

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JULY 28, 2021**

The special meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Kathy Hough, board vice president, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Jason Corte; Matthew Decort; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Tina Latoche; Christian Smith; Dennis Squillario; Erik Thrower; Eric A. Zelanko, Superintendent of Schools; Ralph J. Cecere, Jr., Junior Senior High School Principal; Pete Noel, Elementary School Principal; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary. Absent was Dennis McGlynn, Esquire.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PERSONNEL (6:30 p.m. to 6:59 p.m.)**

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

At this time, Mr. Zelanko addressed the large audience of parents and staff members concerning the start of the 2021-2022 school year and the district's Health and Safety Plan. He explained in detail what the latest guidance from the CDC, PDE and DOH for the opening of school. He also provided information and data that he's taken into account concerning the wearing of a face mask. Several parents voiced their concerns regarding the wearing of face masks. The majority of those who spoke also supported the school in the decisions made to keep the students in school and learning during the pandemic. They commended the staff and school district noting that many schools in the surrounding area did not provide the support the district had.

Mr. Zelanko noted that he researched the case counts in the 15946 ZIP code, the predominant ZIP code for students in the district and discovered that the beginning of our outbreak occurred when there were 11 cases of COVID documented. At the point, the numbers of persons with the virus soared and many were hospitalized or lost their lives. He stated that was when the district was forced to close for 14 days. He further noted that since that time, about 50% of our community residents have been vaccinated and possibly another 20% have had the virus and could have the antigens in their system. He feels that this is a positive step that we may not have another outbreak but cautioned that everyone still needs to remain diligent. He noted that he will provide the case count for our ZIP codes so that parents and staff can make informed decisions about their children's' well-being as well as their own. He urged everyone to be aware of what's happening in terms of the case count in our area and plan accordingly.

Mr. Zelanko explained his three levels for case counts and what it would mean to both staff members and students. He explained how he determined the numbers for each level and how the district would respond if those levels are reached. He further explained that in the CDC latest guidance, the term face covering was replaced with face mask meaning that face shields or chin shields would not be appropriate and masks would be work.

Mr. Zelanko said that the federal government considers school buses to be public transportation and therefore masks would be required when students were on the bus. He stated that there will be signs on each bus indicating that masks are required.

There was a question and answer period with Mr. Zelanko taking questions from the audience on the pandemic and other school matters. Mr. Zelanko also informed the audience that parents will soon be receiving a survey asking if their students have access to their own personal devices and if the household has high speed internet. He further said that the federal government may be able to provide personal devices to students who do not have them.

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**NOTICE TO PERSONNEL**

There may be reductions and/or reassignments of personnel due to fiscal circumstances.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

**1. NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **Wednesday, August 11, 2021**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium, 84 Mountain Avenue, Portage, PA with the Regular Meeting immediately following.

**2. REPORTS**

IU 08 Operating Committee representative **Mrs. Kathy Hough** reported that the new members were sworn in as the new year begins in July for the operating committee. Business of the meeting focused on the STEM program. Mrs. Hough also reflected on the library's Tales of Tails program which showcased animals around the world. She noted that Mr. Zelanko did a presentation on animals of Africa and she worked with park rangers, the members of TAP and others to bring presentations on other animals to the group. She noted that her assistant Lisa Pisarski and herself were very proud of the programs.

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that the next vo tech meeting is tomorrow where the business will be new hires.

Superintendent **Mr. Eric A. Zelanko** had nothing further to report.

High School Principal **Mr. Ralph Cecere** had no report.

Elementary School Principal **Mr. Pete Noel** had no report.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** was absent.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** had no report.

Athletic Director **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** had no report.

**APPROVING REVISIONS TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving revisions to the district's Health and Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 school year as reviewed.

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**APPROVING BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PRICES**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving breakfast and lunch prices for the 2021-2022 school year as follows:

Adult:	Breakfast	\$2.70
	Lunch	\$3.95
*Junior-Senior High Students:		
	Breakfast	\$2.00
	Lunch	\$2.50
*Elementary Students:		
	Breakfast	\$1.95
	Lunch	\$2.45

\*Cost to be paid if the district did not participate in the CEP program providing free breakfast and lunch to all students.

**PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**HIRING SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Michael Shuss as a secondary English language arts teacher beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be Step 1, with benefits, based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Dana Peles as a music teacher.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Amanda George as a speech and language teacher.

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**HIRING MUSIC/BAND TEACHER**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Addison Holyfield as a full time, permanent music teacher/band director beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA, with benefits. *After the vote, and possibly after the next line item being tabled, Sara Erzal, teacher and PAEA union officer, asked whether this position would be filled pending the position being advertised in the district per the contract, which had been her understanding. Mr. Throver replied that the board has moved to hire at this time. Mrs. Erzal replied that the PAEA will then take further action as the position was not advertised according to the contract. Mrs. Hough replied that the board moved to do what was in the best interest of the students and the district and that this position needed filled as soon as possible to allow the new band director to prepare for the upcoming marching band season. Mrs. Hough restated that the board acted in the best interest of the students. Mrs. Erzal replied that the union too has the student's best interest in mind but they will need to move forward. Mrs. Hough asked Mr. Zelanko to further explain. Mr. Zelanko noted that the music position was initially advertised in the newspaper in March and April, 2021, because the music teacher/band director at the time requested to be relieved of her position as band director. In order to keep the then music teacher/band director employed on a part-time basis, the decision was made to advertise in the newspaper. Currently there is one other certified music teacher in the district who indicated that he did not want to leave his current position in the elementary school and assume the music and band director position in the high school. The union was aware of the newspaper advertisement at the time it was published as well as the request of the then music teacher/band director.*

**HIRING A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TEACHER**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
***THIS MOTION WAS TABLED***

The Administration recommends hiring \_\_\_\_\_ as a full time, permanent speech and language teacher beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA, with single benefits.

**HIRING AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SECRETARY**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Sara Papcun as a 10-month elementary secretary beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current salary scale, with single benefits.

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**HIRING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL ADVISOR**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Mary Ann George as the junior-senior high school student council advisor beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the PAEA and the district for extra-curricular activities.

**HIRING HOMECOMING ADVISOR**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Kristin Gribbin as the homecoming advisor beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the PAEA and the district for extra-curricular activities.

**HIRING HEAD CROSS COUNTRY COACH**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Lance Hudak as the head cross country track coach beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the PAEA and the district for extra-curricular activities.

**HIRING ASSISTANT CROSS COUNTRY COACH**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Amy Burkett as the assistant cross country track coach beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the PAEA and the district for extra-curricular activities.

**BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

Requests for Use of Facilities:

<b>Requester</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Rental Fee/ Amount</b>
Portage Stallions Football	Practices and Games	Football Stadium and Track	Dates as arranged with the athletic office	No Charge
Kristy Claar, Head Cheer Coach	Powder Puff Game	Football Stadium	October 16, 2021 5:00 – 9:00 p.m.	No Charge
Kristy Claar, Head Cheer Coach	Jr. Cheer Camp for K-4 students	Elementary Gymnasium	August 16-17, 2021 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.	No Charge

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AAABA	Host Baseball Games for AAABA	Baseball Field	August 2-8, 2021	No Charge
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**MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0

**MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 9-0

Time: 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary