

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 8, 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: Susan Berardinelli; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Christian Smith; Dennis Squillario; 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, Matthew Decort, and Tina Latoche.

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 306 Employment of Summer School Staff – First Reading
Policy 307 Student Teachers/Interns – First Reading
Policy 317.1 Educator Misconduct – First Reading
Policy 325 Dress and Grooming – First Reading
Policy 805.3 Use of Force – First Reading

Policy 624 Taxable Fringe Benefits – Third Reading

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The Reorganization Meeting will be held **Wednesday, December 6, 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 Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving the October 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 Squillario Second Jubina 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, Van Bids – revise to indicate that the bids were for two vehicles
Use of Facilities, Add request from Fellowship of Christian Athletes to use the gym

REPORTS

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** was absent. Mr. Noel did report that the vo tech was awarded a grant for shops and supplies.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** congratulated Mrs. Hough and Mrs. Berardinelli along with the three new board members on their election to the board. He thanked Mr. Squillario and Mrs. Latoche for their service as board members. He also thanked Tyler Shaffer, of Shaffer Tree Service and The Lehman Machine Company for their help in repairing and replacing the top of the flag pole. He added that it was a challenge to get it done but with their cooperation and expertise it was accomplished. Eastern Elevator will be doing their three-year inspection of the elevators in the buildings. Both buildings need electrical repairs as per a recent inspection. Therefore, over the Thanksgiving break the power will be turned off to allow for this to happen. The cost is expected to be \$2,300. The district is currently looking into a new student information system as the one it's currently using is not as capable as it used to be. The administrators are reviewing assessment such as the Future Ready and PVAAS scores so that they can provide best practices for learning. Mr. Noel also praised the staff in their efforts working with the IU on curriculum development. Mrs. Dobrowolsky used PASD as a showcase in Harrisburg as the district was ahead of the game in improving curriculum. Mr. Noel discussed two proposed new policies, Crowdfunding and Employer provided Cell Phones with the board and asked for their input as to whether to begin the process of adopting them. Finally, Mr. Noel advised the board that he will be attending New Superintendent's Academy, Part 2, next week.

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** advised that the district was awarded a grant that will provide training and classroom items to the learning support/autistic classrooms which could amount to about \$5,000. He is awaiting finalization from PATTAN and then he will bring the plan to the board for consideration. The Special Education Plan will be renewed in the Spring with board approval in April after a period of public inspection and comment.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** reported to the board high events such as upcoming field trips, the annual Veterans Day ceremony and student fundraisers. He added that fall sports

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have wrapped up recognizing that volleyball lost to West Branch in playoff competition, Alex Chobany finished 50th and Logan Gentile, 135th at cross county state competition and that Cami Burkett has signed with Bucknell to run track.

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that eligible students participated in the good behavior incentive with a trip to Morrison's Cove for skating and bowling. The elementary school will present a Veteran's Day program on Thursday, November 9 and she thanked the staff for participating and presenting the 10 minute takeaways.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** advised that it was a quiet month with only a few items discussed with the administrative office.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported that the district is looking at ways to allocate its remaining ESSER money so it doesn't have to return it. Currently the EADS group has been in to assess upgrading the high school entrances for security. The auditors will present their report at the December meeting. The Act 1 Index has been set at 5.8% with the adjusted at 8%. The district will be looking at a tax increase in 2024. The open application period for the Homestead/Farmstead tax rebate begins December 1. On Thursday, he will attend the basic education funding hearings.

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

Motion Squillario Second Jubina 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
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	\$1,173,039.16
Cafeteria Fund Invoices	\$74,587.09
Capital Reserve Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Capital Projects Fund Invoices	\$6,968.67

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Total Invoices paid	\$1,254,594.92
C.	
Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$15.00
Mr. Layo - Portage Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mrs. Molnar Portage Township – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$12,044.90
Berkheimer Tax Administrators PASD – EIT (Current)	\$42,752.84
Total Taxes	\$54,812.74

REJECTING RESULTS OF VAN BIDS

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends rejecting the bids for two 8 passenger vans. The bids are as follows:

Laurel Ford	\$113,980.00
Alternate (two) 10 Passenger 2024 Ford Transit Rear Wheel Drive	
Laurel Ford	\$122,370.00
Alternate (two) 10 Passenger 2024 Ford Transit All Wheel Drive	

These bids do not meet specifications.

APPROVING HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving revisions to the Health and Safety Plan as presented.

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration requests permission for The EADS Group to advertise for bids for the locker room project in the local paper.

