

Port Allegany School District
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
Committee of the Whole Meeting

September 7, 2021
High School Library
7:00 p.m.

Minutes

President Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library with a moment of silence and the flag salute. Mrs. Veilleux called the roll.

Board Present: Dr. Mark Carlson, Mr. Justin Fillhart, Mr. Kerry Hawver, Mrs. Bonna Johns, Mr. Jason Stake, Mr. Jonathan Stehle, Mr. Donald Tanner, Mr. Adam Moate and Mr. Gary Buchsen

Board Absent: Mrs. Erica Petruzzi

Others Present: High School Principal Mr. Marc Budd, Elementary School Principal Mr. Tracy Kio and Assistant Principal Greg Oliver, Nita Spencer, T. Bowser, Brad Stewart, Nicholas Valentine, Barb Bockoras, Brittany Weimer, Stephanie Taylor, Randy Taylor, Bobbi Newman, Bobbi Herbstritt, Jesse Loucks, Morgan Hanchett, Alex Loucks, Kassie Hanchett, Dan Skinner, Curt Proctor, Ashley Simpson, Christy Lineman, Christopher Ferraro, Cariese Cory, Tare Causer, Arron Austin, Jessica Wright, Maycie Howard, Tish Howard, Jennifer Sisson, Ink Young, Jamie Bowers, Carly Marsiglio, Kelly Hathaway, Rebekah Dinch and Bryce Skinner

Public Comment

There were no comments relating to agenda items, Title I, Title II or District Health and Safety Plan approved by the board on July 26, 2021.

Bobbi Newman asked if we are requesting and requiring testing to come back to school when they are sent home from school sick.

Brittney Weimer asked if there will be alternative education for our children if they do not want to test every time they are sent home sick and what our protocol is in general for all? What is the plan for the kids that are excluded from school?

Jennifer Sisson stated that mask wearing is a mandate not a law. They can not force children to wear masks when there is no hard evidence that they are effective. It should be left up to the parents as to whether or not their children wear masks or not.

Chris Ferraro stated that kids get sick and he will not get his kid tested when they are sick. If your child is sick, keep your kids home. Common sense, wash your hands and stay home if you are sick. These tests are not free. The masks do not work and the only mask that protects you 100% is a military grade

gas mask. He applauds the board for coming up with the letters. It should be our choice whether any of us wear a mask.

Rebekah Dinch asked what happens if our child refuses to wear the mask? Are they going to be forced to leave the school?

One visitor asked if the purpose of the exemption form was for the board to not have a protocol in place? If we fill out the exemption form, the school is not liable and prevents parents from fighting with anyone outside of the district at this point in time. She also asked under the current circumstances and how things are running at this time, how is that going to affect our children's sports and spectators or is nothing changing?

Jessica Wright asked what the difference between our school accepting the exemption forms and the other 12 schools who are not?

Mr. Buchsen said that there is a strong possibility that students will end up having to wear masks unless they can provide a doctor's excuse. The district has the ability to livestream classes.

Mr. Hawver stated that there is a lot of passion from all of you and a lot of them share the same feeling. We feel a little bit powerless. If online schooling is a concern, then we will look at that. We as a board are trying to sort through all of it.

Mr. Lathrop stated that they as a board gave them the right for their kids to come to school without a mask. Mr. Fillhart stated that he is really glad to see this many parents here unfortunately it is on this subject. He thinks that today was a test to see how things went. We are trying to get our kids and our teachers to get the best education possible for our area. If you had come to any of the other school board meetings and heard what we have discussed about this and heard where we are at with this you would understand where we are at. As a group we have collectively made the decision with the way that last year was as far as education went we had the highest number of failures in years. We have talked to the community and with teachers and we understand the frustration. We tried to transfer all of that information, trying to make sure we don't lose any of our teachers and move forward to promote our school district and get people wanting to go back here instead of leaving here in droves. That is what we are challenged with, that is what we have been working on and we have been trying to piece together. We always get thrown a curve ball from the state. When the state is holding a teaching certificate or an administrator certificate, we are here for the kids number one but what can we teach if we don't have teachers to do that? We need to keep everything together in one group and look at it collectively and that is what we have tried to make the best judgement call from that. We have followed all of the requirements per the mandate and still allow everyone to have their choice. We wanted our kids here, we didn't want our kids virtual. We wanted them to be as normal as possible. We all like to think that we have a bulletproof plan but I know things that will be missed.

Cristine Lineman addressed the board that a friend of hers planned on coming but was not able to and wanted to discuss a bussing issue. Apparently if there are two parent households the child has to only ride one bus and the other parent has to pick the child up or make other arrangements. They said that it was because of contact tracing. If it is a consistent thing, why can this not happen?

Committee Reports

Mrs. Johns said there wasn't anything but salary changes and personnel changes which is normal for the IU to do this time of year.

Mr. Tanner stated that on an upbeat note, CTC and dual enrollment with Penn College has allowed the students to have saved over \$80,000 in tuition last school year.

Mr. Fillhart has nothing to report from the PSBA.

Communication

None

Superintendent's Report

Pennsylvania Department of Health Order 'Directing Face Coverings in School Entities' - Mr. Buchsen stated that currently there are three districts in Pennsylvania that have filed suit against the state. There is a possibility that there will be an injunction and the judge will hear this case next week. He has no idea of the timeline and how long it will take for them to resolve the matter. Mr. Fillhart asked where they will be having the court hearing. Mr. Buchsen is not sure at this point.

Curriculum

Miss Amacher has a recommendation for the fall play. Penny has done a fall play over the last few years. There are no restrictions for attendance. A summary was provided for the board.

Personnel

Approved the addition of Ms. Amanda Rudolph and Mrs. Chris Causer to the Substitute List retroactive to August 27, 2021 for cafeteria and paraprofessional staff. Motion: J. Stake; Second: B. Johns. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approved the addition of Ms. Danielle Anthony and Ms. Lauryn Potter to the Substitute List for paraprofessional staff pending paperwork. Motion: S. Lathrop; Second: K. Hawver. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approved the addition of Ms. Ashley Bridenbaker, BS Elementary Education to the Substitute List. Motion: D. Tanner; Second: J. Stake. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approved the addition of Ms. Elizabeth Tanner, BS Early Childhood Education to the Substitute List. Motion: J. Fillhart; Second: S. Lathrop. The motion was carried unanimously with Mr. Tanner abstaining.

Accepted the resignation of Mrs. Jill Stuckey as the girls junior high basketball coach. Motion: J. Fillhart; Second: B. Johns. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approved eleven elementary and three high school mentor positions for new professional staff for the 2021-2022 school year. Motion: J. Stehle; Second: D. Tanner. The motion was carried unanimously.

Finance

The board will need to approve the educational services agreement with Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems for alternative education costs for students attending the school in Custer City. This school serves as a district option for AEDY (Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth) services.

Mr. Moate discussed the transfer that will be necessary to pay costs related to the energy project. The transfer from the capital reserve will be \$400,000. The board is aware of the ESSERS III funding. The ESSERS III application has not been submitted. Mr. Fillhart asked where we are overall and Mr. Moate stated that we still owe over \$3,000,000.

Mr. Moate shared information on a lease agreement for a driver's education car. Zook Motors would have to order an automobile for the district. The old car is not an option. It has been returned to Zoom Motors. They cannot take anything off of their lot so they will need to order one so we need to start the paperwork to get a new car. The driver's education car is strictly for the use of the driver's education program. It may take up to 3 months for a car to be delivered.

Transportation

Approved Mr. Edward Junglaus as a van driver and bus driver, as recommended by Joseph Muccio Transportation, LLC, Pupil Transportation Contractor. Motion: K. Hawver; Second: J. Fillhart. The motion was carried unanimously.

Executive Session

The board moved to executive session for legal matters at 8:16 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion: S. Lathrop; Second: J. Stake. The motion was carried unanimously. Doctor Carlson adjourned the meeting at 9:25 pm.