

WEST BRANCH AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

REGULAR SESSION
FEBRUARY 26, 2024

Members Present: Chad Diviney, Christina Brown (via phone), Jeremiah Dobo, Jessica Maines (via phone), Norman Parks, Jason Porter, Melvin Smeal, Randy Sterling, Donald Yontosh

Members Absent:

Other:

Media Present: None

Administration Present: Mark Mitchell, Brandy O'Hare, Kevin Hubler, Angela Michaels, Branden Evans, Leslie Stott, David Williamson, David Catherman

Others Present: Randy Lemmo, Sean Sabol (via zoom), Abby Danko, Valerie Emigh, Jim Emigh, Paul Leskovansky, Steph Leskovansky, Crystal Parks, Harold David, Ashley Nines, Mike Nines, Samantha Lannen, Amanda Nelson, Craig Fluck, Troy Mentzer, Austin Silver, Frankie Leskovansky, Xavier Fackler, Hansen Lannen, Conner Danko, Brayden Williamson, Dakota Leinbach, Codey Zelenky, Kurtis Fetters, Evan Emigh, Jaykob Sample, Aaron Stavola, Justin Esposti, Julian Panebianco, Stephen Page, Ethan Dale, Matt Eirich, Gavin Dunlap, Kelly Williamson, Nick Stavola, Natalie Michaels, Ava Parks, Lydia Millinder, Jon Millinder, Danielle McDowell, Brandon McDowell, Abby Gallaher, Tyler Biggans, Cale McDowell, Emerson Reams, Keegan Reitz, E.J. Reams, Fred Little, Tom Hampton, Pam Hampton, Aimee Willett, Stacey Guenot

OPENING EXERCISES

President Chad Diviney called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. All present were asked to stand and pledge allegiance to the American Flag.

STUDENT REPORTS/RECOGNITION

Mr. Caldwell, Middle School Guidance Counselor, introduced the Kindness Club to the Board. Mr. Caldwell and the students shared how the club was started and talked about the online reward program. They brought along with them a cart with examples of rewards students can purchase with the kindness points earned. There are also special raffles and trips coming up for this club. The Board thanked Mr. Caldwell and the students for sharing what their club is all about.

Mrs. Nines, Middle School Math Teacher, introduced students that recently participated in the Math 24 Challenge. These students, under the instruction of Mrs. Nines and Mrs. Nale did tremendously well during the challenge. West Branch had two champions with multiple others placing. Ten different schools participated in the Math 24 Challenge. The challenge is to make the number 24 using 4 numbers provided; all numbers can be used only once. Demo boards were provided to the Administration and Board. The students demonstrated how to come up with the correct answer. The Board congratulated the students' success with the challenge; the students are eager to compete again in the future.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mrs. Abby Danko and Mrs. Samantha Lannen both addressed the Board in support of Mr. Nines, former Head Football Coach. Both of their presentations are attached at the end of these minutes. In addition, Nick Stavola, Dakota Leinbach, and Evan Emigh, student athletes, also addressed the Board in support of Mr. Nines. The athletes spoke to their love of the sport again, enjoying the sport again, and feelings of brotherhood and mutual respect. Numerous other athletes were present at the meeting. On the contrary, Mrs. Valerie Emigh also addressed the Board in regards to the Football program. Mrs. Emigh stated in her opinion Mr. Nines is a nice guy, but inappropriate behavior did occur during the season. Mrs. Emigh has concerns about bickering between the coaches and coaches talking about other athletes. All individuals that addressed the Board thanked the Board for their time. Mr. Diviney ensured all those present that decisions concerning staff are not taken lightly and that the Board is not able to comment publicly at this time on the matter.

MINUTES

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the meeting minutes from January 22, 2024. Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Mrs. Brandy O'Hare, High School Principal:

- STEAM Night
- PETE & C Conference
- PIAA District 6 Man of the Year

Mr. Kevin Hubler, Middle School Principal:

- SOUPerbowl
- Math 24 Competition
- Eating Disorder Presentation

Dr. Angela Michaels, Elementary Principal:

- Book Fair
- Passages Presentations
- Read Across America/Cereal Drive
- Reading With Rosie

Ms. Angela Lucas, Special Education Supervisor: (Absent)

- Board Report Provided

Mr. Branden Evans, Technology Coordinator:

- E-Rate Bidding
- PETE & C Conference
- Sapphire Software Update

Mrs. Leslie Stott, Business Manager:

- Budget
- RFP For Food Service

Mr. David Williamson, Athletic Director:

- Attendance Update
- Athletic Update

Mr. David Catherman, Supervisor of Building and Grounds:

- Water Heater Project
- Oil Boiler
- Roof Leaks

Mrs. Tiffany English, Food Service Director: (Absent)

- Board Report Provided

CIU: (Mr. Norman Parks)

- CIU General Operating Budget
- Early Intervention Pre-K Position

CCCTC: (Mr. Jeremiah Dobo)

- CCCTC Resolution
- Masonry Instructor Interviews

PSBA: (Mr. Chad Diviney) – No Report

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Randy Lemmo, of Burns and Burns Associates, Inc., introduced Mr. Sean Sabol to the Board of Directors. Mr. Sabol joined the meeting via zoom and provided an overview of the benefits of the District participating in an Owner Controlled Insurance Program (OCIP). The Board was provided with a copy of Mr. Sabol's presentation and was able to ask questions about the program. The Board thanked the gentlemen and will review the information provided.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An Executive Session was held from 8:22 p.m. until 8:37 p.m. for purposes of personnel.

PERSONNEL

D. Gomola
Retirement

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the retirement of Deborah Gomola, Health and Physical Education Teacher, effective August 26, 2024. Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0. The board members thank Mrs. Gomola for her 25+ years of service to the District.

C. Michaels
Retirement

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the retirement of Cindy Michaels, Elementary Paraprofessional, effective May 31, 2024. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0. The board members thank Mrs. Michaels for her 30+ years of service to the District.

P. Gable
Retirement

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the retirement of Phyllis Gable, Elementary Paraprofessional, effective May 31, 2024. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0. The board members thank Mrs. Gable for her 25+ years of service to the District.

L. Matthews
Resignation

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the resignation of Larry (Skip) Matthews, Part-Time Cafeteria/Hall Monitor, effective January 30, 2024. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Amanda

- ESY Speech Therapist Harris as Extended School Year Speech Therapist at the contracted rate of \$25/hour, for the 2024 summer program. Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- ESY Substitute Speech Therapist Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Danielle Gregory as Extended School Year Substitute Speech Therapist at the contracted rate of \$25/hour, for the 2024 summer program. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and was carried with a vote of 8-0-0. Mr. Parks abstained from this vote.
- MOU WBEA Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the West Branch Area School District and the West Branch Education Support Professionals Association related to custodial support options. Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- Volunteers Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Coura Fogleman and Robin Anderson as volunteers to the District. All paperwork has been received. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

EDUCATION

- Comprehensive Plan Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the West Branch Area School District Comprehensive Plan (2024 – 2027). Mr. Jeremiah Dobo seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0. Mr. Mitchell summarized the Comprehensive Plan.
- Induction Plan Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the West Branch Area School District Induction Plan (2024-2027). Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- Prof. Dev. Plan Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the West Branch Area School District Professional Development Plan (2024-2027). Mr. Jeremiah Dobo seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- 2024-25 Course Sel. Book Mr. Melvin Smeal, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the High School Course Selection Book for the 2024-2025 school year. Mr. Donald Yontosh seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- HS Library Order Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the High School Library book order in the amount of \$166.20 (High School Budget 2023-2024). Mr. Jeremiah Dobo seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- MS Library Order Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Middle School Library book order in the amount of \$845.25 (Middle School Budget 2023-2024). Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.
- Field Trips Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the 11th Grade field trip to the College and Career Fair at the Clearfield County Fair Grounds on March 14, 2024. Cost to the District: approximately \$98.00. Cost to the Student: none. (Funding – High School Budget) (Information Only: 69 students will be attending. Chaperones are Brandy O’Hare and David Williamson.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the West Branch Reading Team field trip to Forest Hills Junior Senior High School on March 20, 2024. Cost to the District: none. Cost to the student: \$10.00. (Funding – Middle School Budget) (Information Only: 24 students will be attending. Chaperones are Stacy Ricciotti, Crystal Gay, Christina Wilson, Katelyn Archer.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Fourth-Grade field trip to Parker Dam State Park on May 16 & 17, 2024. Cost to the District: none. Cost to the student: \$1.00. (Funding – Elementary Budget) (Information Only: 68 students will be attending. Chaperones are Nanette Reams, Shari Buck, Ashlee Wessel, Wendy Timblin, Kelley Hubler, School Nurse, School Based Therapist, Mollie Neidrick, Robin Anderson, Leah Albright.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the West Branch Marching Band field trip to Harrisburg/Gettysburg on May 3 & 4, 2024. Cost to the District: 1 substitute. Cost to the student: none. (Funding – High School Budget) (Information Only: 60-80 students will be attending. Chaperones are Lance Jones, Kevin Hubler, Melody Bell, Jennifer Porter, Jason Porter, Karla Myers*, Pam Warsing, Janna Gray*, Chris Gray*, Rhonda Bailor, Delissa Hall*, Amber Kyler, and Britney Bell.) (*=pending clearances) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Ski Club field trip to Holiday Valley, NY on March 9, 2024 (rain date March 16, 2024). Cost to the District: none. Cost to the Student: up to \$75. (Information Only: 15 students will be attending. Chaperones are Ashlee Wessel, Stacy Ricciotti, and Kaleb Quick.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Second-Grade field trip to Penn's Cave on May 10, 2024. Cost to the District: none. Cost to the Student: \$5.00. (Information Only: 70 students will be attending. Chaperones are Becky Lutchko, Alexis McKenna, Sarah Lumadue, Kelley Hubler, Ashley Nines, Emigh Modzel, Mary Kay Lupton, Katie Millinder, Brianna Kolesar.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Preschool field trip to Cold Stream Park on May 13, 2024. Cost to the District: none. Cost to the Student: none. (Information Only: 66 students will be attending. Chaperones are Marial Koleno, Jennifer Evans, Carrie Hollenbaugh, Heather Watro, Amanda Bolan, Danielle McDowell, Alison Parks, Tracy Kephart, Jessica Sterling, Rebecca Lannen, Amber Hanslovan, Michele McCamley, Renee Raymond, and Trisha O'Connor.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the First-Grade field trip to the Penn State Arboretum on May 22, 2024. Cost to the District: none. Cost to the Student: \$5.00. (Information Only: 64 students will be attending. Chaperones are Tara Yingling, Scott McClelland, Debra Galley, Casey Goodrow, Lisa Herring, Mary Beth Moslak, Courtney Ryder, Amanda Ward, Theron Ward, Danielle Gregory, Amanda Wilkinson, School Nurse, and one School Based Therapist.) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Fifth-Grade field trip to Fort Roberdeau on May 2, 2024. Cost to the District: none. Cost to the Student: \$5.00. (Information Only: 70 students will be attending. Chaperones are Denn McCamley, Mary Beth Moslak, Cheryl Beck, Tina Bickel, School Nurse, Terry Smith, Mary Kay Lupton, Megan Bickel, Becky Lutchko, Junell Little*, and possibly one administrator. (*=pending clearances) Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the 24 Math Group field trip to Port Matilda on February 21, 2024. Cost to the District: \$452.52. Cost to the Student: none. (Information Only: 10 students attended the trip. Chaperones were Ashley Nines and Lindera Nale. This trip was approved by the Superintendent prior to the board meeting. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

POLICY

2nd Reading Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the second readings of the following policies:

- Policy 200: Enrollment of Students
- Policy 202: Eligibility of Nonresident Students
- Policy 217: Graduation
- Policy 254: Educational Opportunity for Military Children
- Policy 609: Investment of District Funds
- Policy 610: Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation
- Policy 611: Purchases Budgeted
- Policy 810: Transportation

Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

1st Reading Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the first reading of the following policy:

- Policy 903: Public Comment in Board Meetings

Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Surplus Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to declare the following items surplus:

- Groan – 40-gallon Electric Steam Kettle, Model #DEE/4-40, Serial #702D, operated when disconnected
- Agri Fab/Mow and Vac, Model #45-0171?, Serial # 4005?, OLD/oil leak when motor is operated, still operational/newer wheels

Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

TRANSPORTATION & ATHLETICS

Drivers – Long's Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Theresa Hazel as bus driver for Long Motor Buses, Inc., retroactive to February 13, 2024. All paperwork has been received. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Kurtis Malinich as bus driver for Long Motor Buses, inc., retroactive to February 21, 2024. All paperwork has been received. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Asst. Varsity
Baseball Coach

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Anthony (AJ) Coval as Assistant Varsity Baseball Coach at a rate of \$2,833.81 for the 2023-2024 season. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Spring Athletic
Volunteers

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Spring Athletic Volunteers, all paperwork has been received:

- Varsity Baseball: Francis Leskovansky
- Junior High Softball: Christopher (Todd) Bainey

Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Fall Head
Coaches

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Administrative Recommendation to retain the Fall Head Coaches and paid coaching staffs for the 2024-2025 school year:

- Cross Country: **Josh Carr**, Tabytha Carr
- Volleyball: **Terry Trude**, Mollie Neidrick, Mary Beth Moslak
- Soccer: **Angie Fenush**, Alicia Lutz, Levi Good, Mitch Hubler

Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0. Mr. Mitchell noted that the position for Head Varsity Football Coach will be advertised on February 27, 2024.

Ground Lease
Agreement

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Ground Lease Agreement between the Kylertown Community Association and the West Branch Area School District, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. Mr. Jeremiah Dobo seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

FINANCE AND PURCHASE

Disbursements Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the following Disbursements:

\$ 68,066.14	Cafeteria Fund Bills Dated 2/27/2024	Checks 4708 through 4710
\$ 3,496.00	Capital Maintenance Bills Dated 2/27/2024	Check 61
\$ 11,200.90	Visa 1/31/24 Invoices (2)	
\$ 1,850,113.35	General Account	Checks 59663 through 59830
\$ 1,932,876.39	Grand Total	

Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Treasurer's Report Mr. Melvin Smeal, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2024. Mr. Donald Yontosh seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

Activity Acct. Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Activity Account for January 2024. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

CenClear Agreement Mr. Norman Parks, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Care Coordination Agreement with CenClear effective for one year from the date of approval/signatures. Mr. Melvin Smeal seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 9-0-0.

CCCTC Resolution Mr. Melvin Smeal, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the resolution to incur debt in concert with other sending school districts participating in the Clearfield County Career and Technology Center (CCCTC) for principal debt not to exceed \$6,470,000 in accordance with the terms and conditions described herein the resolution. Mr. Donald Yontosh seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 7-1-0. Voice Roll Call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Smeal – no; Mr. Diviney – yes; Mr. Yontosh – yes; Mr. Porter – yes; Mr. Dobo – yes; Mr. Parks – yes; Mr. Sterling – yes; Mrs. Maines – disconnected from call.

ESS Sub Agreement Mr. Melvin Smeal, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the Addendum to Extend Agreement with ESS Northeast, LLC, and the West Branch Area School District through June 30, 2028. This company provides substitute services to the District. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 8-0-0. Voice Roll Call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Smeal – yes; Mr. Diviney – yes; Mr. Yontosh – yes; Mr. Porter – yes; Mr. Dobo – yes; Mr. Parks – yes; Mr. Sterling – yes; Mrs. Maines – disconnected from call.

Funds Transfer Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve the transfer of \$4,000,000 from PSDLAF to a savings account at CNB Bank for committed funds for future projects. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 8-0-0. Mrs. Stott noted that this line item is per auditor recommendation.

Reno Project
Pay Estimates

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve and pay the following pay estimates (totaling \$59,135.76) related to the renovation project and approved by our engineers:

- Westmoreland Electric:
 - Pay Estimate #1 \$3,121.38
 - Pay Estimate #2 \$9,751.86
 - Pay Estimate #3 \$2,342.88
 - Pay Estimate #4 \$9,787.14
- Hinkle Plumbing and Heating:
 - Pay Estimate #1 \$30,172.50
 - Pay Estimate #2 \$ 3,960.00

Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 8-0-0. Voice Roll Call: Mrs. Brown – yes; Mr. Smeal – yes; Mr. Diviney – yes; Mr. Yontosh – yes; Mr. Porter – yes; Mr. Dobo – yes; Mr. Parks – yes; Mr. Sterling – yes; Mrs. Maines – disconnected from call. Per Mrs. Stott, all pay estimates relating to the Elementary Renovation Project will be included on agendas for approval. This is to remain completely transparent throughout the renovation process.

CIU General
Operating
Budget

Mr. Norman Parks, in the form of a motion, recommended to approve Central Intermediate Unit 10 General Operating Budget for 2024-2025. Mr. Jeremiah Dobo seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 8-0-0.

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Mitchell provided a fieldhouse update to the Board. Unfortunately, some blacktop will need to be removed to make the appropriate repairs.

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to solicit for bids for the recommended work from the engineer to complete field house repairs. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion, and it was carried with a vote of 8-0-0.

Mrs. O'Hare informed the Board that Nate Kerlin, substitute teaching intern, had to unexpectedly return to Kansas. As soon as his paperwork is back in order with the U.S. Army, he will return. He is expected back in just a few days.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Donald Yontosh, in the form of a motion, recommended to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. Mr. Norman Parks seconded the motion and it carried with a vote of 8-0-0.

Respectively Submitted,



Stacey Guenot
Secretary to the Board of Education

Mr Mitchell and Mrs Ohare

I am here on behalf of the entire football team. My question is simple, why? Why did you feel it was beneficial for this group of young men to rescind your vote for Mr. Nines as head football coach after one year. How would you feel if someone demanded to take your position at the start of a new school year?

We as parents are continuously being told to treat this group of boys as young adult men. With that being said, you need to treat them just the same and give them a truthful and concrete answer as to why. Why they were called in unexpectedly and told Mr Nines would not be back next year with no explanation. And now, here they stand, almost into March and no head football coach.

These boys who gave their all for months and trusted the process and the coaching staff, parents who entrusted Mike with our young men and a community who filled your football stadium and contributed to your athletic department for months, we all ask why.

More kids were out this year than in many years, Varsity attended districts for the first time in while and the JV team had a very successful year. The future of Warrior Football looked very promising to these young men and their excitement on the field could be felt.

There have been administrators, teachers and coaches who have done or known about unspeakable acts, but still, they are here, teaching and/or coaching our children. We would like to know what Mr. Nines has done to deserve to not come back. Mr Nines believed in these kids, kids that never played the game or maybe didn't even believe in themselves. They had pride and joy on that field and Mike became a friend and confidant. We want Mike as our coach for the future of WB football.

Thank you.

Dear West Branch School Board Members,

My name is Samantha Lannen, I am a resident of Morris Township. As you all probably know I am a long-time parent of student athletes here at West Branch. The reason I am here tonight is my concern for the football program. The student athletes and their families deserve clarity on the situation.

The football players were given a brief notification that, again, within the last 12 months the football program will be starting over with a new coaching staff. The players were totally shocked when they were called down during the school day and told that coach Nines was relieved of his duties as Head Coach.

Anyone that knows anything about sports and coaching knows that it takes several years to build a successful program. It takes vision, goals, and ownership to create a successful culture. Most times that can't be done in one year. However, I do think that our program was on the right track to obtain that. After an 0-4 start, watching adjustments be made and executed, we rattled off 5 straight wins to become playoff eligible for the 1st time in 5 years. I personally remember our last visit to the playoffs very well.

I'm not sure what everyone's expectations were but that is a successful 1st season in my book.

Just to refresh everyone's memory this was our 1st non-losing season since 2018. In the fall of 2019 we were 2-8, in the fall of 2020 we went 4-5, in the fall of 2021 we were 3-7, the fall of 2020 we were 4-6. So for these seniors this was their most successful season.

I'm not here to head hunt or bash anyone past, present or future. I'm here on every player's behalf that felt that they had a successful season and that our program was on the right path. I know what it is like to have a successful athlete come out of our program and be successful at the next level. For the record, I was pleased with the previous coaching staff and what they did. I found myself just as pleased with this year's coaches and was confident that our program was building a winning culture.

As a parent I think we deserve an explanation because it involves each one of our sons and daughters' future in athletics. We have received zero explanation and that is not ok with me. From my point of view, you had good numbers and to my knowledge only 1 player did not return from the year before. We made the playoffs, and had several records broken. We also have 3 players moving on to play at the collegiate level. When is the last time that happened here? I understand everything wasn't unicorns and butterflies and some people were not happy. Those issues should have been taken to the coach and handled by the Athletic Director. As in all my years as an athlete's parent this is the correct way to get those issues resolved. No matter who coaches you can't please everybody. To quote former Alabama Coach Nick Saban "If you want to please everyone, don't be a coach."

Now I am going to go on my soap box. If the reason the coaching staff is being opened is because of a few angry parents, then every coaching staff in the district needs opened. I can find angry parents on every team in the district. Finding coaches that can make everyone happy is unattainable and unrealistic. That is why we have a board that approves our coaches to make sure that we are hiring the most qualified person. We as parents should be able to trust that is happening, as well as the student athletes that will make up that program. What message are we sending to our students if you only give

that person a year to prove themselves? You are going to end up with a team full of players that doubt their ability to be successful because in their eyes they were on the right track. The juniors this fall will be playing for their 3rd coaching staff in 3 years, that is disgraceful. How can these athletes grow and obtain the skills they need to move on to the next level with all this change? Football is an intricate and complex sport to learn and master. You are not setting these athletes up for success as again they are forced to learn a new system. I am aware that some of the prior coaches stayed last time and that made it familiar, however it was still new, and they still had a learning curve.

To conclude and to get to the point. Someone's mad parent doesn't get to dictate my son's or anyone else's child's future in athletics. This feels like the squeaky wheel gets the grease. If that is what this is, then its opinion based. I know nobody asked for my opinion and I can find 30 parents that nobody asked for theirs either. Our opinions are just as important, but more so the opinion of each player is what should matter most. I'm certain theirs wasn't asked for either.

What should matter is qualifications, success, rapport, and culture and these were all prevalent this year.

My son and many of his teammates had bought into the program this year and were very excited for what next year would bring.

The Warrior Football Family deserves answers.

Thank you for your time.