

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Susan Berardinelli, board vice president, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Matthew Decort; 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. Absent were Jason Corte, and Kathy Hough.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Jada Willinsky, a senior, invited the board to their September 21 volleyball game which will be dedicated to suicide prevention. She noted that suicide is on the rise among students and the volleyball team is doing their part to bring awareness to this situation. There will be fundraisers at the game and proceeds will be sent for the suicide prevention task force. Ms. Willinsky encourage everyone to come to the game and support this cause.

NOTICE TO PERSONNEL

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

DISTRICT POLICIES

Policy 624 Taxable Fringe Benefits – First Reading

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **Wednesday, October 11, 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 Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

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

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ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

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

Routine Matters, Add Line Item 20, Motion to Reject Coal Bids and Re-advertise for Bids

Agenda Requests/Use of Facilities Requests, Revise Mr. Eppley and Mrs. Burkett's request to go to the Gifted Bootcamp and the Gift Network to add the cost of substitute teachers.

REPORTS

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** was absent.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** discussed the class rank draft policy that he provided to the board. He specifically talked about how the 8 credit for ranking purposes would be determined. He added that this will begin with this year's freshman class if approved. Mr. Noel next discussed when the band would be expected to wear their uniforms. The board agreed that if the band is representing the school at an event; they should be in uniforms unless there are extenuating circumstances. There was damage done to a stadium grandstand wall and Tim Kauffman, a local mason took a look and estimated the repairs to be less than \$1,000. Also, the custodians will begin putting bags in the garbage cans at the stadium to hopefully alleviate the bee problem and make it easier for them to change and empty the cans. Mr. Noel also explained the Choosing Love Program presented by Scarlett Lewis who lost her son at the Sandy Hook massacre. Ms. Lewis presented to both the high school and the elementary and the programs were slightly different for the buildings to take into consideration the ages of her audience. Ms. Lewis provided information on dealing with grief and how to overcome these incidents. The programs were very well presented and received. Bubba Fatula will be on campus to present Run, Hide, Fight training to staff in the high school and "sheep, shepherd, wolf" to the elementary school. Mr. Clouse was working on a new FOB system at the senior wing and back stairwells which exit to the track and softball fields to make them more secure. Mr. Noel mentioned that he would have a Use of Facility policy ready for board review at the October board meeting and in concluding his report he stated that Johnson Controls will be talking with the district concerning moving to a cloud based HVAC system.

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** reported that on September 28, he will be discussing with the people from PATTAN and the IU regarding the design and creation of a life skills classroom, which would involve classroom plans and coaching materials. He also discussed with the board that there has been a change in IDEA concerning the age of majority, meaning up to age 21. It is not being interpreted to mean through 21, the day before a student's 22nd birthday. This will change how educational plans are prepared for students.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** discussed that the high school's meet the teacher night went well although they may consider hosting it on the same night as the elementary school next year. He discussed the Choosing Love program saying that it was very thought provoking; the Run, Hide Fight

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program and how it is being implemented in the high school and brought the board up to date on fall sports.

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that the school year has gotten off to a great start with a lot of positive energy in the building. There was a great turnout for meet the teacher. The elementary school will be doing assessments in the upcoming weeks. The Kona Ice Truck paid a visit to the elementary school. Mr. Fatula visited with the students and the students were very engaged with his program.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** noted that it had been a busy month all of which are in the agenda for board consideration.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported that the auditors from Wesel and Company are in the district performing the annual audit and it's going well. There are some revisions to the ESSER grant which will be addressed. Reports upcoming include ESSER, SHAARS, Transportation and IDEA. Mr. Vasilko also noted that they received a candidate through the WorkLink staffing agency which they will be looking at soon.

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

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(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
H. Athletics	Page 9
I. General Fund	Page 10
J. Capital Reserve Fund	Page 10.1
K. Capital Projects Fund	Page 10.2
L. Investments/Pledged Collateral Report	Page 11

B.

General Fund Invoices	\$1,720,501.26
Cafeteria Fund Invoices	\$39,099.93
Capital Reserve Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Capital Projects Fund Invoices	\$11,841.50
Total Invoices paid	\$1,771,442.69

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C.	
Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro –	
Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$13,881.59
Mr. Layo - Portage Boro –	
Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$320,482.84
Mrs. Molnar Portage Township –	
Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$838,161.31
Berkheimer Tax Administrators	
PASD – EIT (Current)	\$40,834.68
Total Taxes	\$1,213,360.42

APPROVING SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM WITH CAMBRIA COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The administration recommends approving a School-to-Work Transition Program with the Cambria County Association for the Blind and Handicapped to provide vocational services to eligible students. The fee remains the same for this school year at \$65 per student for Vocational Assessment Testing and \$45 per student for pre-vocational/vocational training.

APPROVING SUBSTITUTE TEACHER AGREEMENT WITH IGNITE EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving an Agreement with Ignite Education Solutions to provide substitute teachers and other types of temporary staff. The rates are as follows:

Substitute teacher	\$140.91/day
Substitute Nurse	\$20.13/hour
Substitute Aide	\$13.42/hour

This is the amount paid to Ignite and covers the position rate and administrative fees.

APPROVING ISSUE OF NOTICE OF AWARD

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Issue of the Notice of Award to Allegheny Restoration Inc. for the Football Stadium Bleachers Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$415,540.

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APPROVING EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Execution of the Agreement with Allegheny Restoration Inc. for the Football Stadium Bleachers Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$415,540.

APPROVING ISSUE OF NOTICE TO PROCEED

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Issue of the Notice to Proceed to Allegheny Restoration for the Football Stadium Bleachers Rehabilitation Project.

APPROVING ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR DESIGN OF LOCKER ROOMS

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Architectural/Engineering Services Fee Proposal for the design of the new locker room building at the football stadium, the scope of work as detailed in the proposal for a fee of \$104,900. The Administration further authorizes the EADS Group to proceed with this project.

APPROVING ARCHITECTURAL SERVICE FEE PROPOSAL/AGREEMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL EXTERIOR DOOR FRAME REPLACEMENT

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Professional Architectural Services Fee Proposal/Agreement for the high school exterior door frame replacement project. The scope of work is outlined in the proposal. The fee for these services \$27,500. The Administration further authorizes the EADS Group to proceed with this project.

PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to advertise for bids for laptops to be paid for from ESSER Funds.

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REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR VAN

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to advertise for bids for a 10 passenger van the cost of which will be paid from ACCESS funds.

APPROVING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cambria County Backpack Project for the 2023-2024 school year. The purpose of this project is to provide healthy and sustainable food options on the weekends to eligible students.

APPROVING POLICY REVISIONS

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving revisions to the following policies:

- Policy 008 Organization Chart
- Policy 251 Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care and Other Educational Instability
- Policy 602 Budget Planning
- Policy 603 Budget Preparation
- Policy 604 Budget Adoption
- Policy 605 Tax Levy
- Policy 606 Tax Collection
- Policy 607 Tuition Income
- Policy 609 Investment of District Funds
- Policy 610 Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation
- Policy 611 Purchases Budgeted
- Policy 612 Purchases Not Budgeted
- Policy 613 Cooperative Purchasing
- Policy 614 Payroll Authorization
- Policy 617 Petty Cash
- Policy 618 Student Activity Funds
- Policy 623 Fund Balance (new number only)
- Policy 620 Internal Funds (new number only)
- Policy 621 Local Taxpayer Bill of Rights
- Policy 622 GASB Statement 34

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RETIRING DISTRICT POLICIES

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends retiring the following district policies:

Policy 610.1 Work Done Under Contract Bids
Policy 623 Fund Balance

APPROVING REQUEST TO HOST HOMECOMING DANCE

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Class of 2024 and their advisor, Tina Lutz, request permission to host a Homecoming Dance at the Cassandra Firehall for grades 9-12 on September 30, 2023.

