

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 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: 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

The officers of the junior class: Jonah Irvin, Trae Kargo, Kendra Kunko and Hailey Johnson addressed the board concerning the junior class service project, which is pancreatic cancer awareness. In honor of Michele Coukart who is currently battling the disease, they are raising money for the Griffith Family Foundation to provide research for a cure.

Jessica Ports from the PA School Board Association presented Mrs. Kathy Hough for 36 years of service as a school director and Mrs. Susan Berardinelli for 8 years. She thanked these board members, as well as all board members for their service.

INFORMATION ONLY

ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Creating an Esports program. Mr. Noel advised the board that the proposal had been sent to them and that this item is on the agenda for board consideration.
2. Approving speech therapy agreement. Mr. Noel reported that this is a local private contractor who had filled in for the district on occasion. She would be used on an as-needed basis.
3. Contribution to the Portage Volunteer Fire Company. Mr. Noel reported that in the past, the district contributed \$200.
4. Participating in the REAL Institute. Mr. Noel advised the board this program would offer continuing education at a discounted cost to staff members through St. Francis University along with networking and workshop opportunities. It is focused towards rural school environments and their needs.
5. Approving Agreement with Soaring Heights School. Mr. Noel reported that this is a licensed, private academic school that offers special services. The district would only incur a cost if it utilized the facility.
6. Approving Agreement with R.E.A.C.H./R.I.S.E. Mr. Noel advised the board that this program is available due to opioid settlement Cambria County received and will be funded for the next 18 years. In the current agreement, it was only in effect for the 2022-2023 school year so it was revised to have no end date. Mr. Steve Larson is the social worker who is here in the district under this agreement. He will now be here full time.
7. Approving electronic signature Resolution. Mr. Noel advised the board that this Resolution is to allow him to electronically sign documents and agreement for the PDE.

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8. Approving Agreement with ACRP. Mr. Noel explained that this is a resources and services referral agreement that is renewed each year.
9. Approving new policies, policy revisions and retirements. The new policies, revised and retired polices are on the agenda for board consideration.
10. Consideration of bids for coal and a 10 passenger van. Mr. Vasilko explained to the board the situation concerning the bids. For coal, he, Mr. Noel and Mr. Thrower are discussed the feasibility of using it for heating this year. He did not want to accept a bid based on the district buying 500 tons when it could only purchase 10 or 20. That would not be fair to the coal broker. For the vans, the cost for a 10 passenger is very high and it could be that the district could purchase two 8-passenger vans for the same amount of money. Having to vans may be more practical as the district moves a life skills/autistic support classroom to the high school.

PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 6:54 p.m. to 7:23 p.m.)

1. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda.

BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES

POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD

Time: 7:23 p.m.