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APPROVING POLICY REVISIONS

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends approving revisions to the following policies:

- Policy 236-AR-0 Student Assistance Program
- Policy 301 Creating a Position
- Policy 302 Employment of Superintendent
- Policy 304 Employment of District Staff
- Policy 305 Employment of Substitutes
- Policy 306 Employment of Summer School Staff
- Policy 309 Assignment and Transfer
- Policy 311 Reduction of Staff
- Policy 312 Performance Assessment of Superintendent
- Policy 313 Evaluation of Employees
- Policy 314.1 HIV Infection
- Policy 317 Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures
- Policy 317.1 Educator Misconduct
- Policy 318 Attendance and Tardiness
- Policy 319 Outside Activities
- Policy 320 Freedom of Speech in Nonschool Settings
- Policy 321 Political Activities
- Policy 322 Gifts
- Policy 324 Personnel Files
- Policy 326 Complaint Process
- Policy 328 Compensation Plans/Salary Schedules
- Policy 330 Overtime
- Policy 331 Job Related Expenses
- Policy 332 Working Periods
- Policy 333 Professional Development
- Policy 334 Sick Leave
- Policy 336 Personal Necessity Leave
- Policy 337 Vacation
- Policy 338 Sabbatical Leave
- Policy 338.1 Compensated Professional Leaves
- Policy 339 Uncompensated Leave
- Policy 340 Responsibility for Student Welfare
- Policy 341 Benefits for Part-time Employees
- Policy 342 Jury Duty
- Policy 343 Paid Holidays
- Policy 347 Workers' Compensation Transitional Return-to-Work Program

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Policy 351 Drug and Substance Abuse

RETIRING DISTRICT POLICIES

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends retiring the following district policies:

Policy 303 Employment of Administrators
Policy 315 Wireless Communication Devices
Policy 327 Management Team
Policy 329 Substitute Compensation
Policy 348 Unlawful Harassment

PERMISSION TO RE-ADVERTISE FOR TWO 8 PASSENGER VANS

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The District requests permission to re-advertise for two 8-passenger vans.

PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The District requests permission to advertise any vacancies which may arise before the next board meeting.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

HIRING COMPETITION CHEER ASSISTANT COACH

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

The Administration recommends hiring Hannah Shaffer as the competition cheer assistant 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.

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HIRING ASSISTANT FOOTBALL COACH

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

The Administration recommends hiring Larry McCabe as a junior high football assistant 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.

HIRING ESPORTS ADVISOR

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

The Administration recommends hiring Michael Shuss as the esports advisor 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.

HIRING ASSISTANT TRACK COACH

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

The Administration recommends hiring Craig Castel as an assistant track 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.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Paul Weakland as the assistant rifle coach effective November 8, 2023. The administration requests permission to advertise for this position.

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BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

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

Request for Approved Travel:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Molly Harrington	Yes! Curriculum Training Altoona IU8	February 1, 2024	\$132.50	Yes
Jen Pisarski & Krystal Smith	Title I Improving School Performance Conference Pittsburgh	February 4-6, 2024	\$1,450	Yes (Title 1 Funds)
Mary Boland	Blair County Convention Center Food Show, Altoona, PA	November 17, 2023	\$0.00	N/A
Travis Kargo	Gifted Network Professional Development	November 15, 2023	\$15.00	Yes

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Addison Holyfield	16 students to participate at Cambria County Band	November 30 - December 1, 2023	\$570.00	Yes
Addison Holyfield	Marching band to participate in Ebensburg Christmas Parade	December 2, 2023	\$281.38	Yes
Addison Holyfield	One student to participate in PMEA District Chorus at Westmont High School	January 24-26, 2024	\$240.00	Yes
Addison Holyfield	Take the music students to see Beauty & the Beast at Toby's Dinner Theater in Maryland	June 1, 2024	\$0.00 (Friends of the Band)	N/A
Tara Williams	Take 4 visual arts students to Johnstown for holiday window painting	November 21, 2023 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	\$105.00 (substitute)	Yes
Travis Kargo	Take 19 Bio II and gifted students to St.	November 21, 2023 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	\$806.84	Yes

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	Francis University to STEAM day			
Mary Ann George	Take grade 9 to Admiral Peary Vo Tech	January 26, 2024	\$281.38	Yes
Gayle Price and Mary Kenny	Take the Science Club to the Farm Show in Harrisburg	January 9, 2024	\$720.94	Yes
Dennis Link, SADD Club Advisor	SADD Club to the TRU Event	December 15, 2023	\$0.00	N/A
Mary Kenny and Gayle Price	Attend the STEELS Network, Part #2 (new science standards)	December 13, 2023	\$210.00 (substitutes)	N/A
Addison Holyfield	Take the marching band to participate in Portage Winterfest Parade	December 9, 2023	\$0.00	N/A

Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Jen Pisarski for the Red Cross	Blood Drive	Elementary Gymnasium	December 11, 2023	No Charge
Portage Area Girls Basketball	Art Burkett Tournament	Len Chappell Gymnasium	December 1-2, 2023	No Charge
Kristine Bartoletti, Portage Euro Club	Meetings	Jr/Sr HS Library	Dates as arranged with principal's office	No Charge
Christina Franey	Basketball drills clinic for girls K-1	Elementary Gymnasium	November 19, 2023 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	No Charge
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	Flag Football, Volleyball and Basketball for FCA members	Gymnasium as available	November 22, 2023 12:00 – 5:00 p.m.	No Charge

MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Squillario Second Jubina Vote 5-0

Time: 7:12 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary