

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 10, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli (6:31 p.m.); Jason Corte; 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 Matthew Decort and Christian Smith.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Those who wish to speak should limit their remarks to three but no longer than five minutes.

**NOTICE TO PERSONNEL**

There may be reductions and/or reassignments of personnel due to fiscal circumstances.

**DISTRICT POLICIES**

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **May 8, 2024**, 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 Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving the March meeting minutes. A copy of the minutes was distributed with the advance agenda.

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**REPORTS**

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that students are completing their NOCTI performance exams and on 5/8/2024, the vo tech will host a senior ceremony.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** thanked everyone who helped with the total eclipse and making it a fun and safe day for everyone. The school security and mental health grants have been approved and required assessments are now underway. He and the administrative team met with people from the IU to hopefully work towards getting the district out of its ATSI status. The Emergency Operations Teams is progressing with more training on the way. The district was able to purchase lockers for the new locker rooms from General Services for \$3,000.

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** reported that the special education plan has gone through the period of public review and is now ready to be board approved. The extended school year program has been set up for this summer, specifically in July. Mr. Eppley has applied for the PA Autism grant for the next school year. It would provide training and professional development.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** reported that Craig Castel is doing a great job as athletic director and that he's in the midst of spring sports which can be very challenging with the weather. Kylee Cerwinsky won an award for a her presentation and now she is going to present it to the student body. Isaac Geer will be headed to states for band in Erie. The spring concert, mock crash, prom and drama productions are all coming up in May as well as Jazz in the Park and field trips. Mr. Burkett noted that the senior usually took a trip to Washington DC which was funded by the Holocaust Memorial Organization and is now no longer funding it. The seniors are raising money to fund the trip.

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that the elementary will have their third marking period good behavior incentive, which is the jumpies. PSSA's will be upcoming and Mrs. Mignogna is the test coordinator and doing a great job. The entire district is working towards a consistent positive behavior reinforcement plan. May is very busy with field trips, concerts, a vo tech trip for 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the PTO book sale and other events.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** had nothing to add to the agenda.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** that he has been working on the preliminary budget to present to the board in May and that he's hoping that the governor will be able to push through his budget which is generous to education. This year cyber/charter school expenses and outside

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placements for students drove expenses up. On Friday, he will attend a PASBO meeting of business managers to discuss budget preparation. The district is beginning the preliminary discussions of possibly implementing solar energy.

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

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0  
(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>\$1,107,837.15</b>
<b>Cafeteria Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$83,780.56</b>
<b>Capital Reserve Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Capital Projects Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$63,113.48</b>
<b>Total Invoices paid</b>	<b>\$1,253,731.19</b>

**C.**

<b>Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation</b>	<b>\$0.00</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>\$37,408.66</b>
<b>Total Taxes</b>	<b>\$37,408.66</b>

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**APPROVING PAYMENT APPLICATION**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Payment Application 1 to Montgomery Bros Plumbing & Heating, LLC in the amount of \$8,550 in regard to the New Locker Room project.

**APPROVING CHANGE ORDER**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving Change Order #001 in the amount of \$2,500.93 to supply and install two single drinking fountains in the new locker rooms at the football stadium.

**APPROVING PAYMENT APPLICATION**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Payment Application 3 from Allegheny Restoration in the amount of \$31,336.75 in regard to the bleacher restoration project. This payment completes the project.

**APPROVING IDEA FUNDING DISTRIBUTION, COORDINATED EARLY INTERVENING SERVICES AND NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF LEA POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND USE OF FUNDS**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving Funding Distribution, Coordinated Early Intervening Services, and Notice of Adoption of Approved LEA Policies, Procedures and Use of Funds by School District for the 2023-2024 school year.

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**APPROVING STUDENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving the folding Mount Aloysius teaching students for student teaching assignments.

Maya Capozzoli under the supervision of Mrs. Washko  
Troy McConnel under the supervision of Ms. Thomas

**ADOPTING DISTRICT POLICY**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends adopting Policy 254 Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

**REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends that upon review, the board approves the district's special education plan for the three-year period 2024 to 2027. The plan has been available for public review and comment for the required period of time on the district's website.

**MOTION TO OPEN THE AGENDA**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The board moves to open the agenda for the purpose of voting on additional items.

**MOTION TO REVISE FITNESS CENTER PROCEDURES**

Motion Shope Second Berardinelli Vote 5-4

The board moves to allow volunteer coaches to use the fitness center throughout the year, which they are approved (July 1 to June 30). The volunteer must be available for the majority of practices and games during the PIAA season and be accompanied by a staff member in the fitness center.

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**PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**HIRING LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHER**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 8-0-1

Voting Yes: Decort, Shope, Corte, Jubina, Myers, Sherbine, Smith and Hough

Abstaining: Berardinelli

The Administration recommends hiring Lakin Phillips as a long-term substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.

**HIRING AUTISTIC SUPPORT/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TEACHER**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 8-0-1

Voting Yes: Decort, Shope, Corte, Jubina, Myers, Sherbine, Smith and Hough

Abstaining: Berardinelli

The Administration recommends hiring Lakin Phillips as an autistic support/emotional support teacher for the 2024-2025 school year. Salary will be Step 1, with benefits, in accordance with the PAEA contract. Ms. Phillips hiring will be dependent upon her obtaining professional certification.

**HIRING CUSTODIAN**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Gene Tewart as a member of the custodial staff. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the custodial union, with benefits.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Lisa Dividock as a school nurse in the high school. Mrs. Dividock's last day would be May 8, 2024. The Administration further requests to advertise for vacancy.

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**ACCEPTING LETTERS OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Sonny Kerch as a high school secretary effective May 31, 2024, and the resignation of Wendy Zock as an elementary school secretary effective April 12, 2024. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ACCEPTING LETTERS OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the following co-curricular resignations effective the last day of the 2023-2024 school year. The district further requests permission to advertise these positions:

Sara Richardson	fourth-grade discipline chair
Christa Miko	sixth-grade discipline chair
Annette Lutz	elementary student council adviser

**APPROVING REQUEST TO EXTEND A FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting a staff member's request to extend a medical leave of absence by one week for the period March 13, 2024 to April 1, 2024.

**ACCEPTING REQUEST TO REVISE A FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting a staff member's request to revise a medical leave of absence for the period March 18, 2024 to March 25, 2024.

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**ADDING VOLUNTEER COACH**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends adding Brianne Pinizzotto as a volunteer softball coach for the 2023-2024 season. Ms. Pinizzotto will provide updated volunteer clearances prior to participating in practices.

**BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Travel:

<b>Requester</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>	<b>Budgeted Y/N</b>
Ashley Shaffer, Mary Ann George and Bill Sheehan	Attend Drug Impairment training at Central Cambria SD	June 4-5, 2024	\$300	Yes
Mary Boland	ServeSafe Manager Test Johnstown	May 29, 2024	\$189.95	Yes

Request for Approved Field Trip:

<b>Requester</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>	<b>Budgeted Y/N</b>
Fourth Grade Teachers	Portage tour with Irene Huschak	May 23, 2024	\$0.00 (Historical Society)	N/A
Sara Erzal	Math 24 Tournament at St. Francis University	May 17, 2024	\$230.00	Yes
Sixth Grade Teachers	Old Bedford Village	May 7, 2024	\$0.00 (Paid by PTO)	N/A
Dennis Link, SADD Club Adviser	Take 34 students to Tony Hoffman Mental Health and Substance Abuse lecture	April 15, 2024	\$145.88	Yes
Travis Kargo	Attend Business Round Table with St. Francis University at PASD	April 17, 2024	\$0.00	N/A
Dennis Link, SADD Club Adviser	Take students to Commonwealth Prevention Alliance Convention in Harrisburg	May 1, 2024	\$105.00	Yes



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Kristen Gribbin	Yearbook end of year incentive, at the Clay Cup, Altoona	May 9, 2024	\$221.94	Yes
Phillip Miller	Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh	May 23, 2024	\$640.10	Yes
Tyler Johnson	Senior trip to Washington DC	May 21, 2024	\$1,260.00 (Fundraisers)	N/A
Christa Miko	Take sixth grade students on a train trip	May 20, 2024	\$0.00 (Paid by Historical Society)	N/A
Christa Miko	One Book Novel Program Penn Highlands CC	May 14, 2024	\$0.00 (Paid by Rotary)	N/A
Jen Szpala	Take transition students to the Cambria County Job Fair	May 7, 2024	\$258.09	Yes

**Requests for Use of Facilities:**

<b>Requester</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Rental Fee/ Amount</b>
Lance Hudak, Cambria County Basketball Coaches Association	CCBCA Senior Showcase Practice	Len Chappell Gymnasium	4/4/2024 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	No Charge
Flood City Elite Baseball	Baseball practice	JrHi Baseball Field	April 14, 21, 28, 2024 May 5, 12 19, 2024	\$30/hour
Portage Volunteer Fire Company*	Community Fireworks	Football Stadium, Parking Lot, Area Behind Stadium	August 10, 2024	No Charge

\*approval contingent upon receipt of a certificate of insurance

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

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

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

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

Time: 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary