

Price of Trail games going up

C.J. MARSHALL / Published: August 16, 2017

Adults will now have to pay an additional \$1 to attend home football, basketball and wrestling games at Lackawanna Trail School District.

The school board voted on Monday to increase the adult admission price at those events from \$3 to \$4 at the beginning of the school year.

As explained by high school principal Mark Murphy, the increase is to offset the cost of paying for referees for the games. He explained that as of 2018, all referees - volunteer and paid - must be certified. Although there is no charge to attend the clinics, each participant has to pay \$90 to cover the cost of study materials.

Murphy said they have surveyed other districts within the region, with nine out of 16 reporting they too now charge \$4 for adult admission, due to rising costs. Trail's increase is expected to raise an additional \$3,000 per year.

District Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas reported that students will return to classes on Thursday, Aug. 31. Teachers will start on Aug. 28. Students will attend two days of school, then have off for three days, including Monday, because of Labor Day.

Elementary Principal Brian Kearney reported that the drop off time for school buses at the elementary school will be 8:40 a.m. The time had previously set at 8:30 a.m., but was changed to allow students more time to have breakfast in their homerooms.

Robert Minick, a resident in the district, voiced his concerns to the board about the practice of students being required to pay for pencils, tissues, and other similar items. He produced a list from teachers which had been sent home with his children, asking that those items be supplied.

Minick said he believes a school district with a \$21 million budget should not make its students pay for such items. He said he had spoken to a former teacher at Trail, who recommended sending his children to Abington Heights, or a charter school.

Business manager Keith Glynn explained that of the \$21 million in the budget, only a very small portion is marked for supplies. He said that things have been very difficult budget-wise in the past couple of years, and some hard decisions had to be made.

Kearney said that organizations such as Walmart and the PTO have been providing donations to the district to alleviate the situation, but it still remains a concern.

Minick also asked why was one of the items on the list a dry eraser, typically used to erase special markers from a board. Kearney said that the lists are prepared individually by the teachers, and sometimes they anticipate a need for an item for specific projects.

Kearney and others informed Minick that they are willing to work with him on the matter. At the end of the discussion, board member Ned Clarke said he resents the fact that a former teacher recommended to Minick to send his students to Abington or a charter school. Clark said Trail offers the best service possible to its students, and is working hard to maintain that standard.

In other business, the board:

*approved Jeff Marx as the Junior High Cross Country Coach, at a stipend of \$2,550 per LTEA contract.

*accepted the resignation of John Yanniello as junior high basketball coach;

*approved Kelly Hopkins as Interact adviser;

*approved Yvonne Kwiatkowski as a volunteer girls volleyball coach;

*heard from Glynn who urged parents of students participating in the free or reduced lunch programs to return their paperwork to the district as soon as possible. Those who fail to do so, he said, will be ineligible to participate in the program for the 2017-2018 school year.

*approved a one-year agreement with First National Bank for naming rights of the high school auditorium for \$5,000. A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled at the auditorium at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 28.

*approved lists of bus drivers, substitute bus drivers, and private vehicle contractors and substitutes.

*voted to deny grievance 2017-3 filed by the district's support staff.

The next board work session will be on Tuesday, Sept. 5, at 7:30 p.m.