

**Transcript of Board of Education Meeting  
January 13, 2021**

Mr. Buono:

School District Board meeting. Call the meeting to order at seven pm. Members present, we have a lot of folks virtual tonight. We do not have Ms. Massey, or I'm sorry, Ms., Skumurski's not on right now. Jennifer's here. We expect Michele to join us in a moment. So, that will be our roll call, and so with that, please rise and join me in the pledge of allegiance.

All:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks everyone. So, I did see that we have our student council reps, Katie and Ryan. I do see you guys out there. How are you doing? Did you have a good holiday? So, who wants to start? Katie? It's on mute. We can't here you.

Ryan Seely:

Hi. I hope you guys can hear me. I think I'm having some wifi issues.

Mr. Buono:

Ryan, you're good.

Ryan Seely:

Oh wonderful. Okie dokie. So, after school today we had a meeting to discuss plans for spring events and to brainstorm charity fundraising ideas. And next week, we'll be finalizing two charitable events to focus on in the next few months. Our apparel sale was completed just before winter break and we raised a total of around \$1,100. This money will either go towards a charitable donation or towards the school spirit event which is to be determined. We have also decided to postpone our March Madness spirit week that is usually held in coordination with the March Madness basketball. This vote took place since it has been difficult to participate in virtually, so we were hoping to postpone the spirit week until the spring.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks Ryan. Katie can you get on? There you go.

Katie Asenbauer:

Sorry. My mic is having problems, but I just have two more quick things. So, one thing that has come to the students' attention recently is that when emails are being sent out for major events, they're being sent to parents and staff and not directly to us. Which such as things like prom being postponed and school closing before winter break. So, we definitely understand that this is with good intention to inform parents, but in many cases what happens in high school is students are hearing from other students before they're hearing from their parents. So, since these are such sensitive topics that's kind of hard to hear from other people first, I know, especially for juniors and seniors, since events are being

postponed and canceled. So I think, on behalf of the high school students, we'd really appreciate hearing about them directly or being included in these emails if that's possible.

Katie Asenbauer:

And then, just a second thing, on a positive note, this week our school newspaper, the Devil's Advocate has launched their website. So, there's a ton of student articles and other work that on that. I know how much work has been put into this and I'd like to thank Benson Haley, one of the seniors that put this entire thing together along with Mr. Adams who wrote an article and published that on the website. So, we just wanted to mention that on the behalf of the high school students as well. And it would really-

Mr. Buono:

Looks like we lost Katie's wifi. So, did you know what she was going to talk about Ryan? So it might be digital then.

Ryan Seely:

Yeah. She is on the school newspaper, and they are all just really proud that it is back up and running again like it was last year.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. And, Mr. Simons I think Katie was talking about communications directly to students?

Mr. Simons:

Well, we'd like to do it. First of all, Katie and Ryan, we appreciate you bringing that concern to us. The administrative team will evaluate that request and see what we can do to provide some direct communication to the students through the school messenger system. Appreciate you making us aware of that, and we will take it back to our team, and we will see what we can do to address the concern, and I appreciate you bringing it forward.

Ryan Seely:

Thank you very much.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. Anything else, Ryan?

Ryan Seely:

That is it.

Mr. Buono:

You good? Great. Thanks for joining us tonight.

Ryan Seely:

Bye.

Mr. Buono:

Take care. So, we now move to the public forum. As we have in the past in virtual meetings, we do have the emails set up for our community to reach out and with comments or questions regarding the district. Residents, students, employees and business representatives of the East Greenbush Central School District may address the board on matters concerning programs and or operations of the district other than matters involving personnel. Members of the board do not directly respond to citizen concerns through the public forum. If a response is appropriate either the president or the superintendent will contact the individual in the near future. Those persons wishing to address the board will be recognized by the chair of the meeting and should state for the record their name and address or affiliation with the district or business.

Mr. Buono:

While the board does not wish to infringe upon free speech protections it must be stressed that the visitor's forum is not deemed to be open forum. The board president will conduct a forum for the orderly and efficient operation of board business. In addition any remarks which be considered inflammatory or stigmatizing or prohibited, it would be declared out of order. So, with that again, a reminder to use the board email that's set up for the public forum. I know a lot of times, folks seem to be waiting to see the business of the board first. And, we do have a second public forum at the conclusion of the regular business. So, I will ask Linda if she has received any emails?

Ms. Wager:

No public comment at this time.

Mr. Buono:

No public comment. Okay. I'm sure we'll have some later in the meeting. So, with that I will go to the board forum. And, I will start with who's here. Frank, anything to say?

Mr. Yeboah:

Nothing for this time.

Mr. Buono:

Nothing at this time. Okay. Okay. I'll go by my screen. I see by the top Mr. Dunn. Anything? We're good. Mr. Mann? You're good. Ms. Muth? Deanna, good? And we go to JoAnn Taylor.

Ms. Taylor:

Hi everyone. I just want to take this second to say a few words of condolences to the Susan Garrigan-Piela family. As many of you know Susan passed away a few weeks ago and has put so much effort into this district. Her target was always doing better things for our children trying to make our schools, our community the best it could be for our students. And, I just want to express my sympathies to the family and say that she will be missed in the community.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you JoAnn. I think you express the sentiments of many in the board and the community with those words. So, thank you. Kathleen Curtin?

Ms. Curtin:

I also want to thank JoAnn first of all for saying that because that was also what I was going to mention. I had the pleasure of working with Susan way back when, when we were in the Green Meadow PTO when our kids were little and she always, always put our kids first and was always working for our kids, so I know that her presence will be missed in our district and her contributions are so many that they'll be around for quite some time.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you Kathleen. Jennifer Massey? You're good? And, Michele's not on yet, Peter? Michele Skumurski? You don't think so? Okay. I just want to say welcome back to the staff and students after the holiday break. I know it's been a pretty challenging period for all of us in many ways both professionally and probably personally and also in our committees. And, we're persevering through a lot of difficult challenging times right now. And, our board meeting will focus a lot on the efforts that are made to keep our district and our kids safe as well as stay open in the future even through some really big surges that are happening due to the Coronavirus. So, with that, I will turn over to Mr. Simons and the team presentation of the testing [inaudible 00:09:03] plan.

Mr. Simons:

Prior to the holiday recess, the district began to plan for the requirement that state could put in place at any time on the district to test our students and our employees for COVID-19. At this time the state has not determined that our district is in a designated yellow, orange or red zone which would trigger the testing requirement. However, we are well prepared in the event that that occurs. So, Molly McGrath, Linda Wager, and Marissa Cannon, three of our administrators, Molly being our director of people, personnel services, Marissa being our director of human resources and Linda Wager being our director of business and finance working in coordination with all of our administrative team including our COVID coordinator Karen Vincent have put together a very good plan in the event that we need to meet that requirement to test students and staff.

Mr. Simons:

We are working under the auspices of Questar BOCES which has been licensed to oversee the testing as a limited service laboratory. We are grateful for the work that Questar has put in place to enable us to implement this plan. So, at this point, I'm going to turn it over to the administrative team to present to our public the details of the plan and to the board so that everyone has an understanding that in the event that we have to shift to a testing requirement. We are well prepared to deliver those tests to our kids and our employees.

Ms. Cannon:

Thank you Mr. Simons. Our district in coordination with Questar III BOCES has been preparing a COVID-19 testing program informed by New York State's micro-cluster strategy. The state's micro-cluster strategy will mandate testing in yellow, orange or red micro-cluster zones based on infection rates, daily new cases and hospital capacity. If a zip code or region is placed in one of those zones by the state of New York, there will be restrictions for schools. While East Greenbush Central School District is not currently in one of these zones, we are preparing to begin testing 20 to 30% of students and staff in our schools should we enter either a yellow, orange or red zone.

Ms. Cannon:

If we do go into a yellow zone, the criteria would be a three percent positivity rate over the last 10 days, and in top 10% in the state for hospital admissions per capita. The testing requirement for a yellow zone would be testing 20% of both our staff and students over a two week period. The criteria for an orange zone would be four percent positivity rate over the last 10 days. And, in the top 10% in the state for hospital admissions per capita. Testing requirements for an orange zone would be 20% of both students and staff over a four week period. And lastly, a red zone would be a significant increase in all of these metrics and includes the cancellation of elective surgeries. The testing requirements for a red zone would be 30% of both students and staff over a four week period.

Ms. Cannon:

Questar III BOCES has been approved as a limited testing services laboratory, and Questar has already received the testing kits. Our school nurses and approximately 50 of our SRP members have been trained on rapid testing process. Our COVID-19 testing plan was published on our district website on January 5th. Our COVID-19 testing plan does require consent from both our staff and our students' parents and guardians. Consent forms for student and staff testing were sent out on January 5th with a deadline to be completed by January 8th. We are requiring a parent or guardian to be present with a student during testing, and it is important to know that testing is not mandatory and no one will be excluded from either school or work because they have chosen not to be tested.

Ms. Cannon:

Our data is in. And, we received 740 yeses from our students and 57 nos. That equals 97% of respondents consenting to participate in the testing from our student population. In terms of our staff, we received 313 yeses with 13 nos and that is 96% of respondents consenting to participate in the testing for our staff.

Ms. Cannon:

The rapid test is used to test asymptomatic students and staff. Our school nurses will be administering the test which involves a non-invasive cotton swab swiping just inside the lower most portion of the nostril. These are not the deep sinus swab tests that are conducted at medical facilities. And, the test results will be available within minutes. The district will be testing a pool of individuals representative of all our schools in the district. And at this time if we do enter a yellow zone, we would need to test approximately a total of 388 students and staff which is about 10% of our staff and 10% of our students.

Ms. Cannon:

Just a couple of few key points here. Again, New York State would be the one to make the designation of micro-cluster zones. Our district is not currently in a zone, but what our plan does is it prepares us if we do go to a zone. So, rapid testing at schools is to ensure that our in person learning could continue should we enter either the yellow, orange or red zones. Again, testing will only be done on asymptomatic in person students and staff. Consent is required. We need a parent and guardian to accompany the student for the testing. The tests are free and will be made by appointment only. Our school nurses will be the ones administering the antigen tests and results will be available on that same day because it is a rapid test. We will be making appointments and the testing dates will be communicated in advance. I would like to now turn this over to Mrs. Wager who will talk a little bit about the testing sites.

Ms. Wager:

Thank you Ms. Cannon. Once we begin the testing, we will be testing a certain percentage of students and staff over a two week period. Our staff will be tested on a virtual Wednesday. They will receive appointment times, and the testing will take place either in the health office within the building or in another designated area. When parents were asked to consider consenting to have their children tested, we also requested that they select a day that would be most convenient for them.

Ms. Wager:

We will be conducting tests on Tuesday evenings from four to eight pm. And on Saturday mornings from nine am until noon. Our first Tuesday evenings testing site will be held at Columbia high school in the main lobby. On that Saturday morning following from nine am until noon, we will have two testing sites again at the Columbia High School main lobby, and we'll also have a drive through testing site at the transportation center. On the second Tuesday evening, we will have two testing sites again. One at the Goff Middle School Cafeteria and the other at the DPS main lobby. And then, the following Saturday on the second Saturday from nine am until noon, we will have just a drive through at the transportation center.

Ms. Wager:

The staffing for the testing operations include parking attendants. We are considering our plan and it changes periodically based on as we're walking through the progress. So, we have at least one parking attendant, but we will most likely have two. The parking attendants will be responsible for checking in a parent with their child when they arrive. And, they'll be communicating that into the building. We also will have another parking attendant available so that we don't have any congregating taking place in the parking lots either before or after the tests.

Ms. Wager:

Once a parent with their child is inside the building, they will approach a check in station. At the check in station there will be a person there that will take the student's temperature and the parent will sign the consent form that they submitted online. There'll be one check in station per site.

Ms. Wager:

From there, the student will move to a swabbing station. There will be two swabbing stations at each site, and the test will be administered by a trained nurse. The trained nurse will administer the test and then prepare the sample for testing. It will then go to a processing station where the sample will be logged and then passed on to another person who will have a timer. The tests take 15 minutes for the results. Once the results are in, they will be passed to a reporting room. In the reporting room there will be two people. We initially thought one, but there will be two people. One of those people will be a nurse and the results will be read and confirmed and verified by both people. The negative results will be communicated to parents via email, and the positive results will be communicated to parents by phone call from one of our nurses. There will also be an administrator on site at each one of the testing sites. They will be available to answer any questions and just generally facilitate the process.

Ms. Wager:

We have supply totes that are available. We have them ready to go to each of the testing sites. Right now they are being stored in the facility director's office. Molly McGrath, Ms. McGrath will review the supplies and the equipment that are included in those totes.

Ms. McGrath:

Thank you Linda. As Mr. Simons said, we have been working closely with building principals, the technology and data department, our transportation supervisor, our facilities director and our entire central office team to ensure each site is prepared and well equipped to start the testing process. So, each site has an organized list of everything we would need including tables, chairs, any material and supplies, like thermometers, biohazard bags to discard the test kits in. And then, of course. All of the proper cleaning and disinfectant tools.

Ms. McGrath:

PPE is very important to ensure that health and safety remains our top priority while testing. So, our nurses will have an abundance of PPE including N95 masks, face shield, gowns and gloves and our nurses will change their gloves in between each swab.

Ms. McGrath:

The support staff at each station will also be given the proper PPE of a surgical mask, face shield, gloves and a gown. Next, we'll show you a short video that Questar put out demonstrating the testing process. And, the students starring in this video are the Beardsley children who attend Goff and Green Meadow.

Ms. McGrath:

Thank you Peter. And our final steps are we await further guidance from the state, and when we are told that we need to start testing, we will assign staff to each station. We'll schedule appointments with students and families and then we'll announce the testing dates. So, that's the end of our presentation, Jeff. If anyone has any questions or comments?

Mr. Simons:

I will ask the board members present if they have any questions regarding the testing? This would be a good opportunity for our administrative team to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Mr. Buono:

I have a question. Have we gone through any kind of a practice runs with the staff?

Mr. Simons:

We talked about that today. We're planning to set that up. Molly, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to-

Ms. McGrath:

I was just going to answer that we have not received any test kits yet to practice with, but we're working on arrangements for a trial run.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. Okay.

Ms. Curtin:

I was just going to say that your presentation was so thorough you really don't leave a lot of room for questions.

Ms. McGrath:

Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Just on the numbers team. So, the 10% you said was about close to 400. 20% would be twice that and we're getting pretty close right? So, will we have enough in terms of percentages to? And the other question is since, K-12 is kind of mid in the mix what does that mean for building by building in the elementary particularly. Is it a broad spectrum of 20% regardless of where they're from? In terms of the building?

Mr. Buono:

Molly, either you can respond, or I can respond.

Ms. McGrath:

You can respond, Jeff.

Mr. Simons:

The 20% requirement is to be done over a two week period. And, if the infection rate in the pool of employees and students is less than the micro-cluster, we can remain open. It is 20% total of student and employee combined. It is not 20% of both. The other thing interesting about the requirement is it is 20% across your district if your whole district is in the zone or 20% of the buildings that are in the zone. It is not 20% of each respective building, however we feel that the testing results would be more valid and a better predictor of the infection rate within our schools if we make sure that the initial pool of the individuals being tested is representative of all of the schools.

Mr. Buono:

Makes sense. Anyone else have questions from board members? I don't see any. So, again, this is a protocol and procedures that are put in place to again, help us to remain open should we enter one of those zones. There's been a lot of emphasis on testing lately for different things that we're talking about the state opening different things and testing. So, it's something that we have to be prepared for. Hopefully we don't have to go there, but I appreciate the community and staff for stepping forward and consenting to participate in this important activity should it come to that. So, thank you for the presentation, and I think we have a good plan in place.

Mr. Simons:

Okay. Thank you to the team for presenting appreciate it. Good job.

Mr. Buono:

Jeff do you have anything else on the board forum superintendent report?

Mr. Simons:

No. I'm going to postpone my comments until we talk in the discussion item section about some of the considerations regarding school reopening and after Mr. McHugh presents his information.

Mr. Buono:



Okay. Very good. So, if no one has any comments we'll move on to the discussion item which has the as Mr. Simons said, school reopening considerations related to COVID-19 and some updates. So, Jeff.

Mr. Simons:

Okay. So, Mr. McHugh is our assistant superintendent for curriculum instruction, and together with the entire administrative team we have been working on identifying students at all levels who either are struggling to engage with the school district with our classrooms or teachers or designated populations of students that we know require extra support and services to be successful. The board received a presentation at the last board meeting in December regarding learning gaps including some concerns regarding the number of students that are failing courses currently in both the middle school and high school and also academic intervention services data which indicates that we want to address those issues as we can if we can right now during the middle of the year as we still deal with the restrictions of social distancing and the limits on the number of students that we can bring in for in person learning on a daily basis.

Mr. Simons:

So, the team has been working on some proposals. Mr. McHugh is going to summarize those proposals. Some are being implemented now. And some will be implemented within the next seven to 10 days as we address our learning needs of our students. Mr. McHugh.

Mr. McHugh:

Good evening. So, like Mr. Simon said we're constantly looking for opportunities to enhance our instruction during this hybrid model during COVID-19 as well as really having some deep discussions on what we can do and what we can have in place once we get over this COVID-19 challenge. So, currently our elementary level our students that attend full days special classes and integrated co-teaching classes have been allowed to return to school four days a week. So, they're still getting their live virtual Wednesday, but they're in person Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. As well as the majority of our English Language learners at the K five level and those students attend they are clustered at Genet Elementary. The majority of those students have also returned for four days of in person instruction.

Mr. McHugh:

At the Howard L. Goff Middle School, grade six through eight, students in Map, the middle school alternative program for grades seven and grade eight. Those students have returned to four days of in person instruction as well as students in the academic skills development, life skills and special education transitions.

Mr. McHugh:

At Columbia High School, grades nine through 12, our students in our CTEP program, our Center for Therapeutic Academic Excellence program, our jump start which is ninth grade, Operation Graduation academic skills, special class life skills have been allowed to return to school four days per week.

Mr. McHugh:

In addition the majority of our English language learners have also returned to school four days per week, as well as some of our CAP students on a case by case basis. In addition to the four days of in person instruction to the groups that were previously mentioned, Columbia High School initiated Operation Launch Pad. That targets our students that we had spoke about at our last board meeting that

have failed more than one class, but also the students that have not demonstrated the ability to be successful on our remote learning days and the student's that haven't connected on our live virtual Wednesdays.

Mr. McHugh:

So, students that participate in the Operation Launchpad, they come in to school on Wednesday mornings for two instructional support sessions. Those sessions range between 50, 60 minutes each in duration. It's held in the Columbia cafeteria. I just want to acknowledge our SRP bargaining unit. It is our teacher assistants that are providing that academic support pretty much on a one to one basis on Wednesday mornings in the Columbia cafeteria. Our last session on January 6th we had 20 Columbia students participate.

Mr. McHugh:

Goff Middle School has worked hard developing two different plans to support students that are struggling during this time period. They're really taking a deep look at students that are failing courses, that have poor attendance, that are lacking student engagement and that our instructional staff, our faculty at Goff has identified those students that need that extra support. Plan one that we're looking to put in place would be providing additional instructional support, in person similar to Columbia High School on live virtual Wednesdays. Plan two would be to provide two after school sessions to support students, one on Tuesdays, and one on Thursdays. Tuesdays will be utilized to support B day students in person. And Thursdays will support A day students in person. That would be an extra hour of instructional support.

Mr. McHugh:

In addition to all of those situations our K 12 principals and administrative team have identified students that may have been out for a period of time for a variety of reasons including a required quarantine and we are looking to assign some tutoring services based on principal recommendation to help bring those students back up to where they need to be instructionally.

Mr. McHugh:

Any questions or additional comments? Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks Jim.

Mr. McHugh:

Yeah.

Mr. Simons:

One of the other things we are doing to address learning gaps with our students due to the COVID-19 situation is we are developing some ideas and proposals for summer school programs. Those programs are subject to the board's approval and the public's approval of the budget. We are very uncertain as to what the budget will look like at this point in time, but we want to have a program designed at the elementary and middle school and high school level. We also are discussing this summer school option to our Questar BOCES to see if other districts would want to join together with East Greenbush which

we would share a program and would make us eligible for reimbursement from the state in terms of BOCES aide. And we are just in the preliminary stages of looking at developing that program. And I'll be meeting with Anthony Taibi from Questar BOCES for further discussions tomorrow.

Mr. Simons:

Going back to where we were at before the holiday recess, I do want to offer some encouragement to the community, to our families, our students and our employees. We made the decision just prior to the recess to go virtual for really two days that were not planned to be virtual. An A day and a B day. And then, we had a virtual Wednesday. That was a really difficult decision to make, and that decision was based on the number of employees and students who had been impacted by COVID and are a sense that we were going to be challenged the following week to cover our classes, and we also wanted to reduce the chances that further students and families, including the families of all of our schools students and employees would be further impacted by quarantines over the holidays.

Mr. Simons:

So, we made that determination, and I'm happy to report that today, this week, our numbers look much better. The number of classes that we have been able to cover last week and this week has been fairly good. The number of staff absences is reduced as compared to prior to the holidays. We are also happy that the number of students who are subject to quarantine has been reduced as of today. So, I just want to share some of those numbers and I'll start with just giving you the perspective of the district since September 8th when schools were officially able to open. Although, we opened on the 14th.

Mr. Simons:

The total number of positive student cases in our district on September 8th as of yesterday's reporting, there were a few more today. It was 60 students. And that 60 students includes students that were attending in person, through the hybrid program as well as through the full remote program. As a percentage of our overall enrollment which is 4,031 students, that's about 1.4% of our student enrollment. So, that is very low. We're always concerned when we get a call that somebody has tested positive within our student population, but 1.4% is a pretty good indicator that the infection rate within these Greenbush schools is since September has been pretty, pretty low. The number of staff cases and on the report staff cases, those staff cases do not include teachers. Teachers are a separate category. We have 14 staff cases as of yesterday since September 8th. And, that represents about 3.2% of our staff members who are not classroom teachers. To them is when you compare that to the overall rates within the state, it's pretty low. Teacher cases, we have 336 teachers. We have had 10 cases among our teachers at 2.9%.

Mr. Simons:

So, with the heightened concern that we all share, regarding what's happened since Halloween. The numbers overall when you take a look at it from September through yesterday represent a fairly small percentage of our school community when compared to the overall number of students and or employees. Prior to the holidays, on December 18th, we had 137 students across the district on quarantine. And, I think we had more than 100 at Columbia High School alone. I can give you the breakdown as of today. And, it has come down approximately 40 students since prior to the holidays. We have about 99 students across all seven of our buildings currently on quarantine, either quarantined by the department of health, or they've been quarantined. The parents notified us that the child has tested positive or has been identified as a contact.

Mr. Simons:

Bell Top school has an in person enrollment. These numbers are of in person enrollment of 251 children. Current four of the 251 are quarantined and that's 1.6% of the overall enrollment at bell top. We've had some recent cases at Genet as well as at Green Meadow and at Columbia High school. So, those percentages are slightly higher, but lower than what they were prior to the Christmas recess. At Genet, we have 18 students currently on quarantine. We announced yesterday I believe it was that there was a case and there was some exposure on the bus as well as in the classroom. So, most of that 18 is reflected in a recent case announced today. So, that's about 5.2%.

Mr. Simons:

Columbia High School, 28 students out of 862 participating in in person learning are currently quarantined. That's 3.2%. DPS, 6 out of 209, 2.9%. Goff, 25 students out of 678, 3.7%. Green Meadow, again, a little higher because of recent cases, 15 out of 327 at 4.6%. And Red Mill, three students out of 326, at one percent.

Mr. Simons:

I share that data simply to give some confidence to our employees, our parents and our children that we are monitoring this daily. Sometimes two or three times daily and we are reporting it through the state portal. We have been fortunate that after the holiday recess we made the determination to continue to operate under the hybrid and at this point the numbers and how they are impacting the district is better than what it was prior to the recess. So, it's a total of 99 students out of 2,997 participating in the hybrid program and the overall rate is 3.3% of those children quarantined across the district.

Mr. Simons:

We talked with our administrative team today. We have a regular Wednesday morning meeting. And, one of the things we want to do is simply encourage our staff and our parents during this very difficult time. And, we're doing a really good job as an education community continuing to offer the education and learning program that Mr. McHugh talked about, but also to respond to the circumstances around COVID-19 as the infection rates have gone up during the holidays.

Mr. Simons:

In recent days, they seem to have ticked down a little bit. Those could be an anomaly. There have been some issues in terms of accounting regarding some of the reporting in our data and they're catching up. But, overall we are able to remain open at this point as we assess where we go for the rest of this week. Additionally, a reminder that next week the board approved a modification to the high school schedule that will occur January. The reason this week was canceled. Monday is Martin Luther King day so school is a holiday and then we have four days at the high school of virtual instruction to be able to accommodate larger blocks of time to implement testing. That will not only provide a good testing environment for our midterm exams, but it will also give us the availability of additional substitutes for our middle school and our elementary school next week. So, high school is virtual next week not in response to COVID but to implement the testing and that will also free up a lot of our subs to be able to serve our elementary school and our middle school.

Mr. Simons:

And, the one thing we wanted to point out and this was really ringing loud and clear within our principals and our administrative team. We couldn't do this without the cooperation and support of our

students and our parents and our employees. Additionally, we want an extra shout out to our SRP. Our school related personnel who have been so flexible during this period of time. They find out when they show up for work that they need to cover a class, so they cover a class. They find out that they need to pitch in because we need an extra person to do temperature checks. They come and they pitch in. Our SRP employees among all of our employees have been wonderfully flexible and adaptable during a very difficult time. So, shout out to school related personnel as a special recognition for what they're doing to keep our schools open.

Mr. Buono:

Thank you Mr. Simons. Any questions board members regarding the information just shared? I think it is a testament to the work that everyone's doing, diligence. We knew we were going to have that surge after the holiday and the New Year's period. I think we've handled it as best we can. We've remained open while other districts who have different models and have had to open and close on a frequent basis. Some getting contacted on Sunday evening, that they're closing. So, I think we've done the best we could within the model that we have and I appreciate everyone's support to continue that. And, I think next week too, we'll have our transportation will be more available probably too as well, so we'll be able to transport students. So, let's hope this continues for us, that we remain open, and that our plans continue to support our students. And, I appreciate that extra work and help that's going to be available for our students who are struggling during this time.

Mr. Buono:

Again, parents you just need to reach out to your principals if there's questions. Your teachers to see if they can support. Backing up a little bit Michele Skumurski joined us around 7:30. Welcome Michele. And there was Mr. Mann's mic was not working during the testing presentation. He had a question for one of the team about what happens to some of the medical waste that is collected on site? Maybe Molly or Marissa that can answer that question?

Ms. McGrath:

Sure. We have a contact with a company called Stericycle. They come a few times a year to dispose of the medical waste from our health offices across the district. So, we reached out to them to increase our time with them. Is that correct Linda?

Ms. Wager:

That's correct. And, we also ordered and received medical waste bags that we will be disposing of the tests in.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. Mr. Mann any follow ups? You're good? Thank you. I appreciate that. Any other comments board members regarding information Jeff shared about reopening or Mr. McHugh? We're good? All right. Thank you Mr. Simons. So, I'll move to committee reports. Marissa Cannon, you're up first.

Ms. Cannon:

Thank you Mr. Buono. I wanted to provide an update on the hiring process for our payroll specialist. Rensselaer County Civil Service Commission approved of the new job and the position description on December 21st. We then posted the position on December 21st with the posting closing on January 5th. Ms. Wager and I reviewed the applications. We've had seven candidates apply, and we selected four

candidates who had the minimum qualifications to do virtual interviews with. Those interviews occurred over a two day period on Monday January 11th, and Tuesday January 12th, and we now are in the process of conducting reference checks on an identified candidate. And, we are hopeful to make the recommendation for an appointment at the January 27th board meeting.

Mr. Buono:

Great, thanks Marissa. That's good news. And, I know Linda, your team is pretty new, and you're going through a lot right now. So.

Ms. Wager:

Pretty new, but strong candidates.

Mr. Buono:

Strong candidates, and I know that we'll welcome the experience and expertise that's coming into the office. So, great. Great news. Any questions for Marissa? No? Good job. Thank you Marissa. I'll move to Linda Wager.

Ms. Wager:

I do not have any committee reports at this time.

Mr. Buono:

Good. Thank you. Jim McHugh.

Mr. McHugh:

The education committee met January 4th. Our middle school administrative team, Mrs. Barker, Ms. Hoffman, Mr. Newman prepared and presented an initial review of the encore classes specifically we were looking at art, health, CTE, business, family consumer sciences and technology. What the New York State requirements are, where our flexibility is, and we had an initial discussion of starting a computer literacy course under CTE, under technology, technology literacy, competencies. It would include internet safety, coding, keyboarding, introduction to Google. And really the rationale for doing that is that it would give that foundational course for typing and all our computer literacy skills. It'd be a nice feeder into some of our programs. We do have three New York State approved pathways under business. It would free up some of those high school student's courses to be able to take some of those courses.

Mr. McHugh:

We also have, you are well aware of the difficulty that we've had trying to find a certified technology teacher. We've been looking for the last three years just like a lot of other districts. We run into the mad scramble each summer trying figure out how we're going to cover those classes. So, it would free us up a little bit and give us a little bit of flexibility in hiring.

Mr. McHugh:

That presentation and that information is going to be presented to our CCS committee on February 3rd. And, after goes to our CCS it will eventually come forward to the board to start to discuss and review. On January 6th, our committee for curriculum study met. Two of our programming reviews are

completed, and they will be decided in CCS on February 3rd. If they are endorsed and Mr. Simons approves, there'll be a brief presentation to the board. I think they are two impressive program reviews. There's been quite a bit that has been accomplished.

Mr. McHugh:

We also discussed the application for curriculum writing for the summer of 2021. That paperwork will go out to all of our AGTA members and it's due back towards the end of March. And, Mr. Harkin presented a CCS regarding Operation Launchpad which was previously discussed. Any questions, comments? Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Good. Board members are good? Thank you Jim.

Mr. McHugh:

You're welcome.

Mr. Buono:

Mr. Simons.

Mr. Simons:

The only committee I want to mention is our BRAC committee, Budget Review and Advisory Committee has been in place for some time. That committee has been chaired by a volunteer citizen Wayne Pratt who is a strong supporter of the district. We've had some conversations over the last month or so about having the BRAC committee focus on long range facilities planning. Our first meeting of BRAC with the new scope will be on January 25th at 6:30. It will be a virtual meeting. Initially, we have reached out to individuals such as our architect, our construction manager [inaudible 00:52:02], our supervisor of facilities, Paul Bickel. Some of our people that are involved in grounds and maintenance to talk about the status of our current capital projects, but also will talk about needs for our future capital project.

Mr. Simons:

Our building conditions survey which is the tool that is used by schools to assess work that needs to be completed to keep our facilities healthy and safe will be due in 2022. So, it is not too early to begin to talk about what the needs are within our buildings and in our grounds. So, that meeting is scheduled for the 25th. We will also be looking at the work that will occur next summer which is the second portion of phase two of the current capital project, and then the following summer, which will be phase three and hopefully we will wrap up the project that was approved in 2017.

Mr. Simons:

That phase three will involve significant work at the high school with the new artificial turf field which will be I think 13 years old when we do it. The average life span of an artificial turf field is 12, so it will be right at the point in which it needs to be replaced. New lighting, and new track. So, we have a design of the field from our landscape architect we'll be sharing with the committee. Mr. Leonard has been involved. The coaches have been involved. We want to involve some of our parent boosters in looking at that design, and any board members who want to participate through BRAC. So, it should be a good meeting and we're looking forward to it.

Mr. Buono:

Good. Thanks, Mr. Simons. Any other questions for Mr. Simons on the committee? No? Okay. Great. Moving on to the minutes of December 9th. All members were present either in person or virtual. Any comments, questions, revisions? Seeing none, I need a motion to approve that.

Mr. Mann:

Motion.

Mr. Buono:

Mark. JoAnn.

Mr. Mann:

Could you hear me?

Mr. Buono:

I can hear you now, Mark.

Mr. Mann:

Oh good.

Mr. Buono:

Did you have a question?

Mr. Mann:

Nope. We're good.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. So, we have a motion. You catch that Jeanne?

Jeanne:

Yes, thank you.

Mr. Buono:

Good all those in favor? Approved. Moving on to regular business. Approval of programs for resident children with disabilities. Any questions on that? No? Need a motion to approve. Jennifer. Second? Kathleen. All those in favor? Approved. We now have the Rensselaer Columbia-Greene BOCES board nomination, Questar III BOCES. Mr. Mann is running again for a three year term, Mark for the BOCES? I think so right? So, we appreciate him, and we do appreciate that the district has representation on the BOCES board to bring forward the issues that we get into to help in that partnership. So, I need a motion to nominate Mr. Mann. JoAnn, Deanna Second. All those in favor? All right. Congratulations, Mark.

Mr. Buono:

Moving forward and let the clerk know that you're serving the Questar III board.



Mr. Mann:

Thank you. Thank you everybody.

Mr. Buono:

You're welcome. Moving to reports and presentations, superintendent of the schools. Mr. Simons?

Mr. Simons:

Just have an informal report. I feel I should talk about vaccines a little bit.

Mr. Buono:

That'd be good. Yep.

Mr. Simons:

Which, I didn't mention earlier. Over the weekend, I think it was on Saturday, the governor approved the state moving forward with phase 1B which includes various categories of individuals who are now eligible for the vaccine while the state is still in phase 1A. So, 1A eligible and 1B eligible citizens can participate in the vaccination process. The immediate reaction to that was that school personnel, teachers wanted to know where they could sign up, register to receive the vaccine, and that wasn't really clear to school districts as to how we could go about helping to facilitate that process for our employees. We discussed it among superintendents on Monday at our regular Questar meeting. We have communicated to the county department of health twice that our districts would be very interested in playing a role to provide vaccination sites within our schools.

Mr. Simons:

Now, that may not be able to occur in every building, but schools are well equipped and counties have had plans on file to do vaccination clinics in school buildings, and we have the personnel in terms of our school nurses to do it. The difficulty right now is there is not a sufficient supply of vaccine in Rensselaer County. And, that may be the case in other counties. We meet every Wednesday with the county executive Steve McLaughlin and director of the department of health Mary Fran Wachunas. We met again today and superintendents are unanimous in Rensselaer County that we would like to be involved in providing an opportunity for a vaccination site. And we conceptually have the support of the county to do that, but they don't have the vaccine.

Mr. Simons:

In fact, they indicated that they placed an order for 1300 and received 100 recently. So, there is not sufficient vaccine available. So, what we are doing right now is we are encouraging our employees to by providing them with the information that's available for where they can go receive the vaccine including at the New Albany site which is operated by the state. Last time I checked which was this afternoon, they're into April in terms of appointments right now. So, we're doing what we can to advocate that we as a school district can serve our employees well by setting up these vaccination clinics. There is not a sufficient supply of vaccines right now to give us the vaccines in order to be able to do that. We're still advocating for it. And, I want folks to know that we are pressing on that issue.

Mr. Buono:

Great. Great. Do we have any idea how many staff would be interested or are planning on getting?

Mr. Simons:

I'm very glad you asked that question Mr. Buono. We provided this data to Questar because Questar wanted to facilitate the information to the county department of health. We sent out a survey last week and so far we've received 539 responses. 495 of our employees have responded which is about 92% indicated that they were interested in getting the vaccine, and 44, no. So, I've provided that data to Craig Hanson at Questar and he has data from all of the school districts of all of the individual employees who would like to be vaccinated.

Mr. Buono:

Great. Glad to see the higher leverage. So, that represents what percentage of the total staff? 500 and some plus we have what seven or 800?

Mr. Simons:

We have a little bit more than 800 I believe. Marissa, do you know that off the top of your head? Total number of employees?

Ms. Cannon:

About 750.

Mr. Simons:

750. So, it's a pretty good representation.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. Good response to the survey. So, thank you everyone. Any questions for Jeff regarding the information he just shared? Good okay. Thank you. Moving on to table motions. I have none at this time. Old business? Board members, anything to bring up? No? I just would ask Jeff, we talked about it in last meeting. Can you just give us a quick budget kind of time line where you might be right now in terms of the budget preparations?

Mr. Simons:

We expect at the January 27th board meeting to share with the board the priorities of the administration of the expenditures side of the budget. Linda is still putting that together for our review. The governor this week had given three separate State of the State Addresses. There wasn't much said about education other than we continue to need funding from the federal government for state and local governments. I think there is a sense or at least a belief that after the inauguration we may see an additional stimulus package that would benefit New York State and the schools. It's very hard to weigh the school budget when you don't know what your revenue is going to be. So, we can give you the expenditure information. We can give you some suggestions of areas that we want to take a look at to report to the board, but in terms of a draft budget, we would probably be looking at closer to the end of March.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. I think that's a... At least keep us posted on the timeline and how things are progressing. I know these are challenging times. And, everyone's time is taken up by a lot of other things that would

normally be done budget this time of year, but if you need more time and things to flush out just let us know.

Mr. Buono:

The other thing is I want to follow up too, do we have any FEMA stuff that we talked about last time? Anything?

Ms. Wager:

Yes. So, we are collecting the information to submit two applications to FEMA. We have already submitted some documentation to them. We have an application together and will be reviewed by a representative for homeland security before it is submitted to FEMA.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. Thank you. Anybody else have anything? Old business? Okay. Nope. Okay. We'll move on to the consent agenda. Is there any items here that Jeff you want to talk about individually before we open it up to the floor?

Mr. Simons:

I think I should highlight a couple of items.

Mr. Buono:

Sure.

Mr. Simons:

I'm going to ask Linda for the public's benefit to explain item G, which is NYSMEC bid.

Ms. Wager:

Okay. Thank you Mr. Simons. So, the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES created the New York State Municipal Energy Consortium. And that is to provide cooperative bidding services on the supply portion of natural gas and electricity. This program focuses on reducing and controlling energy rates. The current contract expires April 30th of 2021. So, NYSMEC is requesting all of the participants to indicate to them whether we are interested in continuing to participate in the program. Their goal is to obtain the best possible energy prices without sacrificing security and predictability of pricing. So, before you this evening the board has before we go into that, I wanted to report that we participate in this service through a cross contract through our BOCES our Questar BOCES with the OCM BOCES.

Ms. Wager:

On the second page there, you will see that we pay for this service which is a state aided, BOCES aided service. Last year we paid \$8,750 to the BOCES to participate in this service. At the end of every year, usually in September or October, they do a reconciliation of our actual expenses to the amounts that we paid. We make six equal payments during the year and we typically receive a refund in about October. So, this past year for the '19 '20 year, we received a refund of \$77,245.01. So, before you this evening, there are two resolutions for participating in the program. One for the electricity and one for the natural gas and there are two cooperative energy purchasing service billing schedule agreements, one for the electricity and one for the natural gas included for your consideration.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks, Linda. We've been doing this for quite some time.

Ms. Wager:

We have been doing this since the '07, '08 school year for both natural gas and electricity, and '06, '07 for gas only.

Mr. Buono:

Any questions for Linda on that one? Okay. Jeff, anything else you want to highlight here?

Mr. Simons:

The other item I want to talk about is the change order related to the phase one capital project. The board's policy requires board approval for any change orders that exceed \$35,000 and we are in the process of reconciling our paperwork for phase one. There was additional work done within phase one for extra security cameras that were identified as being needed to have appropriate views within each of our buildings, and there was additional work. This specific change order was related to tying in the security camera system that monitors the stadium when the kids are out on the field, even during the day for PE classes to tie that back into the surveillance and monitoring equipment and electrical system within the high school to make it work properly. So, that does require a formal board approval. We've also given the board a summary of all the change orders associated with phase one.

Mr. Simons:

One thing I will explain to the public when I mentioned the additional cameras. Because there was some delays in the installation in the project of Day Automation who was the contracted vendor, at my request contributed 12 of those cameras. I believe it was 12 at no additional cost to the district which included the installation costs which included wiring and in some cases some asbestos abatement.

Mr. Buono:

Great. Great news. Thanks Jeff. Just one comment before I ask the board members if they have any questions. The food services P and L is there and that is something that we've struggled with and talked about in the past, but it's obviously no reflection on the staff and the great service that they provide our students. And, we have a lot of things that we've been doing during the pandemic that have caused this, but I just want to thank the food service staff and Phyllis for all the work you do to keep our kids fed and home and also in school.

Mr. Simons:

Mr. Buono, in light of that topic that you just brought up. I'd like to make a public service announcement if any of our employees are watching. On virtual Wednesdays in particular, I know we've been offering a lot of different opportunities for our staff. Phyllis Sanford has a significant culinary background and would love to see increased participation in purchasing of school lunches that are prepared for the staff. So, that might be a way to offset some of her revenue loss right now. And, she asked me to give that plug.

Mr. Buono:

Very good.

Ms. Wager:

She is developing a menu that is specific to our staff for virtual Wednesdays. So, it's nice.

Mr. Buono:

Oh. Awesome.

Ms. Wager:

So, we had great participation today at the high school and middle school.

Mr. Buono:

Excellent. Excellent. I think it's a great morale booster too. Thanks for taking that on Phyllis and the challenge is out there to the staff. So, any questions on any of the other consent agenda items? I don't see anyone. No. So, with that, oh just one thing too. I want to mention that the instructional memo that there's a large number of student interns and teachers that are listed there. And I just wanted to thank the district, take the precautions, but also that we're encouraging and participating in supporting our future educators. And, it's so important that we get them that experience in the field even though it's challenging during the pandemic. I'm sure they're learning skills they never thought they would learn in a traditional environment, and I think that having this many students from the colleges to participate and just cooperate teachers I want to thank you for continuing to do this important work. And, hopefully some of these wonderful folks will join the district some day as teachers. So, I want to thank the district and the staff for continuing to support those efforts from our interns.

Ms. Wager:

Could I also mention on the consent agenda on the donations.

Mr. Buono:

Yes. Oh yes.

Ms. Wager:

We had some significant donations that are on the agenda this evening. We've had PPE supplies donated to the district from the US Census Bureau as well as Blue Shield. And, we had a very generous anonymous donation to our Genet backpack program as well. And, we also had another donation, another generous donation to our lunch program. And, I just wanted to mention one final thing. We have a donation on there from the Target's Heroes and Helpers program which is a program. It was a grant that we applied for and received, and it was in collaboration with the East Greenbush Police Department Benevolent Association, and together with this \$2,000 and money from the East Greenbush Police Department, it benefited approximately 15 of our families around the holidays. And, it was very heartwarming. I went shopping with the East Greenbush Police Officers on a Saturday and because of the circumstances this year, they could not have the students there, but it was really nice to see. They all face-timed with their students, and they helped them shop for their family members as well. So, it was really a nice, nice event.

Mr. Buono:

Thanks to the Targets Heroes and Helpers program to the East Greenbush Police Department. We so appreciate it. Thanks and to you Linda too. If there's no other comments or questions, I do hear motion

for consent agenda items A through K? John Dunn second. I can't see too well. Deanna. All those in favor. Approved. Okay. Thank you, everybody.

Mr. Buono:

We're now going to a couple items under the new business. One, not so thrilling to hear about, but we'll turn over to Jeff for this, or Linda?

Mr. Simons:

I'll have Linda talk about the tax certiorari.

Mr. Buono:

Okay.

Mr. Simons:

And then, I'll talk about the transportation fuel tanks and Paul Bickel is out there and he can help me.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. Sounds good. Linda? When you're ready.

Ms. Wager:

Okay. Bear with me. So, our attorneys are presenting to us a tax certiorari settlement that has to do with the Greenbush Hospitality Incorporated which is the Fairfield, Fairbush Inn on Route Four. They filed tax litigation regarding the '18, '19 years, '19 '20. And '20 '21 school year. The original request requested a reduction in the assessment that would have resulted in a \$403,500 refund. However, this litigation settlement proposes a refund totalling \$75,844 and that covers the three years, the three tax years. We do have money set aside in our tax certiorari reserve accounts to cover this. So, there is a resolution requesting your approval to make this payment of \$75,844. Are there any questions?

Mr. Buono:

No questions for Linda? Do you need a roll call vote, or you just straight up or down, Linda?

Ms. Wager:

Just a second.

Mr. Buono:

So, I need a motion to approve the resolution. I see Michele and who spoke here, was that Mark?

Mr. Mann:

Yes.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. All those in favor. Looks like it's unanimous, approved, Linda. All right. Thank you [crosstalk 01:14:14].

Ms. Wager:

Thank you.

Mr. Buono:

I will move to Jeff and Paul Bickel to discuss the transportation center fuel tank issue that was recently discovered.

Mr. Simons:

In the month of December, Mr. Noeth our transportation supervisor contacted Paul Bickel and others to do an assessment of a concern that we had some difficulties with the gas storage tank and diesel storage tank which are underground tanks which are approximately 31 years old at the site of the transportation center. Some assessment, the evaluation of the tanks was done by an outside service, and those tanks will not pass the Department of Environmental Conservation inspection. So, they need to be replaced, and I'm about at the end of my technical knowledge of this, so I'm going to turn it over to Paul Bickel and then I'll talk about how the project is eligible for state reimbursement. Paul?

Mr. Bickel:

Okay. Can everybody hear me?

Mr. Buono:

Yep.

Mr. Bickel:

All right. So, like Jeff said it was about early December. Mark reached out to us on just very concerns about the general condition of the tanks over there. I decided the best thing to do because it's a bit out of my area of expertise, is to call a professional. So, we brought in a known professional. EMFS is the company's name. And, they do a lot of OGS State contract work for I think it has two out of the four tiers in New York State. They have quite a few contracts going and they actually have a dedicated contract that was awarded to them by the OGS. So, they're very privy to this type of equipment and checking out conditions and things like that. So, I met him over at the site initially. He pulled apart what he could and did a general overview of the condition, and he felt at that point that the system was very likely to fail a new DEC test that they had put in place.

Mr. Bickel:

So, this is called a [inaudible 01:15:53] hydro test, and basically what it is without getting too technical. The tanks are buried underground and they have basically portholes almost like on a submarine that come up to the ground level and you can see the top off. So, there's four of these portholes. And, this new test required by the EPA, requires that you actually fill those holes with water, let them sit and over a period of an hour you're not allowed to drop water more than an eighth of an inch.

Mr. Bickel:

Unfortunately one of the four failed which ultimately if any of them fail, the complete system fails. So, they performed that test I believe on Christmas Eve. The following Monday, they're required by law to contact DEC and basically put in a spill report. So, we have a spill number in place now for this incident.

And, when that takes place, you have essentially 30 days to provide DEC with the game plan on how you're going to rectify the situation.

Mr. Bickel:

We had already done some preliminary work leading up to this, kind of behind the scenes stuff, because from my initial visit with the gentleman, he felt fairly confident that we were leading in this direction. So, we didn't want to be scrambling at the last minute only having a 30 day window to put together a plan. So, I met with Linda Wager, and she reached out immediately to FEC and just started looking to our options there as far as replacement, mechanical projects. So, what we decided we have to do at this point is and our architect Steve Whitman is actually putting together an emergency declaration letter that he's going to present to the board at the next board meeting.

Mr. Bickel:

This will entail detailed cost estimates of what to expect. But, in the meantime, we have the obligation to move forward anyway, just because we are in DEC's radar right now. So, we are going to move forward and put two temporary tanks over there. The issue is with two tanks total. There's one gasoline tank and one diesel tank, both underground, both 31 years old, like Jeff had mentioned. And, the tanks actually have a useful life of 20 years, so we're about 11 years beyond useful life. So, certainly due for replacement.

Mr. Bickel:

The plan is to get the temporary tanks in place at least for now and get the fuel drained out of those two ground tanks and into those temporary tanks. That will put us in a much better position so that we're prepared to pull tanks when necessary, and I'll look forward to comment after the board approval. But, the key thing here is that there was no actual spill over there. Even though we had put in a spill number. I just wanted to make everybody aware that we have been put in a spill number and get a spill number from DEC once it fails the test.

Mr. Bickel:

So, we haven't had a diesel fuel spill over there. The problem is that these portholes if you will, if a truck was fueling there and it was to overfill the tank, it would essentially flow into this porthole, and the one that is the failed one which is not sealing properly could let the fuel into the ground and cause a further disturbance. So, we don't want to get to that point. We're hoping that there is nothing else underlying there, but of course we won't know until we get the tanks pulled out of the ground.

Mr. Bickel:

There is a high water table in the area which I'm told is good, because it actually most likely is keeping any of that fuel, if there was any kind of fuel, it's either separated into the ground already, or most likely not to be visible when the tanks come out. So, we're crossing our fingers on that. So, just figured we would be a rough estimate, at least a starting point, we're looking at around the \$500,000 mark. Just to actually do the replacement tanks. That does not include architectural engineering costs. You know, cost for construction management. And, so the big unknown which we won't know about until we actually pull the tanks from the ground is know whether the ground is contaminated from a previous leak.

Mr. Bickel:



So, I just wanted to take the time and make everybody aware of this situation, and make everybody aware that the letter is coming at the next board meeting with more specifics, but at this point, being that we failed the test, we are obligated to move forward with replacement. We can actually use the company that I have here. They already, because they have an OGS contract, we can piggyback off them and avoid the bidding process. That's completely up to you. That's an option, but a lot of the pricing that Steve Whitman's doing. He's actually working with this company and going with their line item pricing to get us very accurate information on what we're looking for and what we're looking to run into at this point.

Mr. Simons:

Okay. Thank you Paul. Paul, I'm going to ask Linda to talk a little bit about the aide and the conversations we had with the state.

Ms. Wager:

Thank you Mr. Simons. So, as soon as I became aware of this, I contacted my state contact at the facilities planning. And, she advised us as to what to do next. She initially was talking about it as two separate projects. The first project was the removal of the tanks and that was an emergency project which would be fully aided the following year, but the replacement project which is how she was separating it. That would not be considered an emergency and we would be aided over 15 years. So, I had a bit of a problem with that and I had a discussion with her, because to me it seemed like it was one project. We needed to pull the tanks out and then we needed to replace the system which will be an above ground system. So, after some conversation and review by the state, they did decide that it is one project, and it is considered an emergency project, so we will receive the building aide on that in the following year.

Mr. Simons:

So, to begin the work, it could be '22 '23?

Ms. Wager:

Right. Correct.

Mr. Buono:

Very good. Any questions for Paul, Jeff or Linda regarding the project? I don't see any. Any final comments Mr. Simons?

Mr. Simons:

No. I think everybody's doing a great job addressing it.

Mr. Buono:

Yep, So, we're talking about two tank replacement or four tanks? I heard four tanks.

Mr. Bickel:

Yes. Two tanks total underground. They'll be coming out of the ground. They recommend going forward. And what they do for the OGS sites is the above ground tanks. It's away from any of these issues, because it's fully visible and out of harms way when you put steel in the ground, it's not a good mix.

Mr. Buono:

Sure. No. That's for sure. As we learned from Bell Top right.

Mr. Bickel:

Sure.

Mr. Buono:

All right. Any comments? We'll have more information next meeting regarding this project?

Mr. Bickel:

Yes.

Mr. Buono:

So, thanks for the head up. Unfortunate turn of events, but I'm glad we found out now, and we can get that, get some estimates and see what that's going to cost. It's good that staking now with a full project building aide getting back in the following year. Any other new business Mr. Simons?

Mr. Simons:

No.

Mr. Buono:

Board members, any new business? No? Okay. We'll move to the public forum. Linda, do we have the emails from the community?

Ms. Wager:

There are no public comments.

Mr. Buono:

Okay. We'll move to the second board forum. Board members we're kind of out of order again, so if you have any comments just jump out there and let me know what you've got. No? Michele, Mark, Deanna, JoAnn, Kathleen? Mr. Dunn, last chance. You're good? All right. I'm good as well. Frank? You're good? All right.

Mr. Buono:

So, with that we will move to an executive session. We do have need for that for purposes of personnel collective bargaining and contract negotiations. And, I would ask for a motion to approve going into executive session. Just a reminder that Peter will send you an email in the next few minutes to log into the executive session. So, I suppose see the hands up, motion for executive session? Kathleen, second, Jennifer. All those in favor? All right. We'll move to an executive session. So, thanks everybody. We don't anticipate any business after the executive session. So, have a great night. Thank you everyone for your presentations. We'll see you soon.

Ms. Wager:

Good night.

Mr. Mann:  
Good job.

Mr. Simons:  
Thank you.