

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
AUGUST 16, 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: Susan Berardinelli; Jason Corte; Matthew Decort; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; 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 was Tina Latoche.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Mrs. Adele Vocco, parent and Portage Township resident, addressed the board with her concerns regarding the band front advisors. Her daughter was taking part in a trip to Kennywood where the marching band and the band front would perform. At the time, her daughter had a large cut on her arm and was informally told that she should not twirl for about 48 hours to give the wound time to begin to heal. Mrs. Vocco stated that she did not see a doctor but that she reached out to get some medical advice via phone or text. Mrs. Vocco relayed this information to the majorette coach, Mrs. Miller, who said that she would need a doctor's excuse to participate. She further noted that the coaches were rude and intimidating towards her and her daughter. Mrs. Vocco stated that the coaches yell and stress the student out to the point that her daughter was afraid not to go on the trip and participate for fear of it being used against her. Mrs. Vocco inquired as to the district's policy on whether a doctor's excuse would be necessary. The held some discussion concerning this matter. Mrs. Vocco further mentioned that this coach was not at band camp during the day and she asked why the district is paying her if she does not attend band camp. She concluded that the coaches do not address when students are bullied. The board and administrators will look into these concerns.

**INFORMATION ONLY**

Football Stadium renovations – Andy Fedorko from The EADS Group discussed the bid tabulation for the bleacher rehabilitation project. He noted that Allegheny Restoration was the only bidder with a base bid of \$415,500. Mr. Fedorko noted that he is familiar with this company and would recommend the board approve them for the project. Mr. Squillario asked how long it would be until they started work. Mr. Fedorko noted that it would probably be the third week of September.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

1. Bond amounts. Mr. Vasilko noted that these amounts are typical for the positions. This routine matter is on the agenda for board consideration.
2. Cambria County Drug & Alcohol Program Agreement. Mr. Noel noted that this a routine renewal of the agreement with the county for drug and alcohol assessment.
3. School bus drivers, vehicles and school bus runs. This is a routine matter for board consideration.

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4. Student handbooks. Mr. Burkett and Mrs. Pisarski noted that the changes to the student handbooks dealt with attendance procedures which were aligned between the buildings to make them more consistent.
5. Valley Network agreement. Mr. Noel reported that this is a professional development program for the teachers. He also noted that the cost this year is \$6,000 less than last year.
6. Student teaching assignments. These student teachers will do their assignments in the fall and spring of this school year.
7. New district policies. Mr. Noel advised the board that these policies are ready to be adopted. He did note that he removed the Class Rank policy because the administrators want to take a deeper look into this policy.
8. Board affirmation statement. Mr. Noel reported that this affirmation statement is for the Assisted Targeted Support Plan for the high school. The high school has been working on the improvement plan and will see in October if it is released or if improvement will continue.
9. EFD, LLC consulting services. Mr. Noel explained that this is a continuation of the mentoring/consulting work that Mr. Zelanko's company has been doing since February.
10. WorkLink Staffing. Mr. Vasilko reported that this service could help the district in obtaining custodial staff, which are very hard to find. If a temporary employee would work out, the district would have the option of buying out the remainder of their contract, if any, and hiring them as a permanent staff member.
11. 1<sup>st</sup> Summit credit card. Mr. Vasilko advised that he and Mr. Noel would like the board's permission to apply for a credit card through the bank because the district's money is there and they can get a better rate and credit limit.
12. Southwood Psychiatric Hospital. Mr. Noel reported that this is a routine renewal of an agreement. The board will consider this matter during the regular meeting.
13. Move this World. Mr. Noel advised that this would be a renewal of the social emotional learning curriculum. He added that parents will have access to the curriculum.

**PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 6:53 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.)**

1. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda.

**BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES**

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD**

Time: 7:15 p.m.