

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 - 6:30 P.M.**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Susan Berardinelli, board vice president, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Matthew Decort; John Jubina; Tina Latoche; 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 were Jason Corte, Kathy Hough and Christian Smith.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Kyle Fitz from the EADS Group reported on the status of the football stadium bleacher and locker room projects and asked if there were any questions. As there were none, Mr. Fitz moved on to advised that the district had received a stop construction notice from the county board which turned out to be a miscommunication. Mr. Fitz surmised that someone had alerted the permitting authority that construction had started when it has not. He felt that possibly a resident saw construction equipment at the stadium and assumed that they were working without a permit. He contacted the authority and explained the situation. He further advised the board that when construction does begin, the contract will obtain the required permit.

**INFORMATION ONLY**

1. E-sports. Mrs. Smith discussed the Esports proposal she had submitted to them with the advance agenda. She said that this would provide an extra-curricular option for those students who could be underserved in the district, to reach out to the gamers and give more students an opportunity to represent their school. There has been a lot of interest by the student body and Mrs. Smith gave a tentative schedule of practices and meets. There would be no travel involved and this could be treated either as a team or a club. Mrs. Smith added that the state championships are hosted by St. Francis University. She concluded asking the board to contact her if they have any questions.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

1. Renewing agreement with the Association for the Blind and Handicapped. Mr. Noel reported that this is a standard renewal agreement and it is on the regular agenda for board consideration.
2. Renewing agreement with Ignite Education Solutions for substitute teachers and temporary staff. Mr. Noel advised that this is a renewal agreement for subs and is on the regular agenda for board consideration.
3. Approving Agreements for the Football Stadium Bleachers Rehabilitation Project. Mr. Noel referred the board Mr. Fitz's report and asked if there were any questions. These items are on the regular agenda for board consideration.
4. Approving Architectural/Engineering Services Proposal for Design of Locker rooms. This item was addressed by Mr. Fitz and is on the agenda for board consideration.

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 - 6:30 P.M.**

5. Approving Architectural Service Fee Proposal/Agreement for High School Door Frame Replacement. This item is on the agenda for board consideration. It was previously discussed by Mr. Fitz of the EASD Group.
6. Requesting permission to advertise for bids for laptops and a 10-passenger van. Mr. Vasilko explained that the laptops can be purchased through ESSER III money but the district has to go through the bid process because it is federal grant money. He added that the bid for the 10-passenger van may be a long-shot as it appears there are not many around. Because this would be purchases by ACCESS funds, the district could consider a used van which can only be used for special education travel. Again, since it is an ACCESS purchase it must be bid. He is willing to consider an 8 passenger van if there are no bid proposals for a ten. The district is in dire need of a vehicle to service student transportation needs.
7. Approving a memorandum of understanding with the Cambria County Backpack Project. Mr. Noel reported that the district has been participating in this program for a few years and this is a renewal. The Backpack project provides sustainable food to eligible students for the weekends.
8. District policy first reading of new policy, policy revisions and retiring policies. Mr. Noel referred the board to the regular agenda where these policies are listed. This is part of the PSBA policy update.
9. Approving Homecoming dance. Mr. Noel noted that this dance is being held off campus so it is not a use of facility request or a field trip but is something the board would need to approve.
10. Approving pre-student teacher observers. This is a routine matter to be considered during the regular agenda.
11. Rejecting bids for coal. Mr. Vasilko noted that Penn Keystone Coal Company put in a bid for \$225/ton, up from \$174 from last year and he questioned whether or not coal is the value it used to be. Further, the bid specified that the coal had to meet certain standards and Penn Keystone did not submit all object requested in the bid. He asked the board to consider rejecting the bids and approving to re-advertise. Once we receive any new bids, it may be that the board will need to determine if coal is an economic option for heating this year.

**PERSONNEL MATTERS (6:42 p.m. to 6:50 p.m.)**

1. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda.
2. Student issues.

**BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES**

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD**

Time: 6:50 p.m.