

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MAY 14, 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 (6:35 pm); Jason Corte; Matthew Decort; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Branden Miller (6:33 pm); 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 was Troy Eppley.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

INFORMATION ONLY

1. Update on boiler and solar projects. Mr. Noel noted that he and Jeff will be meeting with the project manager to discuss the logistics of the project such as where there will be parking, office space, etc. Demolition will begin on Monday. He and Jeff have been having meetings with Damian and Dip regarding the solar project. Damian Zampagone noted that he is working with the Portage Township supervisors and the planning commission regarding the offsets for the solar array. This project will begin after August 15 due to protected bat mating season.
2. Grandstand warranty work at the football stadium. Mr. Noel provided an update to the membrane on the grandstand floor which was cracking. The contractor is now repairing it.
3. CPV Maple Hills Solar Farm community outreach efforts. Mr. Noel updated the board on his proposal to the CPV Solar Farm representations for approximately \$15,000 donation to the school for various student programs.
4. Recent power outage. Mr. Noel thanked everyone who helped out during the recent power outage noting that it's something we've not experienced before and was very frustrating. Maintenance will further look at the generator connections, especially at the elementary school. He thanked Ryan Clouse for connecting the district with a freezer truck from Walmart Distribution.

Time: 7:16 pm

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ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Tentative budget, tax structure, federal and state funds, and board appointments for the 2025-2026 school year. Mr. Vasilko provided a budget summary for the 2024-2025 school year noting that the district had a \$523,000 loss which includes a transfer from the general fund to the assigned capital projects funds. Healthcare and cyber school costs accounting for a sizeable increase in the expenditures. He thanked the teaching staff for their efforts to reduce spending. The funds transfer, the increase costs of healthcare and cyber school costs along with increases in utilities all combined to put the district over budget. He projects that for 2025-2026 the district will experience a \$405,000 loss because of increases to salaries and benefits. Healthcare costs are expected to increase 29.5%. Hopefully the current administration will be able to bring down the costs of prescription drugs as that is driving costs up more than medical procedures, etc. In terms of revenues, there may be an increase in funding from the state and additional money from the Adequacy grant which is good for the district. He will keep the board updated.
2. Appointment of board treasurer and secretary. Mr. Noel noted that these items are on the agenda for board action.
3. Collaborative Agreement for Nurse Practitioner. Mr. Noel noted that the board had received the agreement for their review and that this item is on the agenda for board action.
4. Raptor Technologies. Mr. Noel advised that this is a visitor management system. The quote is on the agenda for board action.
5. DirecTec proposals. Mr. Noel reported that he received the proposal for the PA system, bells and mass notification systems which are being implemented because of the safety audit. The clocks will also be replaced and this should get the district to where it needs to be and eliminate any dead spots in the high school as well as safety issues with not being able to communicate with anyone in the auditorium.
6. Police Protection MOU renewal. Mr. Noel reported that this is a two-year renewal agreement. It is on the agenda for board consideration.

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7. Ignite Education. Appalachian Youth Service annual agreements. Mr. Noel advised that this are annual renewals for substitutes and for an off-campus day treatment facility.
8. Milk bids. Mr. Noel advised that the administration is recommending continuing with Vale Wood Farms for milk products. He noted that milk prices are standardized and that the service we receive from Vale Wood is good so the district will continue with them.
9. Student teaching assignments. Mr. Noel noted that the three student teachers as listed on the regular agenda are for assignments in the high school which is not common.
10. District policies. Mr. Noel pointed out to the board that there is only one new policy on AI and one policy revision as the other policies dealt with Title IX regulations which have been reversed with the new administration.
11. Revising the 2024-2025 school year calendar. Mr. Noel noted that the PDE will not approve an emergency closure day for the day missed because of the power outage therefore the calendar needs to be revised. Graduation will now be June 4, 2025.

PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 7:06 pm to 7:26 pm)

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: 7:16 pm