

**ADIRONDACK CENTRAL SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
BOONVILLE, NY 13309
Via Livestream**

DRAFT

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING – February 4, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Michael Kramer, President	Edward Niznik, Superintendent
Almanda Sturtevant, Vice-President	Sharon Cihocki, Business Administrator
Bruce Brach	Michelle Freeman, District Clerk
Mark Emery	Dan Roberts, Asst. HS Principal/Interim AD
Richard Gallo	
Joan Ingersoll	
Doug Muha	
<u>MEMBERS ABSENT:</u>	

Mr. Kramer called the special meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and led the recitation of the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Niznik gave an introduction regarding sports and athletics in the winter. The school district has been working on the return of athletics for the winter season. We are trying to provide opportunities for our students in the safest manor possible. Our first priority is always assuring the health and safety of everyone. As you are aware, on January 22, 2021 Governor Cuomo announced high risk school sports could resume as early as February 1st as permitted by their local county health departments. The Oneida County Health Department has required schools to submit a plan before practicing can begin for the winter season. Guidance for the plans was sent out by Oneida County on Wednesday February 4th. We will work on submitting the plan upon receiving this guidance from the county and will await their approval. We know the importance of having our students involved in athletics and extracurricular activities, however we must also realize we cannot let our guard down when it comes to making sure we minimize the level of risk for our students, staff, families and community. Overall schools have been successful with the safety precautions put in place since the beginning of the school year and we want to keep it that way so we need to continue to be vigilant in all the efforts we have put forth since the beginning of the year. We know the sports season procedures and protocols will be different than past years. Our focus will be to give some opportunities to our students with the realization that practices and competitions will be conducted differently than in past years. Strict adherence to all required guidelines must be followed at all times as put out in the guidance document for Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and also from the NYS Public High Schools State Association. Please realize that as we go through this process that this is a fluid situation and the sports season can change or end due to a variety of factors and some of those factors may include the rates of COVID-19 transmission and positivity rate, is there a new transmissible variant of COVID-19 identified within the community, the quarantining of an athletic team, return to 100% remote learning due to a spike in COVID-19 cases or as directed by the county or state government. As has been recorded in the county, we have seen the numbers go down recently and the seven day average is at 2.8% and the fourteen day average is at 3.9%, so we hope to see those numbers continue to go down. January 6, 2021 the fourteen day average was 10.1%.

As far as participation, decision falls on the parents or guardians if whether they will allow their children to participate in any given sport or activity if offered at the school. As we have been going through the protocols that are required, Mr. Roberts will give an update in regards to our athletics season and an overview of the plan that is being worked on that will be submitted with some new guidance that just came out from the Oneida County Department of Health.

Mr. Roberts stated that one of the commissions the school districts in Oneida County were given is we had to submit a plan to the Director of Health in Oneida County. So we developed a protocol or return to play of sorts to get back into sports, particularly winter high risk sports. He highlighted the areas that were focused on.

> Social distancing - The student athletes, coaches and staff must maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing at all times when they are not engaged in any type of activities requiring a lesser distance. Masks, the mask part of winter sports is going to be vastly different from what student athletes experienced in the fall. Adirondack did not partake in the fall, but there were a lot of school districts that did and the way guidelines read in the fall was student athletes could wear a face mask until it was intolerable and then they could pull it down. The athletic directors, coaches, school districts felt there was abuse of this going on so they wanted to make the policy a little stricter, so within the sector of schools we tightened up the policy on masks. The way we have it worded is that if a distance shorter than 6 feet is required, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings. If student athletes are unable to tolerate a face covering for physical activity they must be substituted out of the game or drill at practice for a mask break. If they have a mask break they must stay 6 feet away from any teammate or coach until they are able to wear the mask again. Coaches, trainers and other individuals not directly engaged in physical activity must wear the mask at all times. So that is a little bit different, during activity they are required to wear the mask. If they cannot tolerate it the coach is going to make a substituting change within the game time.

> Hydration - We are going to ask athletes must bring their own water bottle and label it. There will be water coolers available and we have the water dispenser that freely flows they can use.

> Screening – Players and coaches will have their temperatures checked and fill out a survey upon entry. Coaches will be responsible for collecting information and then turn it into the athletic director. Anyone that checks yes on there or has a temperature over 100 degrees will not be allowed at practice, play in a game or entry into the building. We will make arrangements to get individual home and not come back until cleared.

> Spectators – The league did make an ultimate decision that we are not going to have any spectators at the events with the one exception of Senior Night. We will allow senior parents to attend one game for Senior Night.

> Locker rooms – Basically not allowing, highly discouraging them. If our athletes are traveling to another school, don't believe there is any other school we are playing against are allowing locker rooms to be used. Students are required to come dressed and prepared for practice and games, they can keep their stuff in their duffle bags. Take a pair of sweatpants and have shorts on ready to play. If there are extenuating circumstances we can make arrangements, but if a locker room needs to be used the coach would have to submit some type of locker room plan to the athletic director for approval. Otherwise locker rooms are going to be off limits.

> Transportation – We do have a 5:00 bus. Masks are to be worn at all times. One student athlete to a seat.

> Consent to Play – There is going to be a rider and a parent permission form that is going to involve some COVID questions to student athletes. If a student checks off they have had COVID in the past 90 days they are going to have to seek clearance from their physician to play sports. We also just found out the school district does have to complete a district COVID-19 informed consent form that identifies the risks associated with COVID-19 and playing higher risk sports. They do list a lot of the different risks involved so we have to notify parents and they have to sign off. We will finish creating that consent form and get that out as well. That is one of the newest documents that came out yesterday.

Mr. Roberts stated one thing we did find out that came yesterday in the Oneida County document is testing. They are requiring coaches get tested. The obstacle we are facing is they are requesting the PCR test which is the longer test, 4 or 5 days out before you get the results. So that is going to be problematic and they are recommending students and anyone else associated with the games get tested as well. That was a recommendation, but coaches are mandated by Oneida County as part of their guidance.

As far as the schedules go, we just broke up our Center State Conference League, we are not going to be playing all of the teams because our conference lies over 5 different counties so there is no way to play everybody because some counties cannot participate at this time. We agreed to play just in our county, Oneida County, with the schools that are remaining. We decided to break off into pods. The schools with us are Waterville, Remsen, Oriskany, Westmoreland, so we are going to be breaking off in volleyball and basketball. With wrestling, the Tri-Valley League made a decision recently that they are moving their entire wrestling season to spring so we are electing not to wrestle in the winter essentially because we would not have any schools to wrestle. The one other school in our county, Holland Patent, is electing to move also to spring. He informed the coach and he is on board as well. So we did make the decision to move wrestling to spring. Right now we have on the docket volleyball and basketball for winter sports.

Mr. Roberts asked if anyone had any questions. Mrs. Sturtevant asked when you say we are playing other schools are we traveling to other schools, are they coming to our school? How is that going to be worked out? Mr. Roberts answered that is why we broke into smaller pods. Right now it looks like we are only going to be traveling to about 2-3 other schools in volleyball and the same in basketball so we are only playing at most two other schools so there is going to be a lot of repetition. The start of the season we projected the week of the 22nd for both volleyball and basketball that is what we were kind of projecting amongst the different schools. If we do that and we have an end date of the 13th that gives us a little bit of time and we were thinking 2, possibly 3 games a week, but we will see how the schedule works out. Mrs. Sturtevant also asked since we are not having spectators are we planning on livestreaming the games. Mr. Roberts said yes he thinks we have the ability to livestream and he has talked to the Director of Technology and she is on board to livestream the games.

Mr. Brach asked when the actual start date of practices will be. Mr. Roberts said he had a meeting with the coaches earlier today and anticipating starting with the kids possible Tuesday. The only thing throwing them off is that Oneida County is requiring a PCR test from the coaches. He thinks we need to get confirmation. All the coaches are on board to get tested and if they are on board we have to work out the details, if there is a cost to it, if the district is paying and if they can do it right away because there may be a 4-5 day window before we get the results back before we can start. If it was a rapid test we could do it in 15 minutes and that is the downside.

Mr. Niznik stated we have to clarify if they have to wait for the results because there are other occupations that get tested every week or every two weeks and they still go back to work so we need clarification on that.

Mr. Kramer asked if the athletes will be able to do skills and drills prior to the coaches being checked out because he saw Rome started and now with the clarification from the county they have stopped. Mr. Roberts stated yes because of the document that came out yesterday, so we need to find out some more information on that. He imagines coaches will have to be cleared before they can work with the kids.

Mr. Kramer stated that after tonight's meeting that they would take it upon themselves they get tested in the next couple of days.

Mrs. Sturtevant asked what do the students who are in the 3-5 p.m. program because they are failing several subjects do, would they even qualify for this. Mr. Roberts stated it is his understanding they don't attend the academic program every day, something could be worked out between the coaches if they did have to attend an academic session. Some of the practices would be 5:30-7:30 too, they aren't all 3-5.

Mrs. Cihocki stated they can stay Monday – Wednesday now as well from 2:30-3:00 so they also can do that.

Mr. Roberts stated the information we have been getting the last couple of weeks has been changing daily if not hourly so as we are talking it could be changing, but he will try to get some answers tomorrow to some of the testing questions as well.

Mr. Kramer thanked Mr. Roberts and Mr. Niznik for keeping them updated over the last week. It has helped keeping them in the loop.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and consistent with the terms and conditions enumerated in the Resolution to Conditionally Appoint Athletic Coaches during the 2020-2021 School Year, which resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Education prior hereto on January 21, 2021, the Adirondack Central School District Board of Education hereby conditionally appoints the following individuals to serve as coaches:

- >> RJ Lewis – Boys Varsity Basketball Coach
- >> Nick Palczak – Boys JV Basketball Coach
- >> Jeremy Youngs – Girls Varsity Basketball Coach

- >> Blanche Coscomb – Varsity Volleyball
- >> Courtney Foll – JV Volleyball

Mr. Brach moved and Mrs. Sturtevant seconded.

Mr. Kramer asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Emery stated he is taking the contrarian view as he doesn't think we should be doing anything that jeopardizes the academics with indoor sports that are high risk inside at a time when we have had 10% of the seniors with positive tests and they are going on vacation with another opportunity to become infected.

Mr. Kramer asked for any other comments, there were none. All in favor, carried 5-2; the Board approved the coaches.

At 7:28 p.m. Mr. Brach moved and Mr. Muha seconded, carried 7-0, to adjourn to the Regular Meeting to be held on Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

RESOLUTION
to Conditionally Appoint Athletic Coaches
during the 2020-2021 School Year

WHEREAS, the prevalence of COVID-19 is such that schools were allowed to reopen in September for the 2020-2021 school year, under limited conditions provided schools adhere to certain health related requirements, recommendations, and mandates that have been, or may be, made by the Governor of the State of New York, the New York State Department of Education, the New York State Department of Health, and/or local county departments of health; and

WHEREAS, the Adirondack Central School District (the “District”) is required to comply with the various health related requirements, recommendations and mandates in order to operate the District’s athletic programs and to mitigate the potential negative impact of exposure to the COVID-19 virus and therefore recognize that many adjustments to the routine operation of these programs will be necessary to implement this compliance; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that throughout the 2020-2021 school year multiple adjustments may be necessary in form, frequency, and modality for offering of, and participation in, any specific athletic program which may impact the need for staffing and/or a need to reduce or cancel any specific portion of the athletic program; and

WHEREAS, the District wishes to ensure coaches are compensated on a pro-rata basis for any portion of the 2020-2021 athletic seasons for which students participate in athletics, but that coaches do not receive compensation for services that are not provided in the event that there is no student participation or cancellation of all or a part of any specific portion of the athletic program during any portion of the 2020-2021 academic year/athletic season(s); and

WHEREAS, the pro-rata basis shall be calculated by dividing the amount of a stipend by the standard number of official weeks of each normal season to determine a weekly stipend. The standard number of official weeks for sports will be determined by the athletic section. In the event the students are not able to participate in the event, the employee will only be paid for the weeks the students were able to participate; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education recognizes that coaches receive a longevity stipend based upon the number of years of service an individual has served in their respective position.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED:

1. In the event that students participate in extra-curricular athletics for any portion of the 2020-2021 academic year/athletic season(s), stipends will be pro-rated in proportion to the ratio of the actual duration of service rendered during any specific 2020-2021 athletic season to the scheduled time from an uninterrupted athletic season as set out in the Recitals above, and coaches shall receive longevity credit for actual service during any specific 2020-2021 athletic season; and
2. In the event that students do not participate in any portion of what would have otherwise been a specific athletic season(s) during the 2020-2021 school year, all coaching appointments for that specific athletic season(s) will be deemed rescinded, and no stipends shall be paid, nor shall coaches receive longevity credit for a specific athletic season(s) during the 2020-2021 school year if no portion of the specific season occurs.

Adopted by the Board 1/21/2021