APPROVING STUDENT PRE-TEACHER OBSERVERS

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving pre-student teacher observers for the 2023-2024 school year:

Chase Forberger with Mary Kenny, Science
Jada Graham with Tina Lutz, Math
Madelyn Kline with Mary Walls, ELA

REJECTING BIDS FOR COAL

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends rejecting the bid of Penn Keystone Coal Company, LLC in the amount of \$225 per ton as it did not meet the bid specifications. The Administration requests permission to re-advertise this bid.

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PERSONNEL MATTERS

ACCEPTING LETTERS OF RESIGNATION

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the following letters of resignation:

Leann Decort	cafeteria staff effective September 1, 2023
Jody Hale	teacher's aide effective September 22, 2023
Nicole Hunt	speech league coach effective September 13, 2023

The administration further requests permission to advertise these positions.

HIRING CUSTODIAN

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Thomas Myers as a full-time custodian, with benefits, based on the current contract between the district and the Portage Chapter of the Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ.

HIRING A SUBSTITUTE STAFF

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring the following substitute staff:

Joseph Wills	Custodian
Leann Decort	Cafeteria

ADDING VOLUNTEER COACHES

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

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

Gavin Gouse	Football
Todd Hershberger	Football

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BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Travel:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Troy Eppley and Tobi Burkett	Gifted Bootcamp	September 19 and October 4, 2023	\$310.00	Yes
Laura Gressick	ES/AS Networking Cohort	October 11, and December 13, 2023 January 31 and March 20, 2024	\$0.00	N/A
Troy Eppley and Tobi Burkett	Gifted Network	November 15, 2023 March 26, 2024	\$270.00	Yes
Hannah Shaffer	Complex Learner Seminar	October 4, 2023 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	\$18.75 (travel)	Yes

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Addison Holyfield	Take the marching band to perform at the Johnstown Halloween parade	October 24, 2023	\$203.10	Yes
Jennifer Thomas, PTO	PTO Incentive to Slinky Action Zone	October 24, 2023	\$0.00 (Paid by PTO)	N/A
Jennifer Thomas, PTO	Take students to the Young People's Concert Johnstown Symphony	November 14, 2023	\$0.00 (JSO free concert)	N/A
Jen Szpala	Take two students to visit the PAES lab at Admiral Peary Vo Tech	September 14 & 15, 2023 11:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	\$0.00 (Use of Vehicle)	N/A
Addison Holyfield	Take students to County Band Auditions at Central Cambria	October 23, 2023	\$174.78 (transportation)	Yes
Tammy Jubina	Kindergarten field trip to Vale Wood Farms	May 6, 2024	\$0.00 (paid by PTO)	N/A
Jen Szpala	Take Senior Transition students to CTI Career & Transition Fair	October 19, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	\$0.00 (Use of Vehicle)	N/A
Jen Szpala	Career Fair for Senior Transition	October 4, 2023 10:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	\$0.00 (Use of Vehicle)	N/A
Jen Szpala	Take Junior transition students to Commonwealth Technical Institute Career & Transition Fair	October 18, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	\$0.00 (Use of Vehicle)	N/A

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Mary Kenny	Take 15 seniors to St. Francis to the science lab for the Explore Assessments of Stroke	October 24, 2023	\$221.94	Yes
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Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Hannah Shaffer, Varsity Cheer coach	Host Jr. Cheer Camp	Elementary School Gymnasium	September 7, 2023 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.	No Charge
Joseph Stancovich	5 & 6 grade boys basketball practice	Elementary School Gymnasium	September-December as can be scheduled	No Charge
Sara Richardson	3 & 4 grade basketball practice	Elementary School Gymnasium	October-December as can be scheduled 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	No Charge
Dennis Squillario, on behalf of the Portage Rotary	Sausage and Pancake Breakfast	High School Cafeteria and kitchen	November 3, 2023 6:00 am to 12:00 pm	No Charge

Mr. Decort questioned whether the band would be wearing their uniforms for the parade. Mr. Noel noted as previously discussed since they would be performing/representing the school; they would wear their uniforms.

MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 6-0

Time: 7:31 p.m.