

**MINUTES OF HILLSDALE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023

HILLSDALE BOARD OFFICE ENTRYWAY

7:00 PM

HILLSDALE LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION — December 12, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. The Hillsdale Local Board of Education Regular Board Meeting was called to order by President Vella King at 7:00 PM in the Hillsdale Board Office Entryway. Roll call was taken by Treasurer Lesa Deter with the following Board members present: Nick Atterholt, John Cutlip, Amy Jarvis, Vella King and Kenny Schuck.

All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mrs. King recognized the visitors: Lindsay Bowen, Reed Twining, Sam Lewis, Marc Doblanski, Sarah McNally, Wyatt Hynek, Makayla Schwendeman, Braydon Rakovec, Kathy Rakovec, Blaine Rakovec, Dawn Vesper, Jill Van Stee, Justin Van Stee, Abbey Hoffman, Owen Hoffman, Bridgett Heldenbrand, Gretchen Heldenbrand, Ryan Heldenbrand, Erica Van Stee, Lisa Vesper, Amanda Jones, Kori Vesper

A. Falcon Spotlight

1. Kailyn Moneer - Michele Lahmers- Soccer Recognition
2. Recognition of John Cutlip and Amy Jarvis
3. Reading of Fabulous Falcons and Students of the Month.
4. FFA Information.
Novice Parli Team placed 1st at District and 3rd at State
Job Interview was November 7th
Greenhand and Chapter degree ceremony was held November 15th
November 16th - 6 members attended the Ag Careers Camp at Hocking College
November 29th - 3 members attended Ohio FFA Leadership Night
The chapter helped PTO with the Santa Workshop, 300 people attended
December 19th members may attend the Christmas Party at Wayne Co Fairgrounds
December 14th - Fruit is due to come in at the school
5. Report – Ashland County – West Holmes Career Center – Mr. Schuck.
The Career Center's 5-year Forecast was positive. Several students from Hillsdale achieved all A's and B's
6. Any Additional Public Participation.

Abbey Hoffman addressed the Board regarding the decision made to reduce her husband (Mark Hoffman's) extended time from 60 days to 30 days.

Makayla Schwendeman and Braydon Rakovek addressed the Board on the importance of Mr. Hoffman and the FFA program.

Justin Van Stee addressed the Board regarding the soccer program and a formal complaint against the soccer coach, Athletic Director, and High School Principal. (See attached letter)

Gretchen Heldenbrand addressed the Board regarding how frustrated she was with her soccer season.

Jill Van Stee addressed the Board regarding the soccer coach and her daughter.

Erica Van Stee addressed the Board regarding the soccer coach and her frustration with her soccer season. (See attached letter)

ADMINISTRATION DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Lesa Deter - reviewed the monthly financial reports.
Noted that the National Lunch Program did not submit funds to the State of Ohio in time for a November Reimbursement to school districts. Funds were received December 5th, 2023.
The fiscal year has revenue exceeding expenses by \$1,051,077.76.
- B. Catherine Trevathan - reviewed several topics
CPI Training
Senior Citizen's Breakfast
Purple Heart Designation (in process of applying)
Visited Kids Link in Streetsboro
- C. Sam Lewis - Monthly Project Update
Back punch walk through December 18th
There will be a change order #15 to incorporate the remaining Owner requested changes.
Bus Garage status updated

#23-160 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA AND ANY ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Moved by Schuck, seconded by Jarvis to approve the consent agenda Additions/Deletions for the Regular December 12, 2023 Board of Education Meeting.

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

#23-161 TREASURER'S CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Cutlip, seconded by Jarvis to approve the Treasurer's Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of the November 7, 2023 Regular Board Minutes as presented
- B. Approval of the November Financial Reports as presented.
- C. Approval of the following: (January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024)
 - Annual Membership Dues with Ohio School Boards Association at a cost of \$4,688.00
 - School Management News - at a cost of \$240.00
 - Legal Assistance Fund - at a cost of \$250.00

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

#23-162 SUPERINTENDENT'S CONSENT AGENDA

Approved by Jarvis, Seconded by Atterholt to approve the Superintendent's Consent Agenda

- A. Approval to place the following on the negotiated master salary schedule due to advanced training effective second semester 2023-24 school year:
 - Alicia Metzger - Bachelors +20
 - Tiffany Smith - Masters +20
- B. Accept the resignation of Tina Dove as Van Driver effective end of day, December 1, 2023.
- C. Accept the resignation of Starla Phillips as hourly custodian effective end of day, January 9, 2024
- D. Approve Jennifer Wolfgang to a one (1) year contract as Van Driver, approximately 4 hours per day or as needed., Experience 0, effective November 13, 2023 through the remainder of 2023-24 school year.
- E. Approve Derek Knowlton to a one year contract as hourly custodian effective December 11, 2023, experience 4 and Robert Richardson to a one year contract as hourly custodian, experience 4 with an anticipated start date of December 18, 2023, pending receipt by the Board of a report from BCI/FBI which is not inconsistent with the applicant's answers on the employment application.
- F. Approve Katy Baumgartner as Coordinator of the Smiley Wrestling Tournament, December 9, 2023 at a rate of \$200 plus benefits. All wages and benefits to be paid from Athletic Department Managed Activity Fund 300.950A.
- G. Approve the following to Pupil Activity Contracts effective 2023/24 school year/season:

Thomas Williams - Assistant Baseball - Classification E; Experience 6

Edward Yetzer - Assistant Baseball - Classification E; Experience 8
Nicole Smith - Assistant Softball - Classification E ; Experience 4
Douglas Baker - 7 & 8 Boys' Track - Classification G; Experience 1

H. Approve the following volunteers:

Jordan Burghard - Volunteer Baseball Coach
James Visintine - Volunteer Wrestling

I. Approve the following volunteers:

Jessica Akers	Angela Eichelberger	Heather Morgan
Erin Altenburger	Candace Harrison	Chelsea Porter
Amanda Atterholt	Nicole Holland	Jody Radcliffe
Amy Atterholt	Kimberly Howard	Julie Richards
Julia Blamer	Eddi Iceman	Kathleen Ries
Ashley Bowles	Ruth Ann Jolliff	Melissa Schlechty
Abigail Bowman	Thomas Kaufman	Cassandra Slarb
Randi Bowman	Olivia Keener	Barbara Strahler
Samantha Brightbill	Heather Lahmers	David Strong
Ashley Conwell	Brooke Martin	Whitney Strong
Keirstin Carroll	Kerri McCormick	Tamara Vail
Brooke Cramer	Skylar Mills	Katherine Vetter
		Caroline Wolf
		Ashley Stahl
		Megan Mailloux

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

#23-163 PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Moved by Atterholt and seconded by Schuck to approve the nomination and appointment of Vella King to serve as President Pro Tempore and preside over the January 2024 Organizational Meeting until a new President is elected for 2024.

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

FIRST READING OF THE 2024-25 AND 2025-26 HILLSDALE SCHOOL CALENDAR

Discussion/Information Items

A. Legislative Update – Mr. Atterholt spoke on several legislative actions.

B. Student Achievement Update - no current updates

C. Items from the Board - No information to report

#23-164 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Jarvis, seconded by Cutlip to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of matters to be kept confidential by law at 8:06 PM.

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

#23-165 REGULAR SESSION

Moved by Schuck, seconded by Jarvis, to resume regular session at 9:59 PM

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

#23-166 ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Cutlip, seconded by Jarvis to adjourn the Board meeting at 9:59 PM.

Atterholt, aye; Cutlip, aye; Jarvis, aye; King, aye, Schuck, aye. Motion passes 5-0.



BOARD PRESIDENT



TREASURER

To: Hillsdale Board of Education

From: Justin Van Stee, for the benefit of Erica Van Stee

Date: 12/12/23

Re: Formal complaint against Michele Lahmers, Jodi Long and Alan Keesee

Please consider this a formal written complaint against Michele Lahmers for bullying and retaliatory behavior and against Jodi Long and Alan Keesee for allowing those actions to happen after being informed several times by Erica and her parents. This goes against the school's anti-bullying policy.

The events are listed below:

Erica was made to sit out for the first 10 min of the first game her junior year. A new player asked a question and Ms. Lahmers explained. The player was still confused so Erica explained differently. Ms. Lahmers said Erica undermined her and had her sit out. The failure of Michele's communication to the player and having an experienced player try to explain it differently is not undermining authority. It shows leadership. This shows that Ms. Lahmers doesn't have the proper ability to relate to and communicate with students and admits if she was wrong.

Weekly water bottle awards were given to a player that is united, diligent and shows sportsmanship. The 4 players that did not receive the awards were the ones that were not favorite players. This shows favoritism and that if you're not one of the chosen, you're an outcast. Once again bullying and being singled out.

Michele created a new rule this year that parents had to give 24 hour written notice to take a player home. However, when the team was delivering pumpkins on 10-4-23, no permission was needed, and she had students driving other students. Per the Athletic Handbook, under Transportation of Athletic Teams, Section 1.1 states all Athletic teams will travel board-owned or board authorized vehicles. Section 1.2 states All Student / Athlete may travel with his / her parent(s) if a written note, signed by the parent(s) states they are taking the athlete home. The note must be directly handed to the coach by the parent(s). There is nothing in the Handbook on the coach having 24-hour notice. This was clearly just a ploy to gain power and control.

Team captains for 2023: Kori and Erica were the only 4-year players on the team. Ms. Lahmers told Erica she wasn't captain because she didn't go to enough summer things. However, Kori did and wasn't chosen. Instead, a first-year player and a sophomore were chosen. It needs noted that per the athletic handbook, starting dates for fitness programs is Sept.1. Per the Athletic Handbook under Starting Dates for Fitness Programs – Participation. Number 6 states Mandatory Attendance is Prohibited.

Watching film, Ms. Lahmers would tell the Assistant Coach to move and sit behind Erica, even though she wasn't doing anything. If Erica would make a noise, such as clearing throat or coughing, she was told to keep quiet and not talk. She wasn't talking but was being singled out.

There was a soccer rule that was being discussed by two players. Ms. Lahmers said the rule was incorrect and she proceeded to look it up. Upon confirming the players were correct, she turned around and walked away. Never confirming that the players were correct, and she was mistaken.

When the team arrived for practice, Ms. Lahmers would greet every player by name except for Erica. She would then turn her head until she passed by. This was discussed during a meeting with Ms. Lahmers and the Asst. Coach. She responded by raising her voice and said that she did that as she never knew what Erica she would get. I reminded her that she is an adult and the coach, and she needs to lower her voice. This shows bullying. She was being singled out.

On Aug 31, myself, Jill, Erica, Ms. Lahmers and Mr. Funk met about how Erica was being treated. Michelle admitted that she was being harder on Erica than others because she was a good player. Prior to the meeting, Ms. Lahmers told the Asst. Coach not to come to the meeting. After we refused that, she said he could come but not speak. I asked if she wanted Erica on the team. She replied repeatedly that she couldn't answer that. This again shows that she lacks the communication skills to properly mentor and coach students.

Ms. Lahmers gave one player "mental health" days. On Oct. 3, the team took pumpkins to a nursing home and Village Parlor for dinner. Jill sent Ms. Lahmers a text asking if she would excuse Erica after pumpkins as we had plans for dinner with Erica's Grandmother. There wasn't much notice given on the outing. Ms. Lahmers wrote back "None of the girls are required to eat, either she can join the team until we are finished, or I can arrange a practice for her at the HS from 4-6". It appears that if she didn't want to eat, she would have practiced on her own.

On 10/8, a player had a confrontation with Michelle during a game, walked off the field, outside the gates and was hugging her boyfriend. Mr. Call approached the player and told her to play or sit the bench. She sat on the bench, however as she was a captain, there were no consequences for actions. Erica has been punished worse for doing less. Additionally, Coach Funk and Erica were talking about changing positions. Erica said, "That's stupid" about changing them. Ms. Lahmers said Erica called her stupid and that's when she invited Kailyn to the game listed below. When Erica questioned her, she clarified that she said, "That's stupid" and not that she was stupid. Ms. Lahmers again demonstrated that she can never be incorrect.

