

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION**

January 12, 2009

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, January 12, 2009, was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by President Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 24 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Shirley Johnson, Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, Rusty Rathburn, Jennifer Whistler, and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent Wells commended the Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor, Mr. Bob Small, and his staff for their perpetual plowing and shoveling efforts in the District. She informed the audience of the recent State Revenue Estimating Conference held and invited the Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, to provide highlights. Mr. Noverr briefed the audience and informed them nothing is finalized and he will provide further updates at the February Work Session after the Governor's State of the State address.

President Johnson opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board. Mrs. Polderman informed the audience of the public comment guidelines.

No citizens came forward to speak and President Johnson opened the floor for Board Trustee comments.

Mr. Posthumus discussed comments he received from local contractors and encouraged the District to continue its local focus.

Mrs. Kurdys discussed a student safety concern, the Building and Site Sinking Fund amendment encompassing new tennis courts at both high schools, repairs to courts at West Middle, planned building maintenance, and the need for math curriculum improvements at the elementary level.

Mr. Rathburn responded to Mrs. Kurdys comments about the Building and Site Sinking Fund amendment. Mr. Rathburn also shared comments and perspectives gained from his classroom visits.

Superintendent Wells responded to Mrs. Kurdys student safety concern noting District Legal Counsel and neighboring Superintendent's were consulted and the District is operating in accordance with our Safe and Orderly Environment Manual. The District is seeking additional interpretations and anticipates clarification of this matter.

President Johnson reiterated the Building and Site Sinking Fund will continue to be scrutinized along with the high school tennis courts being considered.

Several other Trustees responded to Mrs. Kurdys comments regarding the relocation of playing fields at the Northern High, clarification about building maintenance, and the safety issue of traffic encroaching on the planned tennis court space.

Mr. Posthumus requested the District provide information to the Board that addresses Mrs. Kurdys comments regarding the need for math curriculum improvements at the elementary level.

Superintendent Wells responded the District will provide the Board with more detailed information regarding the elementary math curriculum.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Project Updates, Technology Plan. The Director of Technology Systems, Mr. Michael Batterson, shared background information pertaining to the work that is underway regarding the infrastructure, tools for teachers, and students. Mr. Batterson invited the Integration Specialist, Mr. Chuck Haskins, to provide further details. Mr. Haskins presented the evaluation process of the technology enhanced classroom, a timeline for the project, and how this equipment has changed the classroom learning climate. After Mr. Haskins responded to numerous Trustee questions, Superintendent Wells acknowledged she is looking forward to Mr. Haskins updating the Board on this project a few months from now.

Bond Project Updates, 12th Street Elementary Fiber Bid Package. The Director of Technology Systems, Mr. Michael Batterson, provided background on the Fiber Optic Wireless Area Network (WAN). Mr. Batterson introduced Mr. Alex Ellingsen, Technology Consultant from Secant Technologies, and they shared information about moving from design to construction, wireless networking, voice over internet protocol, surveillance cameras, tools for teachers and students, and replacement plans. Both responded to numerous Trustee questions pertaining to future bids, maintenance, and the possibility of technology enhanced classrooms enticing new students and staff to the District.

Bond Project Updates, Construction Report. Mr. Casey Peters, Project Manager from AVB Triangle Associates, introduced Mr. John Spencer, Elementary Project Owners Representative; Mr. Gary Kalleward, High School Project Owners Representative; Mr. Jeff Jelke, Project Director from AVB Triangle Associates; Mr. Mike Wittenberg, Central High Project Superintendent from AVB Triangle Associates; Mr. Ryan Leaser, Northern High Project Manager from AVB Triangle Associates; Mr. Mark Reile, Architect from TMP Associates; and Mr. Rick Ball, 12th Street and Lake Center Elementary Project Superintendent from AVB Triangle Associates. Mr. Peters provided a construction update on 12th Street Elementary, Northern High School, Central High School, Lake Center Elementary, the Technology Training Center (previously Waylee Elementary), and the bus and maintenance facility. Numerous Trustee questions were answered pertaining to the completion of specific Bid Packages, geo-thermal installation, Lake Center's track replacement, timing of bids, and building insulation.

Mr. Posthumus inquired about the status of the District's contacts with residents bordering the bus and maintenance facility.

Superintendent Wells briefed the audience on previous meetings held with neighborhood residents near the new bus and maintenance facility. She shared plans for an additional meeting in April to discuss further feedback and landscape to the site and will bring updates to the Board.

Bond Project Updates, Bid Process Review. Mr. Peters provided background information on bids, and the bid process. Mr. Peters and Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions pertaining to alerting a bad reference before hand and in writing, bidders not qualified for projects, flow charts for the bid and change order process, completion of all paperwork, importance of reading bids and disclosing facts, familial forms, bonding, local preference, and company rating.

Motion offered by Mrs. Kurdys to readdress the District's stand on the local bid process for further clarification. President Johnson called for support to the Motion on the floor. Seeing no support, this Motion died on the floor for lack of support and President Johnson moved on to the next order of business.

Mr. Noverr informed the Board that the District determines if a bidder has a local office by their payment of real or personal property taxes in the community. President Johnson inquired about notification up front, in writing, if bidders do not qualify as local. Mr. Noverr shared details he obtained from Western Michigan University regarding their pre-qualification process. Mr. Noverr and Mr. Peters discussed topics and responded to Trustee questions pertaining to the bidding process, combined category proposals, and the robust and fair process being in compliance with Legal Counsel.

President Johnson moved the Action Item up in the agenda.

ACTION ITEM

Motion offered by Mr. Posthumus, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education approve the Northern High School Bid Pack 3 for Soil Stabilization to Nicholson Construction, as presented.

Mr. Noverr and Mr. Peters provided background on the request and responded to Trustee questions regarding the complexity of this project.

Motion carried unanimously.

President Johnson returned to the final discussion item.

Energy Management Consortium. Superintendent Wells shared background information about potentially joining a consortium with other Districts with an energy management firm in order to more effectively track and trim energy costs. Mr. Noverr provided some historical insight regarding previous energy saving measures in the District. Superintendent Wells and Mr. Noverr responded to

Trustee questions pertaining to possible savings, a point person being a District employee or someone from the consortium, and checking into competitors. Superintendent Wells informed the Board she would contact Michigan School Business Officials office to look at other company options to update the Trustees.

President Johnson opened the floor for comments pertaining to the discussion portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board.

Mr. Bob Schafer, 7667 Cobblewood, a citizen, shared information and concerns about technology enhanced and acoustically designed classrooms. He also discussed low bids, commissioning agents and shared concerns about the future traffic flow at Central High School. Superintendent Wells responded to Mr. Schafer that a commissioning agent is already in place for the 12th Street Elementary, but the Administration had yet to determine if that would be needed with the other projects.

President Johnson requested Mr. Schafer make an appointment with Mr. Noverr to discuss Central traffic issues.

Mr. Noverr informed the Board that a request would be moving forward at their January 26th Regular Business Meeting pertaining to 12th Street Elementary classroom furniture purchase for a portion of the District.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary