

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 14, 2021**

The regular 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 (6:33 p.m.); Jason Corte; 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; Dennis M. McGlynn, Esquire, Solicitor and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary. Absent was Matthew Decort.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PERSONNEL (6:36 p.m. to 7:08 p.m.)**

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Janelle Myers, resident and parents, addressed the board asking them to do the job they were elected to do and stand up to agencies such as the CDC and others and not require students to wear masks. She added that she is not in favor of students wearing masks for six or seven hours per day and that her own student 'got in trouble' for not wearing a mask correctly. She feels that the students can't breathe well in masks. She told the board to be brave, that they were elected to be brave and they should not mandate masks regardless of guidance from government agencies.

**NOTICE TO PERSONNEL**

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

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

**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. *It was noted that there would be a special meeting on July 28, 2021.*

**REPORTS**

IU 08 Operating Committee representative **Mrs. Kathy Hough** reported that the last meeting was very brief and consisted of routine matters.

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that the next meeting would be July 29 for personnel matters (hiring).

Superintendent **Mr. Eric A. Zelanko** discussed several items on the agenda including the Health and Safety Plan which at the current time does not mandate face coverings. He added that the district has no crystal ball and cannot predict what will happen moving forward. The Health and Safety plan is a living document which will be revised and updated as needed. He also noted that the Commonwealth has implemented a new criteria that board agendas must be "locked down" 24 hours prior to a meeting with no changes being made. He added that this will prevent last minute additions to the agenda and items must be presented in a timely manner. Mr. Zelanko also discussed the topic of a recreation manager. He noted that the latest agreement sent to him by the Borough included language that the district would share in the cost of this position and would allow the recreation commission "second tier" rights to the district's facilities. Mr. Zelanko stated that he believes the district's sole responsibility is to use taxpayer money to educate students and not to use tax dollars to fund a recreation manager. He

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also noted that the district has in place a procedure for the use of its facilities and each request is approved by the school board. He also noted that the district's facilities are generally occupied by the district. Mrs. Hough noted here that she has kept the board and Mr. Zelanko notified of the discussions and told the commission that the agreement would not fly in terms of paying costs or use of the district facilities. Mr. McGlynn interjected that it is not the school's function to pay these costs or the agreement concerning facilities.

High School Principal **Mr. Ralph Cecere** had nothing to add to the agenda.

Elementary School Principal **Mr. Pete Noel** reported that the Extended School Year will be wrapping up and the Summer Learning Program will end July 29. He noted that WJAC did a segment on what the school district is doing to close the learning gap experienced through the pandemic. The segment will air on an upcoming news broadcast.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** had nothing to add to the agenda.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported that his office is working on wrapping up the 2020-2021 school year and preparing for the 2021-2022 school year.

Athletic Director **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** had nothing to add to the agenda.

**REPLACING/UPDATING SOUND SYSTEM IN HS AUDITORIUM**

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

The Administration recommends updating and/or replacing the sound system in the high school auditorium at a cost not to exceed \$70,000. This work will be done by Open Systems Pittsburgh, a CoStars provider.

**REPLACING GAS BURNERS ON HS BOILERS**

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

The Administration recommends replacing burners on the natural gas boilers in the high school at a cost of \$67,800 for both boilers. This work will be done by Combustion Service & Equipment Company, a CoStars provider. This project can result in a 5% fuel savings.

**APPROVING EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME APPLICATION**

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

The Administration recommends approving the Emergency Instructional Time Application for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends approving the district's Health and Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 school year as reviewed at the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

**REVISING THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**

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

The Administration recommends revising the 2021-2022 school year calendar as discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting to accommodate the 2022 prom.

**APPROVING BOARD AFFIRMATION STATEMENT**

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

The Board of School Directors affirms that it has reviewed and approved the ATSI plan for the junior senior high school for the 2021-2022 school year.

**REVISING DISTRICT POLICY**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends revising Policy 222 Tobacco and Vaping Products as discussed at the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

**RENEWING AGREEMENT WITH IGNITE EDUCATION SOLUTIONS**

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

The Administration recommends renewing its agreement with Ignite Education Solutions to provide long-term, contracted, and substitute non-professional staff on an as needed basis for the 2021-2022 school year.

**ENTERING AGREEMENT WITH IGNITE EDUCATION SOLUTIONS FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

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

The Administration recommends entering an agreement with Ignite Education Solutions to provide substitute professional staff on an as needed basis for the 2021-2022 school year. There is a 10% administration fee plus the cost of the day to day substitute.

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**RENEWING AGREEMENT WITH APPALACHIA IU8 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VALLEY NETWORK PROGRAM**

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

The Administration recommends renewing its agreement with Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 to provide professional development plans for the 2021-2022 school year at a cost of \$8,500 to the district.

**APPROVING AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL-BASED ACCESS PROGRAM**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends approving an agreement with the PA Department of Human Services to participate in school-based ACCESS program for the fiscal year 2021-2022..

**REQUEST TO SELL SURPLUS ITEMS**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration requests permission to sell miscellaneous surplus items using Municibid.

**PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**HIRING ESSER TEACHERS**

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

The Administration recommends hiring the following as a temporary teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be Step 1, with single benefits, based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA.

Taylor Trenger	Grade 1
Beth Eckenrode	Grade 5

**HIRING SOCIAL WORKER**

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

The Administration recommends hiring Ashley Schaffer as the district's social worker beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Salary will be \$42,700, with benefits.

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**HIRING SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER**

***DIED FOR A LACK OF A MOTION***

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

**HIRING MUSIC/BAND TEACHER**

***DIED FOR A LACK OF A MOTION***

The Administration recommends hiring \_\_\_\_\_ as a part-time 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 single benefits.

**APPROVING STAFF REQUEST TO MOVE TO PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT**

Motion Hough Second \_\_\_\_\_ Vote \_\_\_\_\_

***FAILED FOR A LACK OF A SECOND***

The Administration recommends approving Dana Peles's request to move from full time music teacher/band director to a part-time music teacher beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. If approved, Ms. Peles would be eligible for single benefits.

**HIRING SOPHOMORE CLASS ADVISOR**

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

The Administration recommends hiring Abigail Chobany as the sophomore class 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.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Emily Horn as an elementary school teacher.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Jacquelyn Swires as a teacher's aide.

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**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Sara Gdula as the junior/senior high school student counsel advisor. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ACCEPTING LETTERS OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignations of Brandon Vocco Josh Himmer as assistant football coaches. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Amanda George as a speech and language teacher effective July 14, 2021. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

**ADDING VOLUNTEER COACH**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends adding Kendall Claar as a volunteer varsity cheer coach. Ms. Claar has provided her clearances.

**MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES**

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

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

Motion Hough Second Squillario Vote 8-0

Time: 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Matthew Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary