

Port Allegany School District
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Regular Meeting
March 9, 2020

MINUTES

Call to Order

President Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library with a moment of silence and the flag salute. Mr. Moate called the roll.

Board Present: Dr. Mark Carlson, Mr. Justin Fillhart, Mr. Kerry Hawver, Mrs. Bonna Johns, Mrs. Erica Petruzzi, Mr. Jason Stake (arrived at 7:09 p.m.), Mr. Donald Tanner, Mr. Gary Buchsen, Mr. Adam Moate, and Board Treasurer Mr. Daniel F. Lane, III.

Board Absent: Mr. Sean Lathrop and Mr. Jonathan Stehle.

Others Present: High School Principal Marc Budd, Elementary Principal Tracy Kio, Assistant Principal Erika Emerick, Mary Lashway, Lisa VanGorden, Trisha Kallenborn, and Jenna Switzer.

Public Comment

There were no comments relating to agenda items, federal programs or in general.

Minutes of Preceding Meetings

Approved the Minutes of the February 3, 2020 Committee-of-the-Whole meeting and the February 10, 2020 regular meeting. Motion: D. Tanner; Second: E. Petruzzi. The motion was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Approved the Treasurer's Report for the period ended February 29, 2020 as presented by Mr. Daniel Lane, District Treasurer. Motion: K. Hawver; Second: B. Johns. Brief comment was made. The motion was unanimously carried.

General Fund account balances on February 29, 2020 were as follows: Juniata Valley Bank (JVB) Investment Savings - \$7,443,676.44 and JVB Now Account - \$5,963.88. Receipts since March 1 were \$25,051.37 and expenditures were \$40,907.78 bringing the balance in the general fund to \$7,434,333.91.

February 29, 2020 balances for various accounts were reported as follows: Capital Reserve Investment Fund - \$2,741,227.50; Student Activities Account - \$96,025.71; Student Athletics Account - \$75,041.76; and Cafeteria Account - \$38,505.82.

Bill Listings and Payrolls

Approved the General Fund Bill List of March 9, 2020 - \$1,551,561.31; and payrolls of February 13, 2020 - \$245,573.21 and February 27, 2020 - \$291,083.27. Motion: E. Petruzzi; Second: J. Fillhart. Clarification was provided for two bill list items. The motion was carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Buchsen reported there is a substantial water leak into the high school boiler room. Administration has been in contact with the Borough and Doctor Carlson to discuss options. Mr. Kio recommended opening up the line and placing a collar around the leak to curtail the

issue. The Board could look at replacement in the future. Administration believes this is the best option for the District so the Borough will complete this task tomorrow. He expressed thanks to the Borough for their assistance. Discussion was held with Doctor Carlson suggesting that the Board wait to see what condition it is in overall before moving forward with a major replacement.

Mr. Buchsen briefly reviewed an elementary staffing chart comparison from this year to next year noting that administration anticipated having two teaching vacancies and the class size chart includes the replacement of both. The secondary staff information shows current schedules of the two retiring staff. The discussion will continue during the budgeting process over the next several meetings.

Personnel

Approved Mrs. Samantha Wight's request for FMLA leave beginning approximately May 23, 2020 through May 29, 2020 in accordance with federal and state regulations and district policy. Motion: E. Petruzzi; Second: K. Hawver. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved Mrs. Kari Johnson's request for FMLA leave beginning approximately April 1, 2020 through May 29, 2020 in accordance with federal and state regulations and district policy. Motion: J. Stake; Second: E. Petruzzi. Brief discussion was held relating to placement of a substitute. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance

Approved the recommendation to increase health care rates payable to the Seneca Highlands Regional Insurance Trust by 3% for the 2020-2021 school year. Motion: K. Hawver; Second: J. Stake. The motion was carried unanimously.

Renewed the rental contract with Seneca Highlands Intermediate Unit Nine for the use of two classrooms at the elementary school during the 2020-2021 school year at a cost of \$4,000 each. Motion: E. Petruzzi; Second: B. Johns. The motion passed unanimously.

Curriculum and Instruction

Adopted the 2020-2021 Tentative School Calendar. Motion: K. Hawver; Second: E. Petruzzi. The motion carried unanimously.

Authorized the administration to submit a flexible instruction days application to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for potential use during the 2020-2021 school year. Motion: K. Hawver; Second: J. Fillhart. Mr. Buchsen said the state allows up to five days and if the application is approved it is good for three years. He indicated he believes it is a good idea to have them available noting that we do not have to use them. The motion carried unanimously.

Renewed the Affiliation Agreement with Mansfield University for placement of student teachers in the district. Motion: E. Petruzzi; Second: D. Tanner. The motion was unanimously carried.

Transportation

Approved Ms. Bambi Barber, Mr. Adrian Schroll, and Mrs. Ruth Webb as bus/van drivers for the remainder of the current school year as recommended by Muccio Transportation, Pupil Transportation Contractor. Motion: J. Fillhart; Second: D. Tanner. The motion was carried unanimously.

Board

Adopted the following revised policies: 202–Eligibility of Non-Resident Student; 222–Tobacco and Vaping Products – Students; 323–Tobacco and Vaping Products – Employees;

707–Use of School Facilities; and 904–Public Attendance at School Events. Motion: D. Tanner; Second: J. Fillhart. The motion was passed unanimously.

Adopted the Pennsylvania School Boards Association’s resolution calling for charter school funding reform. Motion: K. Hawver; Second: J. Fillhart. The motion carried unanimously. The resolution reads as follows.

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PORT ALLEGANY SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHEREAS, the average Pennsylvania school district spends millions of dollars in taxpayer money annually in mandatory payments to brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools; and these payments are calculated in a manner which requires districts to send more money to charter schools than is needed to operate their programs and places a significant financial burden on districts’ resources and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the current charter school funding formula was established in 1997 under the state’s Charter School Law and has not been changed in the 23 years since it was first created; and the formula for regular education programs is unfair because it is based on a school district’s expenditures and not what it actually costs to educate a child in the charter school; and

WHEREAS, the calculation for charter special education tuition is unfair because it is also based on the special education expenditures of the school district rather than the charter school; and although the General Assembly revised the special education funding formula in 2014 to more accurately target special education resources for students identified with high, medium and low needs, this formula was applied only to school districts and not to charter schools; and

WHEREAS, because the tuition rate calculations are based on the school district’s expenses, they create wide discrepancies in the amount of tuition paid by different districts for the same charter school education and result in drastic overpayments to charter schools; and these discrepancies in tuition rates for regular education students can vary by almost \$13,000 per student and by \$39,000 for special education students; and

WHEREAS, the latest data from the PA Department of Education (PDE) shows that in 2017-18, total charter school tuition payments (cyber and brick-and-mortar) were more than \$1.8 billion, with \$519 million of that total paid by districts for tuition to cyber charter schools; and

WHEREAS, further analysis of PDE data shows that in 2014-15, school districts paid charter schools more than \$100 million for special education services in excess of what charter schools reported spending on special education; and

WHEREAS, the costs of charter schools for school districts continue to grow significantly each year; and on a statewide basis are the most identified source of pressure on school district budgets; and

WHEREAS, the need for significant charter school funding reform is urgent; and school districts are struggling to keep up with growing charter costs and are forced to raise taxes and cut staffing, programs and services for their own students in order to pay millions of dollars to charter schools.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Port Allegany School Board calls upon the General Assembly to meaningfully revise the existing flawed charter

school funding systems for regular and special education to ensure that school districts and taxpayers are no longer overpaying these schools or reimbursing for costs the charter schools do not incur. We, along with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, are advocating for substantial change.”

The board convened an executive session to discuss personnel matters at 7:37 p.m.

The regular meeting reconvened at 8:45 p.m. for adjournment.

Adjournment

Motion: S. Lathrop; Second: B. Johns. The motion was unanimously carried. Doctor Carlson adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ADAM C. MOATE
Secretary to the Board of School Directors