

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2021 - 6:30 P.M.**

The Committee of the Whole 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; Dennis M. McGlynn, Esquire, Solicitor and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

INFORMATION ONLY

1. Continuity of Education. Mr. Zelanko reported on the status of reopening the schools for hybrid and face to face learning. He noted that in addition to having the K through 6 grade students back in class, some students who were studying full-time remotely, are now back in the classroom or hybrid. He also reported that case counts in our ZIP code seem to be on a decrease and he is hopeful that trend will continue. He would like to begin to bring back some targeted groups of students in the next few weeks including seniors in danger of failing and then students in grades 7 through 11 in danger of failure. He outlined his plans to bring back other targeted groups of students beginning January 25 if our current decline in cases holds out. He noted that he is working with providers for administration of the vaccine when it becomes available and with continue to provide updates.
2. Extra-Curriculars. Mr. Zelanko provided an update to the reopening of winter sports noting that the coaches are doing a phenomenal job in social distancing during practices. Locker rooms are being used only for changing. The district will follow recommendations of using face coverings, limiting spectators and social distancing. Games will be broadcasted live or recorded and uploaded to the district's YouTube channel. Mr. Burkett provided information on other district's protocols for social distancing. Mr. Zelanko added that at this time, youth sports are not permitted to practice or host games in the district. He further reported that other districts are following suit or only allowing one grade level or one sport to practice as well as charging the team for sanitizing and cleaning. He feels that the district should not allow youth organizations to practice in that it would interfere with the district schedules and make it very difficult for our custodial crew to continue it's sanitizing/cleaning routines. Attorney McGlynn concurred and added that it is a risk not worth taking.
3. Device Update. Mr. Zelanko reported that devices have begun to arrive and Ryan and Jay Shuck are working on getting them ready for the students. They will be ready to distribute very soon. He also managed to find a tablet for the lower grades that would be a great fit for their needs.
4. Budgeting for 21-22. Mr. Zelanko briefly discussed budgeting for the next school year with the board including whether or not they wanted to hire a special education coordinator or director and if the district should plan for additional sections in the elementary school.

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ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Accelerated budget opt out resolution. Mr. Zelanko reported that this resolution means the district will not raise taxes above the index for the 2022-2023 school year.
2. Single audit for 2019-2020 school year. Joel Valentine, a partner at Wessel & Company, provided the district with the single audit report for the 2019-2020 school year. It was an unmodified report, the best possible report.
3. Activity clubs and advisers. Mr. Zelanko noted that this is a routine matter and asked the board to consider approving the clubs and advisers during the regular meeting.
4. District policies. These policies have been read three times and now ready to be adopted by the board.

PERSONNEL MATTERS (Executive Session 6:55 p.m. to 7:19 p.m.)

1. Staff matters

BOARD AGENDA REQUEST/USE OF FACILITIES

POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD

Time: 7:19 p.m.