

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Kathy Hough, board president, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Members and others present were: Jason Corte; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Christian Smith; Dennis Squillario; Pete Noel, Superintendent of Schools; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Jeremy Burkett, Junior Senior High School Principal; Jennifer Pisarski, Elementary School Principal; Dennis McGlynn, Esquire and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary. Absent were Susan Berardinelli, Matthew Decort, Tina Latoche and Troy Eppley.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

NOTICE TO PERSONNEL

There may be reductions and/or reassignments of personnel due to fiscal circumstances.

DISTRICT POLICIES

Policy 624 Taxable Fringe Benefits – Second Reading

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium, 84 Mountain Avenue, Portage, PA with the Regular Meeting immediately following.

APPROVING THE MINUTES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving the September meeting minutes. A copy of the minutes was distributed with the advance agenda.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Board moves to approve the written agenda with any noted additions, deletions or corrections as discussed.

Routine Matters, Line Item 6, Add request to advertise the position.

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REPORTS

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that the vo tech will have its open house October 12 and that the October JOC meeting is scheduled for next week. Current enrollment is about 780 students.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** reported the following:

- The budget process has begun and the Act 1 Index is now out. The district will consider a tax increase as it has done every other years. The proposed bill to change the date of the primary elections could impact our budgeting deadlines.
- New legislation which could clarify the number of days or hours of instruction required for students could add some flexibility to our school calendar.
- At the last in-service program, staff looked at LinkIt! data to understand student performance measures and keep their pulse on learning. They also had an introduction to STEEL standards.
- Administration and staff are working on a K-12 guidance/graduation plan.
- Clarification is being sought on questions brought by the board and administration.
- There is currently legislation in the state house and senate concerning cyber-charter schools and legal notice requirements.
- Policies to be considered in the upcoming months by the board are use of force, district-owned cell phones and crowdfunding. Currently the district owns three cell phones for use by the custodians which are ruggedized flip phones. The policy would address those phones. The use of force policy is a hybrid of a policy provided by Attorney Ron Repack's office and what the county prison uses as provided by Mr. Smith. The crowdfunding policy would be a way to fundraise within certain parameters to eligible sites and could help manage how money is raised. Mr. Noel asked the board to review these policies and reply if they would like to implement them.

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** was absent.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** reported the following:

- In athletics, Trae Kargo advanced to districts in golf; hockey season started October 10; recognition of Trissa Smith for 1,000 assists.
- Next month, Mr. Bubba Fatula will conduct Run, Hide, Fight exercises with the high school students.
- The Cambria County Suicide Prevention organization accepted a check from the volleyball team's suicide prevention game.
- The senior class will visit the Flight 93 Memorial this week.
- The band will march in the Johnstown Halloween Parade this month. The theme is "Glory Days".
- The end of the marking period is October 25.
- Senior night will be October 27 for football, cheer and band.

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Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported on the following:

- Students enjoyed the assembly “the magic of science” brought in by student council.
- This is fire prevention week. The fire company will hold a presentation for the elementary school on Friday.
- The first marking period incentive, a trip to Morrison’s Cove for roller skating and bowling is coming up at the end of the month.
- The Halloween parade is scheduled for October 27.
- The Veteran’s Program will be held November 9.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** made his report during executive session.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported the following:

- The audit has been completed and there were no findings. The AFR is due October 30.
- The participation requirements for the CEP have gone down to 23%. This will allow more schools to participate in the program to provide free breakfast and lunch to their student body. The concern now will be that there could be shortages in available food supplies.
- Pittsburgh Stage will be here this week to look at the elementary auditorium sound stage.

REPORTS: A. FINANCIAL, B. INVOICES (GENERAL FUND, CAFETERIA FUND AND ATHLETIC FUND), C. TAX COLLECTORS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

A. Treasurers’ Reports

A. General Fund	Page 2
B. Cafeteria Report	Page 3
D. Elementary School Activity Fund	Page 5
E. Junior / Senior High School Activity Fund	Page 6
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I. General Fund	Page 10
J. Capital Reserve Fund	Page 10.1
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L. Investments/Pledged Collateral Report	Page 11

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B.	
General Fund Invoices	\$1,225,159.24
Cafeteria Fund Invoices	\$86,085.66
Capital Reserve Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Capital Projects Fund Invoices	\$4,435.27
Total Invoices paid	\$1,315,590.17

C.	
Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$719.71
Mr. Layo - Portage Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$3,954.15
Mrs. Molnar Portage Township – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$9,499.64
Berkheimer Tax Administrators PASD – EIT (Current)	\$36,698.12
Total Taxes	\$50,871.62

APPROVING CREATION OF ESPORTS TEAM AND PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the creation of the Esports team beginning with the spring 2023-2024 season. This team would be open to students in grades 7 through 12 with those in grades 9 to 12 competing. A breakdown of the costs is as follows:

Equipment Purchase	\$13,500 for first year; \$1,750 thereafter
Coach	\$1,306 per season
Travel	No cost unless team goes to states which are held at St. Francis University, Loretto

The district further requests permission to advertise for this position.

APPROVING AGREEMENT WITH SIMPLY SPEECH THERAPY, LLC

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving an Agreement with Simply Speech Therapy, LLC to provide speech pathology services on an as-needed basis to eligible students. The fees are as follows:

Four hours or less	\$85/hour
Full day	\$280/day
Short-term/long-term	\$220/day

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CONSIDERATION OF BIDS FOR COAL

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

Upon consideration of the bids for coal, the board moves to reject the bids as received. The bidders are as follows:

Penn Keystone Coal Company LLC	\$189.50/ton
RFI Resources LLC	\$208.25/ton

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS FOR 10 PASSENGER VAN

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

Upon consideration of the bids for a 10-passenger van, the board moves to reject the bids as received. The bidders are as follows:

Rohrer School & Commercial Bus Sales 2023 Ram Promaster	\$76,780.00
Rohrer School & Commercial Bus Sales 2023 Ford Transit	\$74,800.00
Rohrer School & Commercial Bus Sales 2024 Ram Promaster	\$80,344.00

APPROVING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PORTAGE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving a contribution in the amount of \$200 to the Portage Volunteer Fire Company.

APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN THE REAL INSTITUTE

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving participation in the Rural Education Alliance for Leadership (REAL) Institute through St. Francis University, PLDC and Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 to provide tuition discounts, forum and conference and lecture series opportunities to district staff. Membership would also provide workforce development and outreach services as well as access to education repository. The membership fee is \$500/year and would be a two-year commitment.

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APPROVING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving an Educational Services Agreement with Pyramid Healthcare, Inc., Soaring Heights School, a private academic school to provide special education and related services to students. The district will incur tuition costs only in the event a student is placed at the facility.

APPROVING LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving a Letter of Agreement with R.E.A.C.H. Inc., in conjunction with the R.I.S.E. project of Cambria County, to provide a clinical mental health counselor 'site supervisor' to meet with eligible students. The district will provide a confidential space for counseling services.

APPROVING RESOLUTON FOR ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving a Resolution granting the superintendent permission to electronically sign any and all contracts, agreements, grants and/or licenses with the PA Department of Education.

APPROVING AGREEMENT WITH ACRP

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving a Letter of Agreement with Alternative Community Resource Program to provide the most appropriate continuum of care for eligible students.

APPROVING POLICY REVISIONS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving revisions to the following policies:

- Policy 214 Class Rank
- Policy 701 Facilities Planning
- Policy 702 Gift, Grants, Donations
- Policy 703 Sanitary Management
- Policy 704 Maintenance
- Policy 706 Property Records
- Policy 707 Use of School Facilities

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Policy 708 Lending of Equipment and Books
Policy 709 Building Security
Policy 710 Use of Facilities by Staff
Policy 716 Integrated Pest Management

RETIRING DISTRICT POLICIES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends retiring the following district policies:

Policy 713 Personal Property in School Buildings
Policy 715 Use of Fax Machines

PERSONNEL MATTERS

HIRING BASEBALL COACH

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Martin Slanoc as the head JV baseball coach and second assistant varsity baseball coach beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities.

REVISING ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends revising the Administrative Guidelines for Paraprofessionals to add under Compensation the following:

“Autistic Support Paraprofessionals are excluded as their starting hourly rate has the \$0.35 per hour included.”

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ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Brian Bisaha's letter of resignation due to retirement as a custodian effective June 30, 2024. The Administration further requests permission to advertise.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Jude Decort's letter of resignation as the assistant junior high football coach effective October 6, 2023. The Administration further requests permission to advertise.

OPENING POSITION

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends opening the position of assistant competition cheer coach and advertising for candidates.

ADDING VOLUNTEER COACHES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends adding the following volunteer coaches for the 2023-2024 school year:

Larry McCabe	Junior High Football
Koby Kargo	Boys Basketball

ADVERTISE FOR POSITIONS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

The Administration requests permission to advertise for an elementary special education teacher and re-advertise for an elementary computer technology/STEM teacher.

