

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
JUNE 21, 2023 - 6:30 P.M.**

The Committee of the Whole 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: Susan Berardinelli; Jason Corte; Matthew Decort; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Tina Latoche; Christian Smith; Dennis Squillario; Pete Noel, Superintendent of Schools; Troy Eppley, Director of Special Education; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Jeremy Burkett, Junior Senior High School Principal; Jennifer Pisarski, Elementary School Principal; Dennis McGlynn, Esquire and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Stacy Novak, representing Bible to School, addressed the board regarding a lunch/recess time program for grades 2 through 4 to provide Bible electives. Parents would provide written permission to go offsite to the Hammers Street Church of God and receive instruction. The program would run from September through April. Ms. Novak provided the board with information as well as other school who participate in the program.

Tara Williams, junior-senior high school art teacher, addressed the board to discuss her idea of creating a public mural in the newly created outside student area located outside of the cafeteria. She stated that activity would be student led, by art students and the art club. Ideas would be put out for school wide vote. She is in the planning stages and welcomed any questions the board may have. She concluded that she and the students are eager to begin the project to make that space their own.

Ashley Shaffer, district social worker, introduced the board to Nala, her Golden Retriever puppy, who will soon be entering therapy dog training. She noted that currently through the We Thrive program, a therapy dog is brought in and the students respond to the dog in many positive ways. She noted that the students are set at ease with the dog and are more apt to talk and share with therapist and the herself when the dog is present as a calming element. She stated that Nala is her dog and she is 100% responsible for her care and health and she is on Mrs. Shaffer's insurance policy. The dog would present no cost to the district but would bring a lot of benefits.

**INFORMATION ONLY**

1. Football Stadium Update – Mr. Noel provided an update including the following:
  - a. Seating area – The area affected is the middle of the bleachers which are to be reinforced. He was notified by the engineers that more posts would be needed because of structural issues. There is also a concern about water run-off and they are presently looking at drainage solutions.
  - b. Lights – Barclay Electric was at the stadium to look at the lights in the fall and provided a quote to repair and replace in the approximate amount of \$10,000. Mr. Vasilko or Mr. Panick will ask for a new quote. This money had been budgeted.
  - c. Locker rooms – Mr. Noel provided the board with drawings of the proposed locker rooms and noted that this is a separate project

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- d. Temporary locker rooms – Trailers similar to last year will be brought in. Mr. Burkett advised that there is not cost yet for this year and that hopefully the trailers will be available.
2. High School doors. Mr. Noel advised the board that the remaining ESSR funds can be used for air quality improvements which would include replacing doors at the high school. The EADS company will be providing an estimate of the cost.
3. Elementary school gym entry fire alarm pull stations. Mr. Noel reported that the fire alarm pull stations in the elementary gym lobby area were locked in the vestibule of the lobby where the public has ready access to. They have been moved to inside the lobby where they can be monitored better.
4. High school cafeteria serving line floor – The current serving line was attached to the floor and as it was removed there was damage to the tile. Mr. Noel and Mr. Vasilko are talking with the contractor to have it repaired before the new mobile serving line is installed.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

1. District policies – public readings of new policies and adopting new policies. Mr. Noel noted that these policies are on the agenda for board consideration.
2. Final budget for the 2023-2024 school year. Mr. Vasilko provided the board with an updated budget and noted that there were some changes and the budget numbers have improved with \$63,000 to the good. The district will be installing TVs in the cafeteria and hallways for announcements and emergencies and safety matters. Mr. Clouse was able to purchase the TVs through general surplus saving the district a great deal of money. The district will transfer approximately \$800,000 to assigned funds. Mr. Vasilko concluded that the district is in a good fiscal position for next year.
3. Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution. The rebate amount stays the same with approved residences getting \$243 off their real estate taxes.
4. Exoneration of Tax Collectors. This is a routine matter for board consideration.
5. IDEA Adoption of Policies, Procedures and Use of Funds. This is a routine matter for board consideration.
6. IU8 Extended Campus Agreement. Mr. Noel reported that the benefits of the IU cyber options are that it provides PA certified teachers for the courses and the student still remained on our rolls. It is somewhat equivalent to having our own cyber school.
7. Impact Counseling Drug and Alcohol Intervention Agreement. This is a routine renewal agreement to be considered during the regular meeting.
8. Highway to Success Classroom Agreement. This renewal agreement is a routine matter to be considered during the regular meeting.
9. GASB 75 Valuation Agreement. Mr. Vasilko reported that this is a required accounting procedure that provides a valuation of district assets.
10. Elect Consortium. Mr. Noel explained that this program offers support and training for parenting students. The Altoona Area School District directs the program. The district has been involved in this program for several years.
11. ESL Consortium. Mr. Noel noted that the IU provides certification for our teachers for ESL education.
12. Pressley Ridge Agreement. Mr. Noel explained that this facility provides a type of specialized special education which is at a higher level and meets needs of students that are not provided within the district.

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**PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 6:57 p.m. to 8:21 p.m.)**

1. 2022-2023 School Safety Report to the Board
2. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda.

**BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES**

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD**

Time: 8:20 p.m.