

**Trail looks to bring back boys volleyball**BY KEVIN MCCONLOGUE PRESS EXAMINER/ Published: November 9, 2022

Boys volleyball may be offered as a sport again in the Lackawanna Trail School District.

At a school board work session meeting on Monday night, a fairly large group of students was present to advocate for the reinstatement of the boys volleyball program. The program started in 1990 and was suspended in May 2015 due to low numbers with only seven players being on the roster.

Trail senior Max Bluhm was the student spokesman for reinstating the boys volleyball program. He said so far 16 students have already signed up for the team should it become a varsity sport and cited other District 2 schools Scranton, Valley View and West Scranton as approving boys volleyball programs during the past year.

“The sport of boys volleyball is very much growing not just in this area, but all throughout Pennsylvania,” Bluhm said. “Various recreational leagues have also started at various community centers around the area so kids can get experience. I think this would be great for our school. Giving students more athletic opportunities is never a bad thing.”

In his presentation, Bluhm stated no additional equipment is needed and the only costs would be coaching salaries, transportation and uniforms. Business manager Keith Glynn said the cost to reinstate the team would be $14,200 and would be covered through an unassigned fund balance.

Trail athletic director Ed Gaidula explained the procedures of how the team would come back into play. He said the PIAA is currently in the first year of a two year cycle so schedules for the 2023 and 2024 volleyball seasons have already been made, and he doesn’t see the Lackawanna Interscholastic Athletic Association changing schedules to allow new members in the middle of the cycle.

“The LIAA is more than happy for the interest, but the problem is the schedules have already been set and I don’t see those being adjusted,” Gaidula said. “If the team were to be reinstated, there are options for them to have matches however.”

In the first two years, the team could play an independent schedule and still be eligible for the District 2 playoffs. Gaidula recommended this would probably be the best option considering all of the new programs coming into the area before becoming a full-time member of the LIAA for the PIAA’s next two year cycle.

The board will vote on whether to reinstate the boys volleyball program at its next meeting on Nov. 14.

“We’re here to show you we have the student interest to compete in the sport and we’re hungry to win a district title,” Bluhm said.

High school principal Mark Murphy began the meeting by honoring four students who received academic recognition from College Board. Max Bluhm, Francis Cocchini and Matthew Rakauskas received the Rural Small Town Award for their scores on the PSAT’s. Deana Wilhelm received the National African American Recognition Award. Rakauskas was also recognized as a National Merit Scholar.

“Lackawanna Trail students scored higher than the state average on the SAT’s and PSAT’s,” Murphy said. “These students have gone above and beyond and I couldn’t be more proud of their accomplishments.”

In other business, next week the board will vote to approve:

■ The adoption of Policy 240-athletic awards.

■ The appointments of: Megyn Stevens and Ashlinn Simpson, Unified Sports track and field coaches; Dan Maurer, sound and lighting assistant for the 2023 spring musical; Jeff Marx and Chaz Ross, volunteer wrestling assistant coaches; and John Yaniello, volunteer boys basketball and baseball assistant coach.

■ The resignation of Jessica Bentley as Unified track and field coach.

The Trail school board next meets for a regular meeting on Monday, Nov. 14, at 7:30 p.m., in the boardroom.