

**LT official looking to retire** By BROOKE WILLIAMS PRESS EXAMINER Aug 26, 2020

Changes are coming to the maintenance and transportation department at the Lackawanna Trail School District.

During a special meeting on Thursday, the Lackawanna Trail School Board acknowledged the upcoming retirement of Transportation Director and Maintenance Supervisor Rick Kordish, effective Dec. 8.

Afterward, the board moved to hire Thomas Schofield for the position, who began on Aug. 21 at a salary of $62,500. Brian Petula abstained from the vote.

The board also ratified a consulting contract with Transfinder for $2,400 and gave approval for the district’s business office to engage the company for professional services related to implementation and training on Routefinder PLUS for up to $9,250.

Keith Glynn, business manager, explained how the short-term consulting contract comes into play following Kordish’s departure to help the district build its non-public rosters.

The company will also provide training for Routefinder PLUS, an upgraded product.

“We’re pursuing a change in our transportation leadership right now, so we felt it prudent to upgrade to the most recent product,” Glynn said.

Upon evaluation, Glynn said it’s more efficient and user-friendly than Routefinder Pro and helps the district with its COVID-19 transportation limitations.

“We will pursue grant funding because this product handles the bus routing with the limited seating capacity,” he added.

In other business, Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said with updated guidance from the state regarding mask wearing, the district will need to amend its Health and Safety Plan.

Students must wear masks even when it’s possible to maintain 6 feet of distance with only three exceptions: eating and drinking, strenuous activity, and 10-minute teacher-directed breaks. Previously, the district expected to only enforce masks when social distancing isn’t possible.

“Many schools that have gone before us are in the same boat,” he said. “The guidance does change pretty regularly and expectations are that we will have to update this plan multiple times.”

The district still plans for a full reopening on Thursday, Sept. 10.

Principal Brian Kearney shared the most recent numbers for the elementary school, with about 125 students opting for remote learning. About 10-15 students will attend the Lackawanna Trail Cyber Academy, while a few others have chosen cyber charter schools. One student will be homeschooled.

“We are able with the numbers that came back to safely distance within each classroom in the building,” Kearney said.

Board members also discussed the COVID-19 transmission risks that come with allowing contact sports during the upcoming school year.

In the current phase of the district’s athletic reopening plan, competition for sports other than golf won’t begin until after the board meets again in September. Ultimately, the board agreed to wait on making any possible amendments to the flexible athletic reopening plan.

“Given the fact that we have a voting meeting prior to the date in which these contact sports would begin, I think we have some time to reevaluate and see where we’re at,” Philip Stark said.

In other business, the board:

 Approved Tara Crum as a full-time confidential administrative assistant to the superintendent/transportation assistant.

 Approved Ashlinn Simpson as a secondary special education teacher at a salary of $49,836 to begin on Sept. 8.

 Approved the appointment of Jessica Bentley as Simpson’s mentor for the 2020-21 school year at a stipend of $450.

 Approved Corey Packer for a maintenance II position at $14 per hour to begin on Sept. 4.

 Approved tuition waiver requests for Amelia Yanniello and Mia Rose Becchetti for the 2020-21 school year under Policy 202: Eligibility for Non-Resident Students.

 Approved Brenda Grunza as a school nurse substitute for the 2020-21 school year.

 Approved Theresa Loney, Gretchen Sheposh and Linda Kettell as private vehicle contractors for the 2020-21 school year.

The Lackawanna Trail School Board is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 7:30 p.m. It was originally scheduled as a work session, but will be advertised as a regular meeting.