

Carpenter appointed new Trail board member
BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE PRESS EXAMINER Wednesday, February 16, 2022

The Lackawanna Trail School Board appointed a new director to fill the seat left vacant by former board secretary David Thorne.

At a meeting on Monday night, the board voted to appoint Mark Carpenter of Clinton Township to the vacant seat representing Region I. Carpenter will serve the rest of Thorne’s term which expires in 2023. Board members voted 5-0 to appoint Carpenter to the open seat, Brian Petula and Joe Ross abstained from the vote. Robert Minick was absent from the meeting.

Board president Kevin Mulhern announced the board interviewed six candidates in an executive session late last month and ranked each candidate based on a rubric filled out by each board member. Carpenter received the highest overall rating.

“All six candidates were great and truly had visions of how to make this district better,” Mulhern said. “We look forward to welcoming Mark onto the board. He will be a great addition to this body.”

Carpenter will be sworn in at next month’s board meeting.

Building and Grounds Committee member Tracy Wescott gave a presentation on the new student recreation and wellness center project. The 10,000 square foot building will be located next to the high school with easy access to Lions Pride Stadium. The building will feature a new male locker room with 70 lockers, a new female locker room with 50 lockers, a new weight room, as well as multipurpose classrooms which can be used during the school day and for after school activities.

“This building is going to provide tons of educational and athletic opportunities for our students,” Wescott said. “It will be a great place for students to go and destress. As well as providing ample new space for our athletic teams, especially our female athletes.”

The district received and accepted a $500,000 Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant for the project. After the grant, the total cost of construction for the center will be around $1.6 million.

The board unanimously approved to begin the solicitation of bids for construction of the student wellness center. There is no set date as to when construction of the new building will begin.

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas announced he is not quite ready to lift the mask mandate currently in place in the district. He said he is encouraged by the decreasing amounts in cases the past couple of weeks, but wants to see low numbers sustained for a couple of weeks before going to a mask optional policy.

“Even though we have been seeing decreases in cases, Lackawanna and Wyoming counties still have high transmission according to the CDC,” Rakauskas said. “If cases keep dropping that will change. I’d like to see cases drop for a couple of more weeks before making that final decision.”

Business manager Keith Glynn announced prelimi- nary budget talks for the 2022-23 school year are currently underway. He said if Gov. Tom Wolf ’s budget passed as presented, the district would receive an additional $500,000 in funding. Glynn alerted the board not to count on that extra funding, because Wolf ’s budget will be amended multiple times before final passage.

In other business, the board approved

■ Lackawanna Trail’s contribution of $13,193.94 to the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit #19 for fiscal year July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023.

■ The elementary and high school course curriculum and description guides for 2022-23.

■ The appointment of Michael Mould to complete the remainder of Philip Stark’s term on Intermediate Unit 19’s board of directors through 2023.

■ The resignation of Laurel Kinback as Unified Sports track and field coach.

■ The appointments of: Amanda Carpenter and Kara Walters, Level I personal care assistants; Kaylee Hager, contracted driver; Tom Lengel, stagecraft director; Elissa Loubet, dramatics director; Megyn Stevens, Unified Sports track and field coach; Mark Lloyd, Tim Ronchi, Mary Smarkusky, Jenn Boccadori and Max Brewer, volunteer track and field coaches; John Yaniello, Samuel Luke Ryon, Jeff Edwards, Mark June and Charlie Cobb, volunteer baseball coaches.

The Lackawanna Trail School Board will next meet for a work session on Monday, March 7, at 7:30 p.m. The Zoom link will be posted at www.ltsd.org. MARK CARPENTER