



# **Rocket Express**

## **August 20, 2024**

The Rockwood Area Board of School Directors held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024.

The minutes of the committee meeting on 6/18/2024 and the regular meeting on 6/18/2024, were approved.

The agenda and agenda items were approved.

The Board approved the financial and treasurer reports and bills as presented.

### **Board Recognition:**

Hailey Miller and Bradley Pletcher were presented with PSBA Honor Roll Certificates of Appreciation in recognition of five years of ongoing school board service and dedication to their local district and community.

### **Public Comment:**

Jeff Davis, a resident of the Rockwood Area School District, approached the Board regarding the varsity softball program. He requested that the Board consider retaining the current head softball coach and the current assistant softball coach when taking Board action on the discussion and possible action to employ a head varsity softball coach and assistant varsity softball coach.

Samantha Champey, a resident of the Rockwood Area School District, addressed the Board about the softball program and letters of recommendation that were sent to Board members showing support for the current varsity softball coach and the assistant varsity softball coach.

### **Old Business:**

The Board approved the revised 2024-2025 Homestead and Farmstead Resolution as a result of accepting the property tax reduction allocation in the amount of \$353,205.74 to amend the additional aggregate amount from \$9,371.29 to \$9,376.52 and to amend the farmstead exclusion amount from \$9,139.00 to \$9,142.00.

### **New Business:**

The Board approved Change Orders to the Rockwood Area School District Playground Project.

On the discussion and possible action to award a paving project bid, the Board voted in favor to award the project to Expert Paving Company LLC.

On the consideration to approve the tentative bus and van driver lists for the 2024-2025 school year, pending completion of all required paperwork, the Board voted in favor to make changes to the list and to approve the amended bus and van driver lists.

The Board approved the tentative transportation rates and routes for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the agreement between the Rockwood Area School District and Ignite Education Solutions to provide long term, contracted, and substitute staff on an as needed basis for the 2024-2025 school year, including the Extended School Year.

The Board approved the agreement between the Rockwood Area School District and Ignite Education Solutions to provide a School Psychologist/Special Education Coordinator, Jackie Toye, for the period September 3, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Section 508 vote: All directors present voted in the affirmative.

The Board approved the Letter of Agreement for Title I Services between Rockwood Area School District and Ignite Education Solutions for instructional services at Somerset Christian School for the 2024-2025 school year, in the amount of \$684.00.

The Board approved the Letter of Agreement for Title I Services between Rockwood Area School District and Ignite Education Solutions for instructional services at St. Peter School for the 2024-2025 school year, in the amount of \$683.00.

The Board approved Addendum #7 to the Contractual Agreement between Pressley Ridge Johnstown and Rockwood Area School District for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the FFA schedule of events for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved changes to the Rockwood Area School District Title I School-Parent Compact for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved changes to the Rockwood Area School District Equity Plan for the 2024-2025 school year, as required by federal programs.

The Board approved the Boiler Service Agreement with Combustion Service & Equipment Co. in the amount of \$4,150.00 for the period of September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025.

The Board approved the Tenant Estoppel Certificate requested by K2 Towers III, LLC, concerning the Tower License Agreement between Mark J. Matthews, d/b/a Matthews Communications and the Rockwood Area School District.

The Board approved the contract between the Rockwood Area School District and Southwood Children's Behavioral Healthcare at the rate of \$90.00 per day; beginning August 20, 2024, through June 6, 2025, for services as needed.

The Board approved the purchase of jr/sr high school Social Studies textbooks and resources for the 2024-2025 school year, at a cost not to exceed \$50,000.00.

The Board approved changes to the coaches' handbook for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved changes to the activity handbook for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board accepted the letters of agreement from Somerset Area Ambulance Association, Inc. to provide emergency services for Rockwood Area School District Jr. High and Varsity home soccer games and Jr. High, JV, and Varsity home basketball games during the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the 2024-2025 insurance renewal proposal through BDH/Konhaus Insurance Agency in the amount of \$95,474.00.

The Board approved the agreement between Clapper Educational Consulting and the Rockwood Area School District to provide community resource consultation and career activities for the 2024-2025 school year at a rate of \$70.00 per hour, not to exceed 220 hours. Approval is also granted for student participation in all such career related activities.

The Board approved activities related to the Community Based Instruction (CBI) Program for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the Agreement between the Rockwood Area School District and Intermediate Unit I to provide Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title 1 supplemental education services to students of the Rockwood Area School District who are attending nonpublic schools for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the first reading of the following revisions to the Rockwood Area School District policy manual:

- 146.1 Trauma-Informed Approach
- 218 Student Discipline
- 218.1 Weapons
- 218.2 Terroristic Threats
- 222 Tobacco and Vaping Products
- 227 Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia
- 323 Tobacco and Vaping Products
- 351 Drug and Substance Abuse; Post-Offer Pre-Employment and Post-Employment Drug and Alcohol Testing
- 707 Use of School Facilities
- 801 Public Records
- 803 School Calendar
- 805 Emergency Preparedness and Response
- 805.1 Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies
- 805.2 School Security Personnel
- 806 Child Abuse
- 904 Public Attendance at School Events
- 909 Municipal Government Relations

The Board approved the Conceptual Agreement between the Rockwood Area School District and Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 for Extended Campus Virtual Learning Opportunities for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the school photography contract with Megan Snell – Bean Tree Studio Photography for extra-curricular, special events, and yearbook photos for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved the Public Officials Liability policy through Sechler Insurance Group LLC for the policy period 8/9/2024 through 8/9/2025, in the amount of \$10,717.00.

The Board approved the K-12 Voluntary Student Accident Insurance coverage with A-G Administrators LLC for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, at no cost to the district.

The Board voted in favor to accept the Beef in the Classroom Program grant, written by Leanna Weimer.

The Board approved the quote from Appalachia IU08 for the Odysseyware on-line software program, at the rate of \$640.00 per seat, for the period 9/1/2024 through 8/31/2025.

The Board approved the Master Agreement between the Rockwood Area School District and Hoffman Homes, Inc. to provide educational services to students requiring regular education or special education services for emotional support.

The Board approved a Resolution of the Rockwood Area School District School Board to File a Commonwealth Financing Authority Pipeline Investment Program (PIPE) Grant Fund Grant Request with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

### **Committee Reports:**

The Board accepted the resignation of Megan Hetrick as School Psychologist / Special Education Supervisor effective August 1, 2024, and approved a partial tuition reimbursement.

The Board accepted the resignation of Faith Hemminger as Elementary Special Education Teacher and Assistant Musical Coach with an effective date to be determined.

The Board voted in favor to employ Lauren Svonavec as a full-time Elementary Special Education Teacher, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board approved Roni Langley-Burkardt as a mentor teacher for Karey Vough for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board voted in favor to employ Maria LaRotonda as the bona-fide volunteer head junior high girls' soccer coach, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board voted in favor to employ Jaime Gross as the bona-fide volunteer assistant junior high girls' soccer coach, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board voted in favor to employ Kelly Atchison as the bona-fide volunteer varsity volleyball assistant coach, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board approved Todd Pritts as an unpaid bona-fide volunteer junior high boys' soccer coach, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board approved Susie Branam as an unpaid bona-fide volunteer girls' soccer coach, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board approved the request for an unpaid personal day for the following employee (referenced by employee identification number) on 9/27/24. Employee ID #166.

The Board approved a leave of absence for the following employee (referenced by employee identification number) from 11/13/24 through 2/10/25, using sick days and FMLA, and to advertise for a long-term substitute teacher. Employee ID #202.

The Board accepted the resignation of Valerie Friedline as an elementary student council co-advisor effective the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board accepted the resignation of Jenna Sembower as an elementary student council co-advisor effective the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

On the discussion and possible action to employ a bona-fide volunteer head varsity softball coach, the Board voted in favor to employ Steven Barto as the bona-fide volunteer head varsity softball coach, pending completion of all paperwork.

On the discussion and possible action to employ a bona-fide volunteer assistant varsity softball coach, the Board voted in favor to retain Shanda Pletcher as the bona-fide volunteer assistant varsity softball coach.

The Board approved the substitute teacher, nurse, instructional aide, secretary, and custodian lists for the 2024-2025 school year, pending completion of all paperwork.

The Board approved the activity advisor salary scale for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved coaches' salaries for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved coaches' starting salaries for the 2024-2025 school year.

The Board approved Christy Hay as the Act 48 Chairperson and the Induction Chairperson for the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Field Trip Requests:**

The Board approved the following field trip requests:

1. 9th Grade Tour of SCTC – Somerset, PA – 9/11/24 – PJ Opfar, one additional staff, and 45 students.
2. Bike Trail – Ohiopyle, PA – 7/30/24 – Jim Wagner, Greg King, Ben Baker, Carissa Shipley, Josie Knopsnyder, Carter Bower, and 15 students.
3. 11th Grade Washington DC – Washington, DC – Fall 2024 – Nathan Formica, 2 additional staff, and 35 students.
4. 5th Grade Laurel Caverns – Farmington, PA – 10/10/24 – Carter Bower, Melissa Gindlesperger, Jenna Sembower, Learning Support Teacher, and 60 students.
5. Fall 2024 SADD Conference – Somerset, PA – 11/12/24 – Alana Letizia and 10 students.

### **Use of School Facility Requests:**

The Board approved the following use of school facility requests:

1. Rockwood Youth Football – Rockwood high school classroom – 8/12/24; 4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Pictures.
2. Rockwood Youth Cheerleading – Rockwood elementary gymnasium – 8/7/24; 5:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. – Pictures.
3. Rockwood Youth Football – Rockwood athletic field – 8/24/24, 8/31/24, 9/21/24; 8:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M., 9/28/24; 7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. - Youth football games.
4. Rockwood Young Farmers – Rockwood high school library, classroom – Thursdays beginning November 2024 through March 2025; 7:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M. Meetings.

### **Club & Class Activity Requests:**

The Board approved the following club & class activity request:

1. Leaders of Tomorrow – Clothing Fundraiser – 10/1/24 through 10/11/24 – Raise funds to support Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) rewards for students and staff.

### **Superintendent's Report:**

Mark Bower updated the Board in regards to faculty, staff, and students returning to school. Things appear to be right on track thanks to everyone who worked diligently to ensure a successful start to the year.

Mark Bower informed the Board that the playground project is almost finished, with an estimated completion date of September 17.

Jon Hale advised the Board that the new playground will be recognized by Play & Park Structures as a national demonstration site for advancing recreation through researched based best practices. Play and Park Structures is the company responsible for the design and installation of the playground project.

Mark Bower recognized and thanked Kevin Mathias and WoodmenLife for their generous donation of American flags to the district. New flags were provided for all classrooms, common areas, and large group spaces. Their support within our community is greatly appreciated.

Mark Bower recognized and thanked Somerset Trust Company for supporting our students by graciously offering to cover the cost for a student to obtain a defined number of early college credits during the school year.

Jordan Svonavec introduced Andrew Zwally and Mike Arnold of SitelogIQ via a conference call to discuss the next steps with regards to energy efficiency and facility solutions. Following the Board's approval of the PIPE Grant Resolution, SitelogIQ will submit the application for the grant with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

Mark Bower provided the Board with updates on various items concerning the maintenance department. He was advised by the Maintenance Supervisor today that there is a leak in the main water line that will need to be repaired. Repairs will be made prior to students returning to school.

Mark Bower reviewed the purpose of School Safety and Mental Health Grants and how the funds have been, and can be, utilized. He informed the Board he will be applying for an additional grant in the coming weeks.

Mark Bower thanked the administrative team for working together earnestly on the District's Comprehensive Plan during the month of July.

Mark Bower advised the Board that he is actively working on updates to district policies and administrative regulations, as per PSBA's policy and administrative regulation guidelines.

Jordan Svonavec informed the Board that the financial audit process will begin next week.

Jordan Svonavec attended a meeting with Rockwood Transportation and reported that the drivers' list and routes are in good shape.

Jon Hale expressed his excitement about the new playground and welcoming back faculty, staff, and students. The elementary school is ready to start the new year.

Nicholas Buterbaugh reported that the sports season began earlier than usual this year, but it is now well underway.

Nicholas Buterbaugh informed the Board that faculty and staff members have been actively participating in school security trainings and presentations, with a strong focus on ensuring the safety of our students and staff.

Misty Demchak advised the Board that the countertops in the FACS classroom have been replaced.

Misty Demchak advised the Board that a few course adjustments have been made in the high school.

Misty Demchak reported that the high school summer camps and programs went well.

#### **Somerset County Technology Center Updates:**

Noah Wareham reported a significant increase in enrollment at the Somerset County Technology Center.

*Disclaimer: This document is only a summary of the above listed meeting and is not an official copy of the school board meeting minutes.*