

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION**

September 13, 2010

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, September 13, 2010, was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by President Hollenbeck in the Superintendent's Conference Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge.

Board Trustees Present: Kevin Hollenbeck, Geoff Howe, Melanie Kurdys, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and Joanne Willson

Board Trustees Absent: None

Others Present: Marsha Wells, Superintendent; Tom Noverr, Assistant Superintendent of Operations; Ric Perry, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction; and Tom Zahrt, Director of Human Resources

CLOSED SESSION

Motion offered by Mrs. Willson, seconded by Mrs. Kurdys, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy and attorney-client privileged material [Section 8 (c) and 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 5:33 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 6:20 p.m.

Recess was called at 6:20 p.m.

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, September 13, 2010, was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by President Hollenbeck in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. He welcomed an audience of 6 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Kevin Hollenbeck, Geoff Howe, Melanie Kurdys, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and Joanne Willson

Board Trustees Absent: None

REPORTS

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Dr. Ric Perry, provided an update on the back-to-school activities in the District.

The Director of Human Resources, Mr. Tom Zahrt, shared a staffing update and an overview of the new teacher hires that would appear on the September 27th Board Agenda. Superintendent Wells added she was pleased to announce the District had called back all teachers that were on full or partial lay-offs.

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, provided an update citizen concerns regarding 12th Street Elementary as well as Bond construction updates on: Lake Center Elementary, Central High School, and Northern High School. He responded to Trustee questions pertaining to playground liability.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Hollenbeck opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board. Mr. Van Antwerp explained guidelines the Board uses for this portion of the meeting.

Dr. Millie Taraszka, 410 Marylynn Court, a citizen, discussed a cost analysis of tile versus carpeting in District buildings and Mr. Noverr responded to her questions.

President Hollenbeck opened the floor for Board Trustee comments.

President Hollenbeck briefed the audience on the two-day Board Planning Retreat that was held on August 12 and 13. He noted the first day was devoted to the functioning of the Board including a review of the indicators of effective boards and board members. Day two was devoted to long term strategic planning and goal setting that included a SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The Board developed goals around educational achievement, financial management, and leadership designed to propel the District to the next level or “Super-Tier” status to be considered as one of the very best school districts in the state and nation.

Mr. Howe shared an article by Douglas B. Reeves entitled, “The Case Against The Zero.” The article makes an argument about artificially punishing students by giving zeros and discussed the need to consider how Policies play out in the classroom.

Mrs. Kurdys announced she planned to attend a free forum on virtual learning Thursday at the Mackinac Center in Lansing.

Mr. Rathburn discussed the recent Portage Athletic Foundation donation to the District of \$50,000 and work being done on a system that will record distribution of the funds.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Projects:

Technology Bid – Internet Proxy, Security and Filtering Appliance. The Director of Information and Technology Systems, Mr. Dan Vomastek, shared details on the recommendation to authorize the purchase of a BlueCoat ProxySG 810-25 internet proxy, security and filtering appliance, along with the appropriate license and support agreements from Braxton-Grant Technologies in an amount not to exceed \$86,747.00, from the 2008 Bond Funds #1 and #2. Mr.

Vomastek responded to Trustee questions regarding the hardware, software, service, life expectancy, budget, brand, and installation timeframe.

Board Committee Structure Revisions:

Policy 3.9 – Board Committee Structure. President Hollenbeck reviewed updates to the Board Committee Structure, Policy 3.9. Trustee discussion followed pertaining to the potential for a new name for the Owner’s Linkage Committee to reflect its broader responsibilities.

Ad Hoc Committees. President Hollenbeck shared details on the charge to the Ad Hoc Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, formerly the Bond Advisory Committee. Trustee conversations pertained to scope and execution of plans, spending level, change order threshold, and contingency funds. Mrs. Kurdys shared details on the charge to the Ad Hoc Quality and Scorecard Committee formerly the Scorecard Committee. There being no further questions, President Hollenbeck declared the Board’s acceptance of both committee charges as written.

Long Term Financial Planning:

Facilities Study. Superintendent Wells discussed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Facilities Study Committee to work in conjunction with the District Advisory Council to review and recommend updates. She also discussed securing architects to conduct the review of District facilities. After further Trustee discussion, it was determined that Superintendent Wells would discuss this further with the District Advisory Council and would utilize the Request For Proposal process to seek an architect. Board members were urged to contact the Superintendent or President Hollenbeck with further ideas.

2010/11 District Goals. President Hollenbeck led the goals discussion regarding the processes of making Portage a “super-tier” school district. The Board discussed hosting sessions, focus groups, and speakers in order to spur creative thinking and feedback from stakeholders. Trustees agreed to proceed with planning for these events and requested that the Owner’s Linkage Committee oversee the project.

12th Street Elementary Mechanical Concerns. Mr. Noverr and Owners Representative, Mr. John Spencer, detailed heating, ventilation, and air conditioning concerns at 12th Street Elementary. Mr. Noverr and Mr. Spencer responded to Trustee questions pertaining to testing, accountability, timelines, cleaning process, and options. Mr. Noverr noted this recommendation will come back to the Board for action at their September 27th meeting.

ACTION ITEM

The Board deferred the recommended approval of revisions to Policy 3.9 – Board Committee Structure, to their September 27th meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary