

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2025 - 6:30 P.M.**

The Committee of the Whole 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; 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 Jason Corte and Matthew Decort.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Tammy Rodgers, elementary school art teacher, addressed to the board to notify them that the SAMA art show exhibit is up. This years show is again in Altoona and district students have 25 pieces in it. She encouraged the board to visit the exhibit as all feedback has been positive so far.

Steven Fuller, Portage resident, followed up with the board in regard to creating a wrestling program in the district. He noted that he met with school board members as well as Mr. Noel, Mr. Burkett and Mr. Castel. He reviewed three topics of concern:

1. What does success look like? He noted if the team could fill 8 of 15 weight classes. In turn failure would be five or less weight classes and not maintain competitiveness.
2. Scheduling. Based on a 21 point criteria, it would be possible to achieve with just tournaments.
3. Female inclusion. There will possibly be one or two female wrestlers coming up to junior high in the next season. While they haven't gotten far, they are confident they could find a female coach.

Mr. Fuller asked the board if there were any questions and if so, they could contact him.

Nick Summerville, a district student and athlete, addressed the board advising that he is a member of the co-op wrestling program with Penn Cambria. He noted that the PC coaches are great, use diverse techniques and want you to be your personal best. He noted a quote

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used by the coaches “Those who stay will be champions.” He stated that the coaches give great life lessons. In the program, he’s made great friends and has enjoyed a great level of competition.

INFORMATION ONLY

1. Update on Title IX policy. Mr. Noel noted that these policies were updated in 2024 and under the new administration, will most likely be revised once again back to 2020 regulations.
2. Cafeteria audit. Mr. Noel reported that the audit was completed, minor corrections were made but overall it was a clean audit. Mr. Vasilko added that the cafeteria will need to spend some funds as the goal is to have no profit in the cafeteria. Mary will provide a list of equipment, food, and other expenses for this overage.
3. Len Chappell gymnasium sound system. All parts are in for the repairs and will be done very soon.
4. ESSER audit. The audit is complete.

ROUTINE MATTERS

1. GASB 75 valuation. Mr. Vasilko reported that this pertains to post-employee benefits and is an analysis of how much they are worth for the purposes of our annual audit.
2. Custodial contract. Mr. Noel reported that the custodians have approved the contract and now it is on the agenda for board consideration.
3. HVAC maintenance agreements. Mr. Noel briefly reviewed the terms of the agreements, noting that this is a three year contract for both heating and cooling systems. This company provides excellent service.
4. Mental health services agreement. Mr. Noel noted that this company, Cartwheel, will provide behavioral and mental health services and counselors in the elementary school. Fifty percent of the cost will be covered with the mental health grant and it’s his hope that eventually all of it will be covered.
5. Natural gas supplier. Mr. Vasilko explained to the board that the district has a broker who watches rates on gas and when he finds

Time: 7:41 p.m.

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a favorable rate, he will notify us and if we want, we can lock into a plan with a supplier. This move will save the district \$30,000.

6. AmeriCorps volunteers. This is an annual line item with each building requesting two volunteers. It's not assured that we will get four.
7. 2025-2026 school calendar. This item is on the regular agenda for board consideration. Mr. Noel noted that he will bring the 2024-2025 school calendar to the board for revision in April.
8. Job Shadow Affiliation Agreement. Mr. Noel reported that this will allow students job shadow opportunities in the health care fields through Windber Hospital. There is no cost to the district.
9. District policies. Mr. Noel noted that the changes to these policies were mostly semantic and/or procedural changes. He also discussed the new policy on AI.
10. Student observers. Mr. Noel briefly reviewed this line item for board consideration noting that these pre-student teachers are from local colleges and universities.

PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 6:49 p.m. to 7:41 p.m.)

1. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda
2. Other matters as permitted under the Sunshine Act.

BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES

POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD

Time: 7:41 p.m.