On 9/6/23, Ms. Lahmers sent Jill and Stacey Moneer a text about a November date for the Wayne / Holmes senior All Star Game. On 10/9 Erica asked Ms. Lahmers about the game since she told Kaylin and had not said anything to Erica. Ms. Lahmers lied to Erica and said that "I don't know what game you're talking about." Erica said the one you texted my mom about. Michelle said Erica will not represent Hillsdale at the game. Ms. Lahmers was waiting for Erica to mess up for a reason not to have her attend. Erica was excluded from both All-Star game her junior and senior years, where her statistics clearly showed she was eligible. This deprived her of a significant event of her senior year as well as the ability of her parents to enjoy what she has worked for since she was 6 years old.

With two weeks left in the season, Erica went to Mr. Keesee and asked what she should do. He told Erica to clear the air with her. Erica met Ms. Lahmers and she made a mockery of everything Erica said. An example is Erica said what can we do to make these last two weeks more enjoyable. Ms. Lahmers answered, "I don't know, what can we do?" Erica stated that she's asking her what her opinion is. Only to have her answer repeated. This is the same lack of communication and bullying behavior as listed above during another meeting. Erica stuck with playing as it wouldn't have been fair to her teammates. Ms. Lahmers had already caused several players from the 2021-2022 season not to play due to her attitude toward them and threw off one other player this year, even without following the guidelines in

the athletic handbook for discipline issues. The team played short staffed most of the year with little to no substitutes. Sometimes even playing with less than the 10 players that should be on the field.

During the season, 10 of the 12 players went to Mr. Keesee to complain about Ms. Lahmers. Nothing was done. To our knowledge, neither Ms. Lahmers nor Ms. Long were ever consulted or had anything discussed. If teachers complained about a student, there would be actions and this should be reciprocal. If Ms. Lahmers was spoken to, her actions did not change.

Regarding appointment for first and second team. Tessa Butcher received 1st team WCAL and 1st team district OHSAA and defensive player of the year. Per the athletic handbook in the Rules and Regulations Governing Athletic Awards, section 1, 2 and 3 set out the standards. After making a request for records, with the assistance and permission of Tammy Butcher, Erica's statistics exceeded anyone on defense by double. However, she was not submitted. As she wasn't a favorite of the Ms. Lahmers, she was excluded from an opportunity, again.

The inability for the coach, athletic director, or principal to abide by the school's handbooks causes concern. The harm that was done by the Ms. Lahmers actions and the inaction of Hillsdale Local Schools is inexcusable. What can be done to rectify this from our viewpoint?

A public apology from Ms. Lahmers on Hillsdale Girls Soccer Facebook Page and left up for at least a week.

Have Ms. Lahmers contract cancelled and not renewed effective immediately. She is clearly unfit for a role model and mentor for student athletes.

Ms. Long and Mr. Keesee need to take remedial training on bullying in school.

A change of policy that coaches are not picked at the sole discretion of the Athletic Director.

A written reprimand placed in the personnel file for Ms. Long and Mr. Keesee that indicates they were unwilling to protect students from bullying and retaliatory behavior even after numerous conversations and opportunities were given.

Erica

This soccer season was torture to say the least. I regret playing and should have just stuck to my gut and not played my senior year, which is not how it should ~~be~~^{go}. I have never been more torn down by a singular coach. The assistant coach was great when Michele would actually let him do something at practice, not to mention that she moved practice times earlier because Jeff, the assistant coach, didn't get to the high school until around 4:15-4:30 due to his full time job. It is kind of ironic that when the head coach was sick and unable to coach a game, and the assistant coach had to coach us, that was one of the only games we actually won. Yes, the WCAL is hard, but consistently losing to every single team 8+ to zero should start to become a red flag that something is not working in our coaching staff. Michele would not allow Jeff, or any other person on the team besides her "favorites", which are blatantly obvious, to talk. If we (meaning Erica, Abby, Lela, Emma, or Jeff) were to say anything that goes barely against her thoughts or ideas, we would instantly be shut off and shut down, mid sentence. That is not how an adult, especially a coach who is dealing with kids, should act. There are many words that could describe the season and the head coach, but I have decided to not name them. There have been countless times I have come home and cried about practice or the game that we just played. I am not one to express my emotions, but when you have been belittled and shoved down into the ground by her words and actions, that's when you see the other side of me. My mental health suffered, and most people did not know it because I did not show it, but if you ask my ~~boyfriend~~^{family}, I was a mess, and that is not how a high schooler should be when it comes to sports. Sports are supposed to be your escape from reality, where you can have fun with your friends and make new friends and just play a fun game that I have been playing since I was 4 or 5. The team is not the problem, it is the coach. Mr. Keesee asked me one time why I do not have problems in basketball with the coaches. My response: Michele is the problem. We could have had four or more girls play if we had a different head coach. And you think that shows the skills needed to be a good coach? This award, which should not be given to her, is about sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity, which describes absolutely nothing about her. To me, and others I have talked to, she is a red flag. While in a meeting with Mr. Keesee, I asked the entire team, except for two players, to raise their hand if they would play soccer next season if Michele was the head coach. No one raised their hand. Does that show anything about our coach? She is not respectful and it is always her way or no way. If I, for example, were to ask her a simple question about changing our defensive line, or switching positions with someone, I was instantly shot down without an explanation. She described someone on the team in a text message, who will remain anonymous, as "beautiful on the inside and out" and said that she "loves them". I don't know about you, but that crosses a line that a coach dealing with a minor should not, and I mean should not, be crossed. And nothing was done about it. She said that I "do not represent Hillsdale", and that is why I could not play in the WCAL Senior All Star game at Chippewa High School. Is it ironic that the

only 4 year varsity letter winner for Hillsdale Girls Soccer was not allowed to play, but a one year letter winner was? In my opinion, and others who will remain anonymous, Michele should not be able to represent Hillsdale. Plus, it does not help that she is best friends with our athletic director. So, obviously nothing is going to get done about it because Jodi Long will do anything to protect her best friend. Mrs. Long is so unapproachable, so it makes it to where we have to go to someone higher up to deal with her problem. And Mr. Keesee did not do anything, even after the entire team, except for two people, sat in a conference room for over an hour talking about the problem, Michele. I want to take this time to thank the new superintendent, who has only been part of this school for roughly 5 months. I went in and talked to her, and she said that she will look into everything that is happening and will try to handle it. That takes guts to do, being new, but someone who has been there for over a year, and someone who has been an athletic director for many many years cannot even take one step towards taking action in the problem of the Hillsdale Girls Soccer Team? Ridiculous in my opinion. Something needs to be changed or else you are not going to have a girls soccer team anymore. If Mr. Baker and Mr. Dickerson were still here, they would be taking steps in the right direction of helping the girls soccer team because they actually care about other athletics at Hillsdale, besides football and softball. If you want to have a girls soccer team next year and more years to come, do not let Michele be involved with anything related to soccer, girls or boys. She will ruin it just like she has ruined everything else. I know I am a senior, so this really does not affect me that much, but I look at the friends I have made through soccer. One of my best friends got kicked off this team due to her "attitude". The cause of her attitude was due to Michele picking and nagging at her every chance she got, which would spark an attitude from anyone if they were in that position. One of my best friends is a sophomore right now, so she still has two seasons left to play. I will be devastated if she does not get the chance to play due to a lack of good coaching. We have had horrible head coaches since my freshman year. The past two years, the assistant coaches have been great to say the least, but it is a shame that they have no say in what happens with the team because of our head coach. It is sad that the assistant coaches' daughters know what is going on around the team, such as practice time changes or game day lineup changes, before their dad, the assistant coach knows about them. That is the lack of coaching right there. I know this has been thrown at you all at once, but please listen to what the numerous people are saying about our head coach. Michele Lahmers is not deserving of this award, or of a coaching position at Hillsdale Local Schools. Thank you for your time.