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BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Travel:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Morgan Long, Hannah Labar, Troy Eppley and Kelly Mignogna	Inclusive Technology Academy	October 18, 2023 January 31, 2024 March 6, 2024	\$630.00 (Substitutes)	Yes
Ashley Shaffer, Kelly Mignogna, Lisa Dividock and Laura Glass	SAP Networking Day St. Francis	October 26, 2023	\$341.82	Yes
Lauren Sinclair	Tier 3 Intensive Lessons Altoona, PA	November 13-14, 2023	\$210.00 (Substitutes)	Yes
Kelly Mignogna	PDE Fall Regional Workshop Altoona, PA	October 24, 2023	\$0.00	N/A
Elaine Plouse	Health and Physical Education Collaborative IU8 Offices, Altoona	October 24, 2023	\$105.00 (Substitute)	Yes

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Mary Kenny	Health Care Explorations: Stroke at St. Francis University	October 24, 2023	\$221.94	Yes
Addison Holyfield	Portage Halloween Parade	October 29, 2023	\$0.00 (Use of Vehicle)	N/A
Addison Holyfield	Cambria County Chorus Forest Hills HS	November 20-21, 2023	\$916.76	Yes
Jennifer Thomas	Field Trip to the Everett Railroad	May 15, 2024	\$0.00 (Paid by PTO)	N/A
Addison Holyfield	PMEA District Jazz virtual auditions	November 29, 2023	\$91.00 (Registration)	Yes
Addison Holyfield	PMEA District Band Auditions at Northern Cambria High School	November 19, 2023	\$14.00 (Registration)	Yes
Addison Holyfield	District chorus auditions at Cambria Heights High School	October 15, 2023	\$21.00 (Registration)	Yes
Jen Szpala	Take Students to College Expo at the Hope Fire Company Social Hall to explore career paths that do not require a 4-year degree	November 16, 2023	\$296.72	Yes
Tyler Johnson	Take Senior Class to the Flight 93 Memorial	October 18, 2023	\$1,493.80	Yes
First Grade Teachers	Field Trip to the Pasquerilla Performing	April 4, 2024	\$0.00 (Paid by PTO)	N/A

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	Arts Center and the Children's Heritage Museum			
Travis Kargo	Field trip for gifted students to EVC in Richland	November 14, 2023	\$0.00 (Use of Vehicle)	N/A
Jennifer Pisarski, Gr 3-6 Discipline Committee	Good Behavior Incentives Morrison's Cove Jumpies Dance 4 Marking Period TBD	Oct. 30-31, Nov. 2-3 TBD TBD TBD	\$0.00 (Paid by Discipline Committee)	N/A
Josh Burkett	Take the Junior Class to the Cambria County Courthouse and Prison	November 8, 2023	\$548.88	Yes

Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Richene Ramos, Winterfest	Winterfest Block Party	Elementary Gymnasium	December 9, 2023 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	No Charge
Valerie Bionaz, Winterfest	Reading with Santa	Elementary Auditorium	December 10, 2023	No Charge
Vivian Herman and Kris Bartoletti	Prom Pictures and Prom Promenade	High School Cafeteria and Auditorium	May 9-10, 2024	No Charge
Brad Harrington, for the Portage Stallions	Stallion Football Playoffs	District Stadium	October 15, 2023 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	No Charge
Mary Walls, Volleyball Coach	Seniors v Faculty Volleyball Game for Breast Cancer Month Awareness	Len Chappell Gymnasium	October 18, 2023	No Charge
Brieanne Irvin, Stallion Cheerleading Coach	Cheerleading Practice	Gymnasiums (either as available)	Days as available 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Saturdays 9:00 am to 12:00 pm	No Charge
Jen Pisarski, Ashley Shaffer, Mary Ann George and Heidi Washko	Host Strengthening Families Program	HS Cafeteria, Len Chappell Gymnasium, Room 111/113 and other classrooms	October 15 & 22 November 5, 12 & 19 December 3 & 10 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.	No Charge
Brian Randall	1 st grade basketball skill development	Len Chappell Gymnasium	Saturdays in October and November 10:00 am to 11:00 am as can be scheduled	No Charge
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	FCA Meetings	HS Auditorium	Fridays 7:00 – 7:40 a.m.	No Charge
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	Volleyball Tournament	Len Chappell Gymnasium	October 27, 2023 10:45 am – 4:00 pm	No Charge
Kelly Mignogna	Title I Family Literacy Night	Elementary School Classrooms	November 14, 2023 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.	No Charge

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MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 5-0

Time: 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary