

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL AND REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

April 19, 2010

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, April 19, 2010, was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Vice President Whyte in the Superintendent's Conference Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge.

Board Trustees Present: Kevin Hollenbeck (arrived at 5:37 p.m.), Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

Others Present: Marsha Wells, Superintendent

CLOSED SESSION

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Whyte, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy [Section 8 (c) of the Open Meetings Act]. Upon a roll call vote, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

The Board moved into closed session at 5:33 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 5:58 p.m.

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Van Antwerp, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing attorney-client privileged material [Section 8 (h) of the Open Meetings Act]. Upon a roll call vote, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

The Board moved into closed session at 5:59 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 6:23 p.m.

Recess was called at 6:23 p.m.

The regular business meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, April 19, 2010, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice President Whyte in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. He welcomed an audience of 30 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Kevin Hollenbeck, Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

ORGANIZATIONAL ITEM

Secretary Polderman opened the floor to nominations for the office of Board President for the 2009/2010 school year.

Mrs. Polderman nominated Mr. Whyte for the position of Board President. Motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Polderman announced Mr. Whyte will assume the office of President.

Mr. Van Antwerp nominated Dr. Hollenbeck for the position of Board Vice President. Motion carried by a vote of 6-1. Mrs. Polderman announced that Dr. Hollenbeck would assume the office of Vice President.

President Whyte addressed the difficult financial issues all school districts in the State are facing and the deep cuts projected in State funding. He urged the community to question the legislators running for office next fall as to their position on stable, secure funding for education. President Whyte acknowledged the District will continue to address the funding issues while maintaining the level of excellence for all students and sustain a 7 percent fund balance. He thanked the citizens for their recent comments and support and acknowledged the Board will continue to work on respect and civil behavior.

RECOGNITIONS

The Community Relations Manager, Mr. Tom Vance, introduced the Central High Debate Coach and Teacher, Mr. Randy Borden. Mr. Borden introduced student award winners and shared news of the Central High School Debate Team success at the 2010 Great Midwest Novice National Legislative Debate Championship Competition.

Mr. Vance provided background information and recognized three middle school students who are Community Literary Award recipients in an annual competition sponsored by the Kalamazoo Gazette, Kalamazoo Public Library, and the Portage District Library.

Northern High School Teacher, Ms. Kathy Mirakovits was acknowledged and recognized for co-authoring the textbook, "Forensic Science: The Basics."

On behalf of the Board of Education, President Whyte offered accolades and presented certificates of recognition to the Central High School Debate Team, the Literary Award recipients, and Ms. Mirakovits.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Wells congratulated the choirs from Central, North, and West Middle Schools acknowledging all recently performed in the District Choral Festival and all qualified for the State Choral Festival. She acknowledged and congratulated the Debate and Literary Award students, Mr. Borden, and Ms. Mirakovits. The Superintendent recognized the 36 seniors that recently completed the rigorous program and qualify for International Baccalaureate Diplomas in June. She acknowledged the academic achievement of all District Seniors will be featured in the June issue of the District newsletter "Inside PPS."

Superintendent Wells acknowledged with proms and graduations taking place soon, the District Substance Abuse Task Force has been working with the County Task Force to get the word out about how adults can help young people make safe choices during this time. She invited Instructional Services Coordinator, Mrs. Sarah Baker, to provide further details. Mrs. Baker informed the audience of a mailing in collaboration with the Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force to all junior and senior households in the District regarding a campaign entitled, “Parents Who Host Lose The Most.” This campaign, designed by the Drug Free Alliance, focuses on liability and legal issues related to serving alcohol to under age drinkers. Mrs. Baker also discussed the rise in prescription drug abuse and urged citizens to lock all prescription medications. Superintendent Wells added the City Council intends to do a Proclamation regarding “Parents Who Host Lose The Most” at an upcoming meeting.

The Superintendent acknowledged the District Strategic Priorities that will be addressed as the Board looks to the 2010/11 planning and reviewing process are: progress made in high academic achievement, financial accountability, and facilities management. She noted the District plan strives to have students at all levels perform at least in the top ten percent of all districts in the State. Superintendent Wells congratulated Angling Road and Amberly Elementary third and fourth grade students who attained 100 percent levels on the recent MEAP testing. She discussed the extensive training taking place in the District as well as curriculum review.

Superintendent Wells discussed the review of information gathered in a recent District survey pertaining to how we are doing as a District and how we can improve. She noted The Kercher Center will present these findings to the Board in early May. The Superintendent clarified this is a separate effort from the annual parent satisfaction survey that will be distributed soon.

The Superintendent provided the following Bond project updates: classes have resumed in the new science wing at Northern High School with no additional concerns and other renovations at the site are progressing; Central High School academic wing is well under construction as well as the extension of Courier Drive where a traffic light will be installed by the start of the 10/11 school year; and plans to move into the new Lake Center Elementary building in May and an open house in late August for the public.

Superintendent Wells acknowledged the previously addressed budget cut of \$165 per student noting the District could be looking at an additional \$268 loss in revenue for the 2010/11 school year. She discussed attempting to close a nearly \$4 million gap in next year’s budget process and will be sharing a draft of key issues the Board is looking at for next year at the Work Study Session in May. She urged citizens to access the District web site at www.portageps.org for an update on budget information as well as links to local legislators.

The Superintendent discussed the May 4th election for three Trustees and the Building and Site Sinking Fund millage. Superintendent Wells invited Mr. Vance to provide background information on District communications to keep the citizens well informed of this millage. Mr. Vance discussed the mailing being sent to all homes in Portage and shared a review of the presentations and informational campaigns that have taken place. Detailed information has been provided to inform voters of the importance of this millage renewal used to maintain critical facility upgrades like roofs and asphalt. He urged the community to attend a public information meeting to be held at the Portage Senior Center on Thursday, April 29th from 10 – 11 a.m. for further information.

Financial Report: Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, presented the General Fund Condensed Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the nine month period ending March 31,

2010. He provided historical background on the Building and Site Sinking Fund (BSSF), building repairs funded, and projected use. Mr. Noverr briefed the Board on the budget time table, noted he will continue providing state budget information, and commented that a date has not been set for the May State Revenue Estimating Conference.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Whyte 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 explained guidelines the Board uses for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale Street, a citizen, shared concern with the Building and Site Sinking Fund millage and Dr. Hollenbeck's appointment to the Board.

Dr. Millie Taraszka, 410 Marylynn Court, a citizen, thanked all District staff that agreed to a pay cut in order to cover funding reductions, urged parent involvement with their students, and discussed maintenance of existing District facilities.

Mrs. Sarah Bricknell, 6371 Cullys Trail, a parent, thanked Dr. Hollenbeck for his willingness to serve and the Board for his selection. As a Portage Education Foundation (PEF) representative, Mrs. Bricknell, shared details on the PEF: Now (Protecting Education's Future Now) program. In light of the school funding crisis, the PEF is an alternative funding source for citizens to contribute directly to the District. She further explained contributions will be tax deductible, transparent, and their goal is approximately \$1 million by June 2011. Mrs. Bricknell noted details are available on the web site (www.portageeducationfoundation.org) and brochures are available also.

Mr. Bob Schafer, 7667 Cobblewood Drive, a citizen, shared concern regarding the audio enhanced classrooms and construction projects and welcomed Dr. Hollenbeck.

President Whyte opened the floor to comments from fellow Board members.

Mrs. Kurdys recognized all District teachers in honor of Staff Appreciation Week. She encouraged community support for the Building and Site Sinking Fund millage and the urged citizens to question Board candidates about education values.

Dr. Hollenbeck thanked the Board for his appointment and acknowledged looking forward to serving as Vice President. He shared details about the Action For Education Summit meeting that is being planned in the community. He noted this meeting is co-sponsored by the ISAAC Group (Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy and Action in the Community) and the Great Start Collaborative to advocate for stable education funding.

Mrs. Polderman welcomed Dr. Hollenbeck to the Board. She discussed recently attending the International Baccalaureate recognition ceremony and, in light of Staff Appreciation Week, urged students to let those significant teachers know how they have impacted your education. As the Portage Education Foundation liaison, Mrs. Polderman echoed Mrs. Bricknell's comments regarding the PEF: Now campaign and encouraged citizens the check the web site.

Mr. Snyder congratulated the students recognized at the meeting. He also recognized and offered kudos to the students and staff involved with the following District productions: Central High's "Of Mice And Men" and North Middle's "Seussical Jr." Mr. Snyder also commented on the crucial budget issues the District is facing urging public input on the prioritization of services.

Mr. Rathburn welcomed Dr. Hollenbeck to the Board, spoke in support of the BSSF renewal, and echoed President Whyte's comments urging citizens to contact legislators to tackle the tough issues and secure stable funding for education. Mr. Rathburn also clarified information pertaining to the band instrument purchase and noted this item will come back to the Board this summer.

President Whyte announced with Dr. Hollenbeck's election as Vice President, he now becomes a member of the Audit Committee. President Whyte also noted he is appointing Mr. Van Antwerp as Parliamentarian for the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Dr. Hollenbeck, that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda items, as presented. Included on the consent agenda was the approval of the Minutes of the March 22, 2010, Special and Regular Business Meeting, March 25, 2010, Special Meeting, and April 5, 2010, Special Meeting, and the Staff Appreciation Week Proclamation.

Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion offered by Mr. Rathburn, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education grant permission for the Central High School students to travel to Peru in June 2011, as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Rathburn, that the Board of Education award the Central and Northern High Schools' Audio/Visual Technology Project as follows: Classroom AV to Central Interconnect of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in an amount not to exceed \$574,464.80; Small System AV to L.Comm of Wixom, Michigan, in an amount not to exceed \$68,731.51; and Large System AV to TPC Technologies of Niles, Michigan, in an amount not to exceed \$212,997.60. These awards, totaling \$856,193.91, will be funded from the 2008 Bond Fund #1, as presented.

Mr. Dan Vomastek, Director of Information and Technology Systems, and Mr. Chris Hamilton, Technology Designer of Secant Technologies, responded to Trustee questions regarding: reverberation and volume levels and addressing special needs.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mr. Van Antwerp, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education accept all bid categories for the Asbestos Abatement at Lake Center Elementary School from

Martin and Associates of Portage, Michigan, for a base bid of \$42,407.00. Funding for this project will come from the 2008 Bond Fund #2, as presented.

Mr. Tom Noverr responded to a Trustee question regarding unit pricing.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mr. Van Antwerp, that the Board of Education accept the bid from Central Tile and Terrazzo of Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the amount of \$61,385.00 for the replacement of carpeting at Moorsbridge Elementary contingent upon passage of the Building and Site Sinking Fund (BSSF) millage renewal on May 4, 2010. This purchase will be allocated to the 2009/10 BSSF, as presented.

Mr. Tom Noverr responded to Trustee questions regarding bid specifications.

Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary