

**LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

December 9, 2024

The combined Committee-of-the-Whole and regular monthly meeting for voting purposes of the Lake-Lehman Board of School Directors was held on Monday, December 9, 2024, in the auditorium of the Lake-Lehman Junior-Senior High School.

The meeting was called to order by President, Bob Wright, at 7:05 p.m., and opened with Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

<u>DIRECTORS</u>	<u>Roll Call</u>
Robert Baran	Absent
Kevin Carey	Present
David Paulauskas	Present
Drew Salko	Present
Jean Sayre	Absent
Mark Wallace	Present
Scott Walsh	Present
Rob Wojtowicz	Present
Robert Wright	Present

Others Present:

James E. McGovern, Superintendent
Tracey Liparela, Assistant to the Superintendent
Mary Jo Casaldi, Superintendent's Administrative Asst./Board Secretary
Avery Smith, Esquire, District Solicitor
Joseph Caputo, Business Consultant
Matthew Nonnenberg, Junior-Senior High School Principal
Tabitha Miscavage Spagnuolo, Assistant Junior Senior-High Principal/Personnel/Benefits Manager
Donald James, Lehman-Jackson Elementary Principal
Michael Kostrobala, Ross Elementary Principal
Lori Bednarek, Special Projects Coordinator
Brian Murphy, Technology Coordinator/Buildings and Grounds Director
Tina Antonello, Director of Special Education
Erica Orock, School Psychologist

Arthur Price	Tracey Stanley	Brayer Stanley	Rob Comparetta	Sarah Comparetta
Craig Selner	Anita Koziol	Richelle Steele	Diana Burkley	Selena Mazzella
Addison Burkley	Deanna Peiffer	Richard Peiffer	Delaney Peiffer	Addison Peiffer
Austin Peiffer	Richard Cronin	Patrick Stanley	Jill Casale	G. Wojtowicz
Isabella Wojtowicz	Abby Wojtowicz	Colby Galka	Reese Galka	Brenda Morris
Kim Pockevich	Landen Aritz	Ella Aritz	Sam Lupinski	

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An Executive Session of the Board was held on December 9, 2024, to discuss employment opportunities – professional staff, support staff, coaching/extra-curricular appointments and job descriptions.

READING OF MISSION

Mr. McGovern read the Mission of the Lake-Lehman School District.

“The Mission of the Lake-Lehman School District is to inspire students to achieve personal fulfillment through the context of community, independence, generosity and mastery within a safe learning environment.”

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

The Superintendent’s Report included the following:

- Mr. McGovern congratulated the Lake-Lehman Theater group for their outstanding performance in the recent production “Coronation.” This was the first theater production held in the newly renovated auditorium.
- The following students were chosen as winners in this year’s 6th Grade Holiday Card Contest.

Brayer Stanley – Lehman-Jackson Elementary
Reese Galka – Lehman-Jackson Elementary
Sydney Campbell – Lake-Noxen Elementary
Layla Comparella – Ross Elementary
Julianna Pockevich – Ross Elementary
Addisyn Peiffer – Ross Elementary

Elementary Art teachers, Selena Mazzella and Jill Casale presented the students with certificates in recognition of their artistic achievement in designing cards with this year’s theme: “A Back Mountain Christmas.” Students also received a gift certificate to Barnes and Noble Booksellers.

BUSINESS MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Caputo, Business Consultant, provided information in regard to the Act 1 Resolution included on the agenda for Board approval. Mr. Caputo explained with the adoption of the resolution, the Board certifies that it will not increase the rate of any school district tax for the 2025-2026 school year at a rate that exceeds the index as calculated by the PA Department of Education. The Lake-Lehman School District index for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is 4%.

WEST SIDE AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER REPORT

Mr. Salko provided highlights from the October 28, 2024, meeting of the West Side CTC Joint Operating Committee.

LUZERNE COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT REPORT

Mr. Walsh provided highlights from the meeting of the Luzerne Intermediate Unit held October 23, 2024.

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

Landen Aritz and Ella Aritz provided the following reports on behalf of the Student Council and SADD (Students Against Destructive Behavior).

Student Council: (Landen Aritz)

The Student Council has been diligently preparing for our upcoming December events. On Wednesday, December 18th, we will host a bake sale during all lunch periods, with all proceeds benefiting a local family in need. Additionally, the Student Council has chosen to sponsor two siblings for the annual Children's Christmas Party.

On Friday, December 13th, we will hold a Class Olympics Competition, where the overall victor will earn points towards our ongoing Class Competition. Following this, on Friday, December 20th, we will host our annual Holiday Assembly, featuring a variety of exciting activities designed to engage students before the much-anticipated holiday break. In the days leading up to the Holiday Assembly, we will also host a spirit week to get everyone into the holiday spirit. As always, thank you for your continued support.

SADD: (Ella Aritz)

Good Evening, my name is Ella Aritz, and I am President of our newly re-established Students Against Destructive Decisions, more commonly known as SADD club. As some of you may know, a while back, there was a SADD club here at Lake-Lehman, but it was dissolved after some time. I was approached with the idea to resurrect the club in honor of a former student who passed away over the summer. My goal, and goal of SADD club, is to educate and empower individuals by imparting knowledge that they will hopefully take with them and share for the remainder of their life. I have a number of ideas that I hope to explore further once we have established a solid organizational foundation.

Our first initiative, which is right outside the new gym doors, is our "Tree of Light". We wanted to take December to honor and remember those we have lost in the form of a tree to light up their names. We chose to do this because we want to honor the life they have lived and remember the impact they had on others. I encourage you all to stop by on your way out this evening to take a look, take a tag, and write a loved one's name on it and add it to the tree so their name can be lit up in honor and remembrance this holiday season. I thank you for your time this evening, and I wish everyone a safe holiday season. Thank you!

FOOD SERVICE

No Report.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. McGovern reviewed and read the agenda and addendum items.

Mr. Wright noted the agenda is approved as read and amended.

VISITORS – Comments relative to approval of Minutes, treasurer's report, payment of bills, and ACTION ITEMS.

No Comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Salko, seconded by Mr. Wojtowicz, to approve the following minutes.

November 18, 2024 - regular monthly meeting

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Motion was made by Dr. Carey, seconded by Mr. Salko, to approve the Fund Accounting Payment Summary with payment date listed as December 10, 2024, in the amount of \$372,603.23, and interim payments dated November 29, 2024, in the amount of \$143,118.72, and November 15, 2024, in the amount of \$132,556.59; subject to audit.

Vote: Upon roll call, all directors present voted yes; motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion was made by Mr. Paulauskas, seconded by Mr. Wojtowicz, to approve the treasurer's report as of November 30, 2024.

Vote: Upon roll call, all directors present voted yes; motion carried.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF FINANCIAL REPORTS AND FILE FOR AUDIT
(Attached to Treasurer's Report)

Balances as of October 31, 2024

- Lehman-Jackson Elementary Fund

Balances as of November 30, 2024

- Lehman-Jackson Elementary Fund
- Ross Elementary Fund
- Lake-Noxen Activity Fund
- Athletic Fund
- Food Service

ACTION ITEMS

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

No items.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

No items.

ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

Motion was made by Mr. Wallace, seconded by Mr. Walsh, to move on the following items:

1. Approve the following as School & Booster Volunteers for the 2024-2025 school year; all clearances on file:

A	Anita Koziol	E	Celeste Regan
B	Kevin Koziol	F	Brent Oliver II
C	Francisco Perez	G	Lex Lee
D	Jessica Funk		

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

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2. Appoint the following Assistant Coaches/ Extra-Curricular Advisors for the 2024-2025 school year, all clearances on file.

A	Scott Shotwell	Wrestling	Volunteer
B	Rebekah Steele	Softball	Volunteer
C	Christopher DeRemer	Band	Volunteer

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

TRANSPORTATION

No items.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Motion was made by Dr. Carey, seconded by Mr. Walsh, to move on the following items:

1. Accept, with regret, the letter of resignation from Julie Vitack, Food Service Worker (Cook), effective November 14, 2024.

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

2. Authorize administration to advertise for the following positions:

A. Full-Time Food Service Worker (Cook), 6.5 hours per day, 186 days per year.

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

3. Approve a leave of absence for Employee #2790 effective October 18 - December 13, 2024. It is understood the leave will consist of sick & unpaid days in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act; not to exceed 60 days.

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

SCHOOL BOARD

Motion was made by Mr. Baran, seconded by Mrs. Sayre, to move on the following items:

1. Adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, on June 27, 2006, the Pennsylvania legislature passed Act 1 of Special Session 2006, entitled the "Taxpayer Relief Act" (hereinafter "Act 1");

WHEREAS, Act 1 requires school districts to limit tax increases to the level set by an inflation index unless the tax increase is approved by voters in a referendum or the school district obtains from the Department of Education or a court of common pleas certain referendum exceptions;

WHEREAS, Act 1 does, however, allow a board of school directors to elect to adopt a resolution indicating that it will not raise the rate of any tax for the support of the public schools for the following fiscal year by more than its index, provided this resolution must be adopted no later than 110 days prior to the date of the election immediately preceding the upcoming fiscal year;

WHEREAS, the Lake-Lehman School District index for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is **4.0%**;

WHEREAS, the Lake-Lehman School District Board of Directors has made the decision that it shall not raise the rate of any tax for the support of the Lake-Lehman School District for the 2025-2026 fiscal year by more than its index.

AND NOW, on this 9th day of December, 2024, it is hereby RESOLVED by the Lake-Lehman School District (hereinafter "District") Board of Directors (hereinafter "Board") the following:

1. The Board certifies that it will not increase any school district tax for the 2025-2026 school year at a rate that exceeds the index as calculated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
2. The Board certifies that it will comply with the procedures set forth in Section 687, of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (hereinafter "School Code"), 24 P.S. §6-687, for the adoption of its proposed and final budget.
3. The Board certifies that increasing any tax at a rate less than or equal to the index will be sufficient to balance its final budget of the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
4. The Administration of the District will submit the District's information on a proposed increase in the rate of a tax levied for the support of the District to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the uniform form prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Education no later than five days after the Board's adoption of this Resolution.
5. The Administration of the District will send a copy of this Resolution to the Pennsylvania Department of Education no later than five days after the Board's adoption of this Resolution.
6. The Board understands and agrees that by passing this Resolution it is not eligible to seek referendum exceptions under Section 333(f) of Act 1 and is not eligible to request approval from the voters through a referendum to increase a tax rate by more than the index as established for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
7. Once this Resolution is passed, the Administration of the District is not required to comply with the preliminary budget requirements set forth in paragraphs (a) and (c) of Section 311 of Act 1. Provided, however:

- (a) The Board understands and agrees that, upon receipt of the information submitted by the District as set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5 above, the Pennsylvania Department of Education shall compare the District's proposed percentage increase in the rate of the tax with the index.
- (b) Within ten days of the receipt of this information, the Pennsylvania Department of Education shall inform the District whether its proposed tax rate increase is less than or equal to the index.
- (c) If the Pennsylvania Department of Education determines that the District's proposed increase in the rate of the District's tax exceeds the index, the District is subject to the preliminary budget requirements as set forth in paragraph (a) and (c) of Section 311 of Act 1.

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

2. Authorize payment of the following insurance appeal(s) based on the determinations of the Lake-Lehman Insurance Appeals Committee:

A.	Appeal #2024-12-1870	\$775.00
B.	Appeal #2024-12-2186	\$2,675.00

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

3. Approve the Affiliation Agreement between Marywood University and the Lake-Lehman School District for the purpose of observation and student teaching placement. Term of agreement shall begin January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, thereafter as agreed to by both parties for a maximum of (5) one year terms.

Vote: Upon roll call, all members present voted yes; motion carried.

INFORMATION AND RECOGNITION

Mr. Wright noted that all informational items are as listed.

BOARD DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE BUSINESS

None.

SET MEETING DATES

Mr. Wright read the following meeting information:

The combined Committee-of-the-Whole and regular monthly meeting for voting purposes has been scheduled for January 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., and will be held in the auditorium of the Lake-Lehman Junior-Senior High School.

VISITORS

No Comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wright called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Wojtowicz motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Wright adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Non-Member, Board Secretary
Mary Jo Casaldi