part of the CDC Guidelines that just came out yesterday, there are new statistics and really it is not that bad as everyone thinks it is. She went on to say that she truly believes that the coaches and players are doing everything that they can to adhere to the rules and the guidelines but just give them a chance to play; at least let them try. Thank you.

AUGUST 31, 2020

Kara Rowley said she was the parent of a senior Cross Country runner and she is asking you to vote yes that fall sports be held. She said she knows there are very strong opinions on both sides of this controversy; and she does not begrudge anyone's opinion, but she does believe that these students have lost so much and need some kind of normalcy in their lives. If an athlete or parent, she said, is concerned or afraid, then they have the option of not participating; but for those of us who are willing to take the risk, please allow us to do so. Thank you.

Liz Sabecky stated she was speaking on behalf of the football parents. She thanked the administration and School Board for allowing their voices to be heard and thank you for being concerned for our kid's safety and well-being. She said we certainly understand that this is a difficult time for everybody, especially when it comes to the safety and well-being of everybody and the hard decisions that need to be made. She went on to say that as parents we are always making decisions as to what is best for the well-being of our children; not only physically but also mentally. Mrs. Sabecky said when the Covid epidemic became prevalent in March, she along with all the other parents took precautions needed to keep their families safe and learned to adapt to the change and we did what was needed to keep our families safe. She said she was the mother of a senior who plays football, basketball, and participates in track; saying her son has played football since he was nine years old. She said she watched him grow and build bonds with his fellow teammates who he has played with for many years; and who he calls his family. When the schools closed in March, she said, one question that was constant for him was will we play football and the statement that always followed that question was mom, I just want one more season. She said when tragedy strikes or a major change happens to a family, one thing is apparent; you try to be there for your children to provide some sense of normalcy. She went on to say that kids need sports, they need to socialize and need some type of normal; and sports help a child's physical and mental wellbeing; and help to develop discipline and time management, maintain goals, overcome challenges, and help to relieve emotions such as stress or built up anger. She said sports, of course, also help kids physically by getting them out and competing instead of staying inside the house and lying in bed playing video games and being lethargic. Mrs. Sabecky said today she is here to ask you to give our athletes a chance. She said the athletes along with the coaching staff here take all necessary precautions and parents who are willing to have their kids play sign waivers. She went on to say that they are confident in the protocols that are put in place and are sure that everything will run smoothly as has been during practices, and the parents who don't want their children to compete have pulled them out. But the athletes that we are

AUGUST 31, 2020

speaking for here today, she said, want a chance to play and seniors want one final season with their teammates to compete. And she said, as was done all summer long, they will continue to follow every precaution and every protocol needed in order to play the game. She said for some players, football is the only outlet from home life and for some football will help make secure their future decisions; so we need to show our athletes that we will not give up on them, that we will do everything within our means to ensure that they have a season. The athletes follow safety precautions when going shopping, or to the gym or work, just like other people are doing and participating and she said if they follow these precautions then our children should be given the chance to play the sport that they love in a controlled environment; otherwise how do I explain to my son why he isn't given the chance to compete when the rest of the schools in his conference are playing. And, she asked, how do explain that even though he followed all the safety precautions without instance, he is still unable, as a senior, to walk on that field and play with his brothers and his teammates. Mrs. Sabecky stated so I ask that you don't make me have that conversation; I ask that you trust in the safety protocols that were set up for the athletes all summer long and I ask that you stand, with all of our athletes, and let them play. Thank you.

Everyone who spoke at this meeting thanked the Superintendent, Mr. Nathan Barrett; all the School Board Members, and the administration for giving them the opportunity to speak at this meeting.

Mrs. Lisa Kitchen, Administrative Assistant, then asked if there were anyone else who wished to address the Board.

No one replied.

Mrs. Lisa Kitchen stated there is no one else, Mr. Mahle.

AUGUST 31, 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PERSONNEL:

It was moved by Frank Ciavarella, seconded by Paul Holmgren: To approve the following motions:

1. Motion to apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for Flexible Instruction Days (FID) for the 2020-2021 School Year.
2. Motion to rescind the August 27, 2020, vote regarding fall sports and to go forward with fall sports for the 2020-2021 School Year.

BOARD VOTE: (ON PERSONNEL MOTIONS #1 AND #2 ABOVE): YES: Bleich, Ciavarella (Yes on Motion #1 and on Motion #2 the reason I am voting yes is because the PIAA is allowing it, the Wyoming Valley Conference is allowing it, we are allowing students to go to college courses and Vo-Tech, so my vote is yes, and Go Hawks!), Holmgren, Mahle, Potsko (Yes on Motion #1 and No on Motion #2), Stevens. NO: Potsko (On Motion #2 only) ABSENT: Kopko, Mazur, Redick. ABSTAIN: NONE
Chair declared the motions carried.

Mr. John Mahle, Board President, stated he just wanted to say one thing. I would like to thank our Superintendent, Nathan Barrett; our Solicitor, Attorney Jack Dean; and all the Board Members because every one of them supported this revote. So I just want to say thank you.

AUGUST 31, 2020

FUTURE MEETINGS:

September Work Session	Tuesday, September 8, 2020
September Regular Meeting	Tuesday, September 8, 2020

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Stacy Bleich, seconded by Paul Holmgren: To adjourn the Special School Board Meeting at 5:27 P.M.

BOARD VOTE: YES: Bleich, Ciavarella, Holmgren, Mahle, Potsko, Stevens. NO: None ABSENT: Kopko, Mazur, Redick ABSTAIN: None Chair declared the motion carried.

ATTEST: _____, Secretary
Rick Stevens
Hanover Area School Board