

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 13, 2024 - 6:30 P.M.**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Matthew Decort; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Jacob Myers; Nancy Sherbine; Brian Shope; Pete Noel, Superintendent of Schools; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Troy Eppley, Director of Special Education; 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 Christian Smith.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Irene Huschak, President of the Portage Historical Society, visited the board to report on her collaboration with the school district to provide curriculum on local history. She provided a packet to the board with samples of the different lessons to each grade. She pointed out several field trips students are able to participate in, the educational significance of these trips and mentioned that through the generosity of the Rotary Club paying transportation costs, these trips are possible. The lessons point out the local history and have been going on for quite a long time. Mrs. Huschak wants to see this continue. She concluded by thanking Mr. Link for making the cutting boards to sell at the museum.

Eric Petrazio, Damian Zampogna and Kameron Lynch from the McClure Company reported the findings of the Investment Grade Audit.

Kelli Swires, Portage Township resident, first thanked the board for volunteering their time and experience to be board members. She then addressed the solar field project stating that 3.5 acres of panels is a huge project and that the board needed to consider the tax payers. She does not want the school board to make this kind of decision for the community. She noted that a solar field would be an eyesore and that she for one does not want to look at it. She asked the board to put this project out to the public for consideration in the form of a referendum. She concluded by saying that a solar field is a long term commitment and asked the board to not rush to judgment.

Tina Friewald, Portage resident, also addressed the board by first thanking them for doing a 'thankless' job. She further stated that she did not know about the solar project until she saw it on social media. She has solar panels on her house roof and asked if possibly the district could do the same but noted that she was told that having them on the roof would decrease the energy produced. She also mentioned that the board is faced with some big decisions concerning this project such as the cost benefits versus the impact on the environment. She concluded that decisions must be made based on facts.

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**INFORMATION ONLY**

1. District website. Mr. Noel and Mr. Clouse discussed the possibility of moving to another company to host our website. The reason behind this is that when looking for an all call system, the cost was not effective. By using Parent Square, the website would be updated and would incorporate an all call system that is easy to use. It would also provide more access for teachers and has a student/teacher communication tool making it almost like the district's own social media site with options to push notifications out to social media. They will bring back more information in December.
2. District projects and bond issuance. Mr. Noel updated the board on the updated bond charts for projects in light of not being awarded any grant money.
3. Len Chappell gymnasium sound system. Mr. Noel reported that the sound system is very old and does not work properly. He provided information on a new system made specifically for gymnasiums. The cost would be under \$12,000. He asked the board to consider this matter and move forward at this meeting so that the new system will be in place before basketball system.
4. Postgraduate use of facility procedures. Mr. Noel reviewed the new Administrative Regulation noting that this is the result of two current district policies. He explained the procedures for using the facilities and emphasized that this use would not interfere with current student activities.
5. AED in the new locker room facilities. Mr. Noel advised the board that the district is placing an AED in the new locker rooms for safety.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

1. PTAC replacement quotes. Mr. Noel reported that this quote is to replace some nonfunctioning units in the administrative offices.
2. Agreement with Pressley Ridge. Mr. Noel advised that this is a standard agreement and there is no cost to the district until a student is enrolled there.
3. Health and Safety Plan. Mr. Noel reported that this plan was initially put into place during Covid and it is annually updated. One notable change on the last plan was changing Covid for Communicable disease.
4. Adopting new policy. This policy has been reviewed at three prior meetings and should be adopted.

Time: 8:24 p.m.

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**PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 7:16 to 8:24 p.m.)**

1. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda
2. Other matters as permitted under the Sunshine Act.

**BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES**

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD**

Time: 8:24 p.m.