

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
MAY 8, 2024 - 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; Jason Corte; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Jacob Myers; Nancy Sherbine; Brian Shope; Christian Smith; 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 Matthew Decort.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

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

Eric Petrazio, Senior Account Executive from McClure Company presented to the board an overview of the company and its services to provide mechanical, electrical and energy solutions and how it could benefit the district.

**INFORMATION ONLY**

1. Stadium project update. Mr. Noel referred the board to pictures he had sent via email as to the progress on the locker rooms. He also reported that the lockers are currently in storage at the stadium. He mentioned that there is an issue with some electric components (surge protector) that is not going to be delivered until September, which is after the start of the season. Mr. Noel will reach out to the contractor for a possible solution.
2. P-EBT cards. Mr. Noel noted that there will be one more round of money added to EBT cards for eligible students. It will be income based and rounds out to be around about \$40 per child per month.
3. Teacher appreciation week. Mr. Noel recognized the staff for their hard work. The administrative office provided breakfast foods for them and the staff also had a dress down week. He thanked them for all that they do for the students in the district.
4. DCED grant. Mr. Noel noted that the things they would use this grant money for would be sidewalks, doors, controllers for the boiler and possible other items. The district will need to get estimates for these upgrades and there is a 75% match for the grant meaning the district would have to pay for 25% of the projects.
5. Elementary auditorium sound system upgrade. Mr. Noel pointed out the new sound system in the auditorium and that it is working very well.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

1. Tentative budget for the 2024-2025 school year, tax structure, federal and state funds. Mr. Vasilko reported that the end of the 2023-24 year is looking good.

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Some money could be moved to an assigned/committed account. Mr. Vasilko reiterated that the 38 students who attend cyber school cost the district \$629,000, which is a significant expense. The district is looking at alternative cyber options. With the budget surplus, the district is going to purchase some items/products/services as itemized on the regular agenda. He did explain to the board that the Meraki network subscription used to be through E-Rate. However this year it will be stand alone expense and then be built back into E-Rate. Some of these expenses will also be paid through Access funds.

2. Board appointments and school board treasurer. These are routine matters for board consideration.
3. Locker room project payment applications. Mr. Noel directed the board attention to the two payment applications on the regular agenda for board consideration.
4. ESL Consortium. Mr. Noel noted that this is an annual agreement and that one of our teachers is now enrolled in the program to obtain her ESL certificate.
5. Contribution to the Portage Volunteer Fire Company. Mr. Noel stated that this is an annual line item and the district has contributed \$200 in the past.
6. Fitness Equipment Service Contract. This is the annual agreement for service on the cardio equipment in the fitness center.
7. Homeless Letter of Agreement. This is an agreement with the Arin IU 28, the regional office for homelessness services.
8. Dual Credit Agreements with Penn Highlands and Mount Aloysius. These are renewal agreements to provide college credit courses to students.
9. Service Agreement with Extended Family Programs, Inc.. This is a routine matter for board consideration.
10. Flexible Instruction Day Program. Mr. Noel reported that he has submitted the application and if approved the district could utilize five flexible instructions days.
11. Memorandum of Understanding with the Learning Lamp (Preschool). Mr. Noel noted that the Learning Lamp uses two classrooms for their program. This matter is on the regular agenda for board approval.
12. Quote for a PAES Lab. This matter is on the regular meeting agenda for board action.
13. Science Curriculum. This matter is on the regular meeting agenda for board action.
14. Meraki network subscription. This matter was previously discussed by Mr. Vasilko and is on the agenda for board consideration.
15. STS Education (Laptops). This action is on the agenda for board consideration.
16. Floor Scrubber. Mr. Noel noted that last year a scrubber was purchased for the elementary school and it this one will be utilized in the high school.
17. Substitute Teacher Agreement with Ignite Education Solutions. Mr. Noel explained to the board that the district has had good success using Ignite to provide substitutes and they can also provide substitute nurses at a rate of \$150 per day.

Time: 8:00 p.m.

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18. World of Learning Extended Campus agreement. Mr. Noel explained that this is the district's Cyber option and that this program offers platforms for courses that will suit many students. This item is on the regular meeting agenda for board consideration.

**PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 7:19 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.)**

1. Personnel matters as listed on the regular agenda.
2. Staff matters

**BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES**

**POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD**

Mr. Myers noted that there seemed to be a miscommunication among board members concerning use of the facilities by graduates. He did not want to give the perception that the doors close after graduation. Mrs. Hough replied that at the last meeting the board discussed this matter and did not vote to allow the use of facilities. Mr. Noel added that teachers to help graduated students for tutoring inside the facility and did the board want to discuss how to make it equitable among all graduated former students. Mr. McGlynn clarified that it is also a matter of liability and that when an alum enters the building without permission of the board it is trespassing. If an incident would occur, the district insurance would cover it.

Time: 8:00 p.m.