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The Urbana City School Board of Education met for a regular board meeting Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 1673 S US Hwy 68, Urbana, Ohio. President Darrell Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll call: Mr. Arter, present; Mr. Engle, present; Ms. Finch, present; Ms. Paul, present; Mr. Thomas, present.

Five members present.

(Motion #0921.01) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Arter and seconded by Ms. Paul to approve the amended agenda as presented.

Roll Call: Mr. Arter, aye; Mr. Engle, aye; Ms. Finch, aye; Ms. Paul, aye; Mr. Thomas, aye.  
Motion carried.

Public Participation: Stephanie Chapman addressed the Board, noting she had attended in the spring to talk about masking. She said it is a big issue for her and she is grateful masks have been optional this year. She said she has started a group called Unmask Ohio's Kids and it has grown to 1,000 members. She said she has heard sad stories from other districts with masks. She said it has been such a blessing to have this safe haven where people can choose and she commended the Board. She said we must find ways to give parents the right to choose what is best for their families. There is information against masking children that shows the benefits don't always outweigh the risks. She said this is one small example of how we can stand up for our rights.

(Motion #0921.02) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Engle and seconded by Ms. Finch to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 17, 2021.

Roll Call: Mr. Engle, aye; Ms. Finch, aye; Ms. Paul, aye; Mr. Thomas, aye; Mr. Arter, aye.  
Motion carried.

(Motion #0921.03) TREASURER'S REPORT

- A. Approve monthly reports for August 2021
- B. Approve Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources for FY 2022
- C. Approve Permanent Appropriations for FY 2022
- D. Accept the following donations:
  - To Urbana High School PBIS, from Jennifer Butler, Ellie Cain, Carleton Cotner, Cassie Cress, Katie deNijs, Jami Denman, Jesse Edwards, Chris Flowers, Holly Lewis, Chris Lightle, Erin McKenzie, Kylee Menchhofer, Stephanie Moore, Laura Morgan, Amy Padilla, Lauren Petty, Ryan Pine, Carmen Pittsenbarger, Laura Ridge, Jason Schelle, Carie Thomas, Steve Wilhelm, Kathy Zaborowski, Kendall Deitloff, Becky Evans, Tony Grigsby, Jamie Jacobs, Don Klingler, Jessica Markin, Corrie McDonald, Robin Morgan, Sharon Murphy, Heather NewKirk, Chris Roberts, Thomas Russell, Larry Saunders, Leigh Ann Simpson, Patrick Trenor, John Williams, Mallory Zachrich, and Debra Kress, a total of \$1,010.
  - To Urbana High School Athletic Department, from CLC, \$374.66.
  - To Urbana Band, from UHS Band Boosters, and the Champaign County Fair Board, a total of \$572.
  - To Urbana Elementary PBIS, from Cheryl Edarsd, Ashley Sullivan, Emily Ginn, Victoria Neer, Natalie Hardman, Jay Keely, Kim Pickering, Jill Weimer, Theresa Knox, Kristen Wasson, and MaryBeth Weiss, a total of \$300.
  - To Urbana Elementary, from Lifetouch, \$200.
  - To Urbana High School Athletic Department, from the Boosters, \$3,000.
  - To Urbana Football, from the Boosters, \$3,560.
  - To Urbana Volleyball, from the Timm Family, \$1,000.

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- To Urbana Elementary and Junior High, from Donay Life & Wellness Center, \$500.

Mr. Engle commented that it was nice to see all of the donations.

Roll Call: Ms. Finch, aye; Ms. Paul, aye Mr. Thomas, aye; Mr. Arter, aye; Mr. Engle, aye.  
Motion carried.

#### REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

- A. School Facilities Update: The cleaning and sealing of the concrete block at the PK8 is complete and the work has been approved by our staff. We are not aware of anything else outstanding and hope to move forward with the closeout process.
- B. District COVID-19 Update: Mr. Thiel distributed a COVID-19 data sheet showing information on positive cases and attendance throughout the district. The ability to adequately staff our schools will impact our in-person learning. Bus drivers have been splitting routes and students have been impacted by some late arrivals. We may be able to co-mingle some routes and allow another driver to be available. Ms. Finch asked if the absences on the sheet are due to the quarantine of someone else in the household. Mr. Thiel said these are all absences. Some are quarantined, others are unrelated to COVID and are normal absences. As far as quarantines go, it has been difficult sometimes to get accurate start and end dates in some cases. We are looking at how best to maintain social distancing in the school in order to avoid the quarantining of students. Mr. Engle asked how the numbers looked compared to last year. Mr. Thiel said the number of positive cases is definitely higher than last year and we are well ahead of the pace of last year. The number of absences we are seeing is higher than in a normal situation. We typically see an increase in late January and early February during cold and flu season. Mr. Arter asked if the quarantines were also high. Mr. Thiel said they were, but the positive test results can result in different levels of quarantines. Some may have several close contacts and others may not have any. Ms. Paul asked if most of the quarantines were coming from classroom close contact or cafeteria contact. Mr. Thiel said we do not have that breakdown specifically. Last year we added the auxiliary gym at the elementary to allow for distancing at lunch. We would like to have a more normal PE situation this year, but may need to adjust if numbers result in more quarantines from lunch. The tables from Local, East, and North have all been stored so we can use them if needed. Ms. Paul asked if we were able to accommodate the three-foot distancing in the classrooms. Mr. Thiel said in some cases we are, but it depends on the number of students we have. Last year we implemented the seventh classroom in each learning community and lessened some interventions. This year we have reimplemented interventions and many of the UVA students have returned. Mr. Arter asked if the busing has worked out as far as the number of kids. Mr. Thiel said the ridership is slightly higher than the projections. Ms. Paul asked about masking on buses. It is a requirement to wear masks on buses, but we are not making the drivers be the mask police. We make sure masks are available and students are encouraged to wear masks. The drivers have limited ability to enforce. Mr. Arter asked if safety protocols were still being followed on the buses. Mr. Thiel said we have assigned seats and windows are to be down for circulation. We are still sanitizing, but per the Health District, the virus does not survive on hard surfaces for as long as originally thought. Last year, junior high students were podded and the teachers traveled, which is not always ideal. Students this year are transitioning from room to room. We have kept dismissals separate and that has worked well. We are putting other things in place as general good practices. Mr. Arter said he has heard that there have been some classes at the high school having difficulty maintaining the three-foot spacing. He asked if band and choir were back to playing and singing. Mr. Thiel said we are back to more of a regular music program. We are seeing transmission that happens in the music room and we need to try to implement more ways to have more distancing and spacing. Mr. Arter said the quarantine numbers seemed high and asked if there was a pattern. Mr. Thiel said when someone is positive in a classroom that is where the contact tracing starts and is variable based on where the student is. Quarantines are also based on household exposures. It is often difficult to determine dates. In isolation situations, someone could be quarantined for twenty-four days. The

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period of quarantine can be reduced by a testing process. The test has to be administered with a proctor and all directions have to be followed. We have low numbers of vaccinated students at the high school.

Mr. Arter asked if it was confusing for our staff with the number of students out. Mr. Thiel said the staff worked with it last year as well. The Google Classroom platform is used in grades six through twelve and everything is put there so the kids can do the work. This is more of a challenge in grades kindergarten through five. Grades three through five pushed hard to get the platform in place and to start using it and assignments are available in Google Classroom. Anytime a kid misses, it is a challenge. Ms. Paul confirmed that we are 1:1 in grades six through twelve, but not kindergarten through five and asked how work was handled. Can a family request to get a device? Do we have enough devices to get one to every kid if we have to go remote? Mr. Thiel said we have the option available to send devices home. We will need to come up with a loaner system for students to be able to do work from home when gone for an extended period of time. Mr. Arter said it is frustrating when the Superintendent does not keep everyone informed and he thanked Mr. Thiel for his communication to the public and to parents. He commented that the letter sent the previous day by Mr. Thiel had the word inevitable in it. He asked if somewhere in the near future, did he plan to implement masks? Mr. Thiel said some places have put in a number that will trigger a mask mandate. The concern is are we picking the right number and using the right data. He said it is not great data; it is incomplete for a variety of reasons. Families may choose not to get tested; students are sometimes in school for several days with and without symptoms and are exposing other students. He said it is imperative to maintain the daily health check process. He said the numbers zoomed up last week and he is waiting to see if that continues this week, along with the associated quarantines. Mr. Thomas asked what the number of staff is that can be missing before we are in trouble. Mr. Thiel said not very many because of the availability of substitutes. We currently have twenty-four substitutes on the list. We had thirty-six last year and fifty the year prior. We may not always have to implement a full sub, but if a whole bunch go out, that will be a challenge. Our para staff has helped and provided coverage. We implement social distancing as much as possible in order to try to avoid quarantine due to close contact situations. If we can keep the current numbers, we will be okay. There are also other reasons that impact attendance, not just COVID situations. It is a challenge on a daily basis to put coverage together.

Mr. Engle said this is such a hard situation. He said he feels for everyone who wore the masks last year and he knows the teachers didn't like it. He said he wore one to respect other people and he thought it was the right thing to do at the time. He said we may need to make the decision and he hopes it doesn't have to happen. He said his daughter is an ER doctor and she sees it every day. He said he hopes that if it comes down to it, we make the right decision and we all need to protect one another. Ms. Paul said her concern is that when we made the decision at the beginning of the year, the cases were low and there was a low impact on students. She questions how long we should let this go before we put another layer of protection in place. We are not at the same level we were last year. She said she feels like we are the point where we need to implement another layer. She said she appreciated the information and the update.

(Motion #0921.04) APPROVE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Consent Agenda – All matters listed under the Consent Agenda (contingent upon meeting all local/state/federal laws/guidelines) are considered by the Board of Education to be routine and will be enacted by the Board in one motion in the form listed below. The Superintendent of Schools will briefly discuss each item in the consent agenda before they are actively acted upon. However, a board member, staff member, or the public may request that specific items shall be discussed and/or removed from the consent agenda. The Superintendent and administrative staff recommend approval of all consent agenda items.

It was moved by Ms. Paul and seconded by Mr. Arter to approve the Superintendent's recommendations as follows:

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1. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following resignations:

|                |                                     |   |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Paul Poppel    | Bus Driver                          | effective end of day September 30, 2021 |
| Tracy Flora    | Junior High Student Council Advisor | effective immediately                   |
| Andrew Donahoe | Freshmen Boys Basketball Coach      | effective immediately                   |

2. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following substitute teachers for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Andy DiLoreto | Sharon McCall |
|---------------|---------------|

3. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following classified substitutes for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Paul Poppel     | Substitute Bus Driver |
| Sharon Ridder   | Substitute Secretary  |
| Trent Crable    | Substitute Custodian  |
| Wilbert Mills   | Substitute Custodian  |
| Jennifer Wilson | Substitute Bus Aide   |

4. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following classified personnel for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

|                  |           |                              |
|------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Seth Lingrell    | Associate | effective August 25, 2021    |
| Brenda Mitchell  | Associate | effective September 8, 2021  |
| Margaret Huffman | Associate | effective September 13, 2021 |

5. The Superintendent recommends the approval of Nikki Sizemore as a home instructor for the 2021 - 2022 school year.

6. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following intra-sub at the elementary for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

|                  |                |  |
|------------------|----------------|--|
| Jamie Anderson   | Mendie Bowdle  | Macy Calland                               |
| Jenn Chapman     | Diane Deitrick | Jack DeLong                                |
| Corina Fain      | Emily Ginn     | Kristin Hartman                            |
| Grace Hower      | Megan Jacobs   | Jay Keely                                  |
| Ann Keep-Maloney | Theresa Knox   | Victoria Neer                              |
| Chuck Pack       | Staci Prince   | Amanda Robison                             |
| Heather Sherman  | Michele Slone  | Kay Trout                                  |
| Finnick Vest     | Kristen Wasson | <del>Emily Smith</del> (move to volunteer) |

7. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following intra-sub at the junior high for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

|                  |                |                |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Loren Baum       | Kevin Bowdle   | Matt Coberly   |
| Stephanie Forson | Arlene Hawkins | Mary Nehls     |
| Jenny Payne      | Evan Petty     | Nikki Sizemore |
| Shane Souders    | Sadie Steffan  | Julie Tirey    |
| Julie Webb       |                |                |

8. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following intra-sub at the high school for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

|                 |                 |                  |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Jennifer Butler | Ellie Cain      | Carleton Cotner  |
| Cassie Cress    | Megan Dean      | Kendall Deitloff |
| Katie deNijs    | Jeremy Dixon    | Jesse Edwards    |
| Chris Lightle   | Corrie McDonald | Kylee Menchhofer |
| Robin Morgan    | Amy Padilla     | Lauren Petty     |

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Ryan Pine  
Thomas Russell  
David Steinmetz  
Ellen Westerman  
Mallory Zachrich

Laura Ridge  
David Sapp  
Ryan Swain  
Steve Wilhelm

Chris Roberts  
Leigh Ann Simpson  
Patrick Trenor  
Kathy Zaborowski

9. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following after-school tutors at the high school for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

Jennifer Hall-Heminger

Laura Morgan

Robin Morgan

10. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the resolution to hire the following non-certified individuals as coaches for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

Andrew Donahoe

Assistant High School Boys Basketball Step 1

11. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following athletic department volunteers for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

William Brett Spriggs

Boys Soccer

12. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following salary schedule column changes for the 2021 - 2022 school year, due to the certification of additional credit hours:

Megan McGinnis

Masters to Masters 15

Sarah Ellen Westerman

Masters to Masters 15

13. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following volunteers at the high school for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

Amy Armstrong  
Lori Tavenner

Stacy Christian  
Robert Tavenner

Emily Mackendrick

14. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following volunteers at the elementary for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

Stacy Tierney

Rob Tierney

Michell Williams

Emily Smith (moved from intrasub)

15. The Superintendent recommends the approval of the following individuals as advisors for the 2021 - 2022 school year:

Sara Lingell

Split Junior High Student Council

Step 0

Shane Souders

Split Junior High Student Council

Step 0

## **B. Travel**

1. The Superintendent recommends the approval of Urbana Junior High 6th Grade to Kirkmont Outdoor Education Center, Zanesfield, OH, May 9 - 13, 2022; pending approval of all travel arrangements.
2. The Superintendent recommends the approval of Urbana Junior High 8th Grade to Washington D.C., May 16 - 20, 2022; pending approval of all travel arrangements.

It was noted that the numbering on the items needed to be adjusted and add a #5. All items after number four were renumbered. Also, Emily Smith was moved from elementary intrasub to elementary volunteer.

Roll Call: Ms. Paul, aye; Mr. Thomas, aye; Mr. Arter, aye; Mr. Engle, aye; Ms. Finch, aye.  
Motion carried.



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BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Career-Technical/Activities: In an update from Ms. Dunham, Mr. Thomas reported that Ohio Hi-Point is moving forward with the construction project and has drawn up future plans for additional expansion.

Curriculum/Technology: Grades K-5 are working with Edgenuity, a program which gives online reading and math practice every day. It is a good way for kids to practice where they are at their learning level. MAP will also help determine where they need to work in the Edgenuity program. All of the online students last year worked in Edgenuity. Grades K-2 are getting a program called Heggerty and learning sounds, letters, and how to break words apart. Some third-grade students are also receiving Heggerty if the need is identified. This is a way to help bridge the gap to help students who may be missing a phonological awareness skill.

Facilities/Finance: We are currently getting quotes for new doors at the gym/auditorium building and looking at camera systems for buses.

Legislative/Policy: The general assembly just returned and is working on several outstanding bills.

(Motion #0921.05) NEW BUSINESS – The following motion was made by Mr. Arter:

“All teachers and staff will wear cloth face masks or face shields in the school building except when working alone in an assigned work area. K-12 students must wear masks on buses and while inside the school building with specific mask breaks per District guidelines.”

The motion was seconded by Ms. Paul.

Ms. Finch commented she felt we needed to wait a little longer before introducing a mandate. Mr. Arter commented he just wasn't sure when that should be. Ms. Finch said so many children don't have a smile at home and they cannot make out what is going on when they have masks on. Mr. Arter said he wished it would go away and he believes it will at some point, but he is pushing this tonight. Ms. Paul said she has wrestled with this. She said the increase in cases is a concern, as well as the number of students we have to quarantine. She said she is concerned we are failing these families educationally. In a classroom setting, you are not under the fifteen minutes. A positive case can wipe out six to eight students. She said this would not be a permanent decision; it can be fluid or if we see a decrease, we can end it. She said we need to look at a reasonable start time in order to communicate with parents. She thought we could possibly start as early as next Monday. Mr. Arter said he has received a lot of communication and read a letter he had received from Dr. and Mrs. Flora concerning the lack of a mask mandate:

“As retired medical professionals we are concerned about the lack of a mask mandate to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Urbana's schools. While vaccination is highly recommended for those students age twelve and older, at present masking is the only way to prevent transmission of the virus in those age groups not yet eligible for vaccinations. It is inevitable without universal masking COVID will spread and be carried outside the school buildings and into the homes of the students' families. This has already occurred, causing disruption and anxiety in those families affected. Mask wearing is not an infringement of personal or parental rights any more than is the wearing of a seat belt in a car or protective headgear while bicycling or playing football. It is common sense. The protection of our children and their families demands a mask mandate.”

Signed John H. Flora, M.D. and Donna Flora, R.N.

Mr. Engle said he is pro-mask because he thinks they work. He said would rather table this and go over the information a little more, as he was not ready to make a decision tonight. He said we don't know what is going to happen. Mr. Arter said there is a good chance it could double, based on the articles he has read about how fast it can spread. Mr. Thomas said when we first started, the Board and Charles had to make a lot of tough decisions. We knew students needed to be in school last year and that meant wearing masks. He said toward the end of the year, with the push to get the

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vaccine, things went well. We were even able to hold a normal graduation this year. However, over the summer the Delta variant came up. He said he has heard from a lot of parents and does believe people have a right to choose. He said he has really struggled with this. At the start of the school year, the cases were low in Champaign County and we had low child positive cases. Today we are not in a position to say this is not affecting the children. Another district has gone to masking and it has helped. He said the job of the Board is to be sure we are able to educate the kids. He said he does not want to end up with a spread to our staff that shuts the school down or to experience a surge that impacts the students. While our county still appears to be in good shape, there is a Dayton hospital that has run out of beds. Time is not on our side and a lot can happen in a month. He said he prays that we go the other direction and the masks can come off.

Mr. Thiel said with regard to the motion, the process used last year for face shields was for a medical necessity or as a means of instruction. Research shows shields are not as effective as masks. Mr. Arter said he also had concerns with kids who were in speech.

Mr. Arter asked to amend his original motion to the following:

“All teachers and staff will wear cloth face masks in the school building except when working alone in an assigned work area. K-12 students must wear masks on buses and while inside the school building with specific mask breaks per District guidelines.”

Ms. Paul agreed to the amendment.

Mr. Arter asked about start and end dates. He said if the motion does not pass tonight, we may see it again at the next meeting.

Mr. Arter asked to amend the motion to include a start date:

“All teachers and staff will wear cloth face masks in the school building except when working alone in an assigned work area. K-12 students must wear masks on buses and while inside the school building with specific mask breaks per District guidelines. The implementation date shall be Monday, September 27, 2021.”

Ms. Paul agreed to the amendment.

Ms. Finch expressed concern that there was only three school days to implement the plan. Mr. Thomas said the language is from the previous reset/restart plan. Ms. Finch said she believed they needed to give this more time. Mr. Arter said he preferred not to wait until October.

Roll Call: Mr. Thomas, aye; Mr. Arter, aye; Mr. Engle, aye; Ms. Finch, nay; Ms. Paul, aye.  
Motion carried. (4-1)

### BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Arter said he was glad to see the large number of donations this month. The donations were across the board for sports, elementary, band, and more. It is one of his favorite things to read. He commented it was good that the Board has the ability to talk, discuss, and disagree. He said he appreciated everyone in the room.

Mr. Engle commented tonight he had to make a tough decision and it was one he really didn't want to make, but he knows it has to be made. He said other schools have reported higher numbers with fewer students. He said he couldn't live with himself if something happened as this seems to be impacting more and more young people.

Ms. Finch said she loves children. Her no vote on the masks does not mean she doesn't care about the students. She said she does not like how the situations are being handled, especially at the hospitals.

Mr. Arter told Ms. Finch he has never questioned her motivation. He said he knows she is pro-Urbana and pro-students and has always pushed to do the right thing. Ms. Finch said it just seems

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like everything gets so carried away. Mr. Arter said he has never questioned her motive for being on the board and knows she is there for the right reasons and truly loves the community.

Ms. Paul said this was a difficult decision and said she wanted to commend the administrators, teachers, and staff for their work last year and this year. She said this is one of the hardest things; you can't please all of the people all of the time. Some people were happy with the decision at the beginning of the year and some will be happy about this one. She said she does not want this to be permanent and she hopes we see a decrease in numbers.

Mr. Thomas said he has not looked forward to this all day. He said he and Jim have had disagreements over masks and as of last night he said he still disagreed with masking. He said we can all believe what we want to believe. He said the question he asked himself was what do we need to do to continue to educate our kids and keep our staff safe. There will be people who will be happy about this because they have wanted to have masks. He hopes we are making the right decision. He said he has gone to several sporting events and is encouraged at how the football team keeps grinding. The girls' soccer team is a great group of girls. He said it is great to see our young people excel. He likes to try to get out and support kids in their activities. As far as COVID information, it became concerning to him that there is so much different information out there and at how people are divided over this. School isn't the catchall and is not the only place to control the virus. Parents also need to take responsibility to keep kids safe. Kids go places other than school. He feels we need to respect everyone; he knows this may not be a popular choice, but he believes this is the right choice in order to be proactive.

Mr. Thiel said he appreciated the thought that had gone into the making of the masking decision. He knows there is often incomplete information and it is good to have dialogue and discussion. There is a bit of a reason to celebrate today. Today is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of South Elementary. He said he would still like to get inside and see what all they have done with the building. There are some temporary residents at North. He said it is exciting to see the buildings still being used in the community. Ms. Finch added that there are residents at South already and there is supposed to be an open house at the Douglass in December.

(Motion #0921.06) EXECUTIVE SESSION – It was moved by Ms. Paul and seconded by Ms. Finch to enter into executive session to consider the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, under ORC 121.22.

Roll Call: Mr. Arter, aye; Mr. Engle, aye; Ms. Finch, aye; Ms. Paul, aye, Mr. Thomas, aye.  
Motion carried.

The Board entered into executive session at 7:53 p.m. The President reconvened the open meeting at 8:37 p.m., noting all members were still present.

(Motion #0921.07) ADJOURNMENT - Being no further business to discuss, it was moved by Mr. Engle and seconded by Mr. Arter to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call: Mr. Engle, aye; Ms. Finch, aye; Ms. Paul, aye; Mr. Thomas, aye; Mr. Arter, aye.  
Motion carried.

The President declared the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

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President

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Treasurer