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Lackawanna Trail Board of Education approves cell phone tower project

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FACTORYVILLE — Members of the Lackawanna Trail Board of Education voted, 8-1, on April 9 to approve a contract with Tower North to lease land and construct a cell phone tower on the district's Tunnel Hill Road property.

The proposed location for the tower is in the corner of the district's practice football field at the high school. Lackawanna Trail Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas is hopeful construction will begin during the summer months.

Board member Joseph Strauch voted against the project, citing several concerns with language in the contract.

"The part that has bothered me since the beginning is that the tenant will have the right to modify, supplement, replace, upgrade, expand, increase the number of antennas, or relocate the tower anywhere on the 26 acres of our premises," Strauch said. "I think giving them that much power is severely restricting our board for the next, possibly, 30 years of the contract."

Strauch is also worried about access the company will have to the school property, per terms of the contract.

"They will have unfettered access, 24/7, over and through our property, at their will," he said. "In my opinion, the contract is not ready at this point."

Members of the board voted, 7-1, to approve the appointment of Rebekah King to the K-12 Principal of Management Administrative position at a starting rate of \$67,000, with a start date of July 1, 2018.

Board member Adrian Bianchi abstained and Michael Mould voted no.

"It's a new administrative position," Rakauskas said. "We haven't had a vice principal in the high school the last two years and our Director of Curriculum left mid-year. We've been trying not to replace (positions) when possible, but it was quite a strain.

"Although she will be responsible for a variety of administrative tasks, primarily it will be discipline and attendance in the high school and elementary center."

King currently serves as an eighth-grade English teacher and the English Language Arts Department Chair at Valley View Middle School.

Lackawanna Trail High School Principal Mark Murphy believes she will be a great addition.

"I think she brings a dynamic set of skills to our district and I'm excited about what she can do with our students," Murphy said.

In other business, members of the board voted:

- 9-0 to approve the agreement between the Lackawanna Trail School District and the Dalton Borough Police Department for a School Resource Officer at a rate \$38 per officer per hour for the 2018-2019 school year.
- 9-0 to approve the appointment of Melissa Flynn as an outsourced independent contractor for Social Work Services for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years at a salary of \$38,000 per year.
- 9-0 to approve the contract with Nutrition Group. Inc. for the 2018-19 school year.
- 8-1 to appoint John G. Audi of Sweet, Stevens, Katz, Williams as school solicitor, effective July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 at a rate of \$185 per hour for specialized services and \$125 per hour for any other services.
- 9-0 to approve the district's Special Education Comprehensive Plan, dated July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021.
- 9-0 to approve the retirement of Debra Curmaci, effective at the end of the 2017-18 school year, and 8-1 to approve the retirement of Sandra Spott, effective Jan. 1, 2019.