

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Branden Miller; Jacob Myers; 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, Matthew Decort and Nancy Sherbine.

**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**

First Reading - 815.1 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **March 12, 2025**, 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 Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the January 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 Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

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

**4. REPORTS**

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

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel**

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley**

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett**

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski**

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire**

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko**

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

Motion Shope Second Jubina 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.**

<b>General Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$1,977,372.25</b>
<b>Cafeteria Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$78,027.32</b>
<b>Capital Reserve Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Capital Projects Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Invoices paid</b>	<b>\$2,055,399.57</b>

**C.**

<b>Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation</b>	<b>\$44,470.61</b>
<b>Mr. Layo - Portage Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Mrs. Molnar Portage Township – Property, Per Capita, Occupation</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Berkheimer Tax Administrators PASD – EIT (Current)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Taxes</b>	<b>\$44,470.61</b>

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**APPROVING VALUATION AND RELATED SERVICES AGREEMENT**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving a three-year GASB 75 Valuation and Related Services Agreement with Pennsylvania Trust. The fee for the period 1/1/25 to 12/31/26 will be \$3,925 and for the period 1/1/2026 to 12/31/2028 will be \$4,150.

**APPROVING CUSTODIAL CONTRACT**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving a contract between the district and the Portage Chapter Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ for a three-year period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028.

**APPROVING SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving a Services Agreement with Cartwheel Health Services for the period April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 to provide mental health services within the district. The fee for this service is \$15,000. If awarded, 50% of the fee may be covered by the Mental Health Grant.

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**APPROVING AGREEMENT FOR HVAC MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Seasonal Cooling Preventative Maintenance Program in the amount of \$25,688.91 and the Seasonal Heating Preventative Maintenance Program in the amount of \$52,017.01 from Huckestein Mechanical for the period March 1, 2025 to February 29, 2028.

**APPROVING NATURAL GAS SUPPLIER**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving NRG Business Marketing LLC as a natural gas supplier for a 24 month period beginning November 1, 2025. The cost is \$4.20/mmbtu.

**REQUESTING PERMISSION TO APPLY FOR AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration requests permission to apply for four (4) AmeriCorps volunteers for the 2025-2026 school year. The district will apply as soon as the application window is open.

**APPROVING 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the 2025-2026 school calendar as presented.

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**APPROVING JOB SHADOW AFFILIATION AGREEMENT**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving a Job Shadow Affiliation Agreement with Chan Soon Shiong Medical Center to provide job shadow experiences within the facility.

**APPROVING REVISIONS TO DISTRICT POLICIES**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration asks the Board to consider approving revisions to the following district policies based upon recommendations through the PSBA in order to remain in compliance with educational law, Acts and policy.

- 222 Tobacco and Vaping Products
- 227 Controlled Substances-Paraphernalia
- 323 Tobacco and Vaping Products
- 351 Controlled Substance Abuse
- 707 Use of School Facilities
- 903 Public Comment in Board Meetings

**APPROVING STUDENT OBSERVERS**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the following student observers from UPJ to observe elementary classrooms four times from mid-February to April.

Katie Selly	Ella Miller	Dayton Maul
Bailey Leach	Catelyn Dawson	Melanie Engle

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**PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**HIRING CAFETERIA STAFF**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Kirsten Chappell as a part-time cafeteria staff member beginning February 18, 2025. Her salary will be pursuant with the current contract between the district and the cafeteria union.

**HIRING SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA STAFF**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Danielle Pennebaker as a substitute cafeteria staff member as of February 21, 2025.

**HIRING A MENTOR TEACHER**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Tina Lutz as a mentor teacher for Mr. Robert Sekerak. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities.

**HIRING AN ASSISTANT VARSITY SOFTBALL COACH**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 5-1  
Voting Yes: Shope, Jubina, Berardinelli, Myers and Hough  
Voting No: Miller

The Administration recommends hiring Brianne Pinizzotto as an assistant varsity softball coach beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. Salary will be based on

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the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the letter of resignation due to retirement of Wendi Kunko as first grade teacher effective August 29, 2025 after thirty years of service. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the letter of resignation of Lakin Phillips as an autistic and emotional support teacher effective January 22, 2025. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the letter of resignation of Tayla Crum as an elementary school administrative assistant, effective February 13, 2025. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the letter of resignation of Arielle Miller as the majorette and color guard advisor effective June 30, 2025. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.



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**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the letter of resignation of Craig Castel as the track and field assistant coach effective February 14, 2025. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ADDING VOLUNTEER COACHES**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends adding the following volunteers for the 2025 season.

Sierra Crum	Softball
Timothy Trusik	Softball
Chuck Gouse	Track & Field

**EXTENDING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends extending a staff member's Family and Medical Leave of Absence to Friday, March 21, 2025.

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**BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

**Request for Approved Travel:**

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N

**Request for Approved Field Trip:**

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
First Grade Teachers	Pasquillera Performing Arts Center Charlotte's Web	April 10, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by PTO)	N/A
Heidi Washko, Elementary Student Council Advisor	Altoona Curve Trip	May 14, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by Student Council)	N/A
Kayla Fisher and Vivian Herman	Students to Heritage Conference Literacy Symposium at Purchase Line HS	February 27, 2025	\$210.00	Yes
Tina Lutz	Students to Penn State Math Competition	May 13, 2025	\$105.00	Yes
Larry McCabe, Baseball Coach	Take members of the baseball team to Philadelphia to scrimmage	March 13-15, 2025	\$105.00 (substitutes)	Yes
Sixth Grade Teachers	One Book, One Community Middle School Reading Program Penn Highlands Richland	May 21, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by Portage Rotary)	N/A
Addison Holyfield	Two students PMEA Regional Band Altoona Area HS	March 5-7, 2025	\$370.00	Yes
Tyler Johnson, Nicole Hunt, Kristen Gribbin	Washington DC trip for Seniors	March 17, 2025	\$315.00	Yes
Addison Holyfield	One student to PMEA Regional Chorus at Bellefonte HS	March 12-14, 2025	\$384.00	Yes

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**Requests for Use of Facilities:**

<b>Requester</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Rental Fee/ Amount</b>
Mary Ann George, HS Student Council	Blood Drive	Len Chappell Gymnasium	February 7, 2025 7:00 am – 3:00 pm	No Charge
Jennifer Thomas, PTO	Someone Special Dance	Elementary Gymnasium	March 7, 2025 3:30 – 8:00 pm	No Charge
Mary Ann George	Career Fair	Len Chappell Gymnasium	March 28, 2025 6:30 am–12:00 pm	No Charge
Tobi Burkett, Girls Basketball Boosters	Spring Fling Jr Hi Formal	Elementary Gymnasium/Lobby	April 11-12, 2025	No Charge
Portage Area Regional Planning Commission	Community Roundtable	High School Cafeteria	May 3, 2025 9:00 am - 12:00 pm	No Charge
Elementary Student Council	Sort fundraiser materials	Elementary Cafeteria	March 21, 2025 4:00 p.m.	No Charge
Makena Baumgardner, Varsity Softball Coach	Parent Meeting	HS Library	TBA	No Charge
Portage Elementary Title Team	Title Family Night	ES Room 204	March 4, 2025	No Charge

**MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

**MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 6-0

Time: 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary