

## POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Directors  
Virtual Zoom Board Meeting  
September 15, 2020  
Academic Center/Zoom  
7:00 p.m.

Present: Dr. Blankenhorn, Dr. Cardamone,  
Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran,  
Mr. Quandel, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban,  
Ms. Wytovich, Dr. Gerace, Acting  
Superintendent; Mrs. Lombel,  
Asst. Business Manager/Board  
Secretary, Atty. Kevin Reid, Solicitor,  
Corinne Mason, Interim Business Manager

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Noble Quandel.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, President Quandel welcomed everyone in attendance.

Mr. Quandel reminded the public that the public comment period is not a question and answer period, but rather the opportunity for the public to submit comments to the Board. Public comments will follow our public comment procedures which require members of the public to identify themselves by indicating name and address and we will read comments consistent with all aspects of our public comment policy. With our meetings now being conducted virtually until further notice, you can submit comments via the Q & A feature.

Mr. Quandel asked if there were any Public Comments.

Dr. Gerace read the following comments:

**Christine Trapani**

To the Members of the Pottsville Area School District Board of Directors:

Hello, my name is Christine Trapani, the President of the Pottsville Area Educational Support Professionals Association, the Association which represents Paraprofessionals, Custodians, Secretaries, and Food Service Employees in the Pottsville Area School District. I am writing on behalf of myself and ten dedicated colleagues who were employed as full-time Paraprofessionals until the end of the 2019-20 school year. On May 6th, 2020, we were notified that our full-time status would be demoted to part-time.

Since May 6th, my PSEA Unser Representative and I have been working tirelessly to negotiate with the district to save money to maintain these positions full-time. We have offered numerous money-saving concessions with no counter-proposals from

the school district. It is incredibly challenging as we believe the negotiations have been one-sided to this point. We feel that our loyalty over the past two decades is of no importance to the school district.

With the recent resignation of eleven members of our Association, enough savings has been created for the district to bring us back as full-time employees. If we were demoted to part-time for financial reasons, the district now has no reason to keep us part time.

These positions are critical to the success of vulnerable students in the district. We work with at-risk populations such as Life Skills students, Learning Support students, Autistic Support students, and those in regular education who require additional support. The demotion to part-time status has removed 19.5 hours per day of necessary paraprofessional contact with students, equating to 3,510 lost hours per school year of paraprofessional interaction with our most vulnerable students. We love our jobs and the students that we serve; however, we cannot sustain our families without the health insurance coverage that our previously full-time positions provided.

The eleven Paraprofessionals who were demoted to part-time status have between ten and twenty years of experience working with vulnerable student populations that the school district serves. The importance of our positions to students cannot be quantified by our salaries of less than \$21,000 per year. Our years of experience are much more valuable to the district than our wages and benefits show.

Please consider keeping us as full-time employees. We have offered drastic concessions to keep our positions as full-time. We ask the district to please take into consideration everything we have provided as well as the extra savings in future years from these concessions to keep us as full-time employees of the Pottsville Area School District. Roll Tide!

Sincerely,

Christine Trapani	Bernadette Ott
Karen Runkle	Susan Griffin
Kathy Thompson	Karen Bevan
Kathleen Weiss	Brittany Stevenosky
Kimberly Pekarik	David Hess
Tessa Remaley	

**Marie Lutkus**

Dear Board Members and Mr. Rismiller and Mr. Mattea,  
Viewing Friday night's football game was not a great success. Pixelation and buffering were constants. I certainly hope that you continue to look into options that would provide fans with a better viewing experience. Sincerely, Marie Lutkus.

**Jess Sickle**

I write this letter to respectfully request the school Board give an official notice to Jeff Zwiebel that his contract will not be renewed. The taxpayers would like that reassurance be made. We cannot tolerate the proverbial albatross around our necks of more years of Dr. Zwiebel. His "leadership" will not be missed. I would be remiss to not mention it would be a real relief to all the taxpayers to finally know there is an end to the Zwiebel years. Thank you for your time. Jess Sickle.  
Mr. Quandel thanked everyone for their comments.

Mr. Quandel read the following statement:

"There has been some talk about the compensation paid to our PASBO supplied interim business manager. There are circumstances that PASD is faced with that deserve to be part of the context of this situation. Why are we using an interim business manager? PASD has been advertising in statewide journals through several sources like PASBO, the PA Assoc. of School Business Officials and other similar sources. The Board has formed a Business Manager Selection Team consisting of the personnel committee and the finance committee. We received some resumes, though the selection committee concluded we have not received enough applicants to evaluate and select a candidate that properly fulfills our unique needs for this important position.

Consequently, we have turned to PASBO, who, as a service to their school district members, supply interim business managers for a service fee of 25%. When we compare the "all-in costs" of Pottsville's costs of prior business managers and add the 25% PASBO service fee, the costs are in line. While the PASBO fee is a premium, utilizing the PASBO business manager allows us to continue to advertise and promote this position until we receive enough qualified applicants to act on selecting someone without rushing or compromising the selection process. Corrine Mason, who is currently fulfilling this position through PASBO has many years of experience in this k12 field as a qualified business manager.

We want the public to be assured that this Board is continuing to proactively pursue candidates for this position. However, in the market today, there is a shortage of qualified candidates throughout the state and this may take some time."

On motion of Mr. Moran seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board dispensed with the reading of the August 18, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes. Since all members received copies, and there being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved.  
Motion carried

On motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Dr. Cardamone, the Board accepted the reports of the Treasurer for the month of August 2020 - Mid Penn Bank – \$6,228,675.81. Motion carried by roll call vote: Dr. Cardamone, Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, Dr. Blankenhorn and Mr. Quandel, Aye.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel, and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board approved the Cafeteria Financial Report for August 2020: Revenue Received - \$99,741.95; Expenditures - \$61,487.97; Net Gain - \$-38,253.98. Ending balance for August 31, 2020 - \$80,365.89. Motion carried.

A list of bills, as appended, was submitted for payment. (Copy to each Director.)

On motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. Cardamone, vouchers were ordered drawn in payment of the bills listed or where vouchers had been drawn, such action was approved and the list of bills was ordered appended to the minutes. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved the Acting Superintendent’s preapproval of the credits indicated for the following professional employees be ratified in accordance with the negotiated agreement between the PASD and the PASDEA:

Nathan Halenar	-	3 Credits
Paula Jones	-	3 Credits
Jennifer Lipton	-	3 Credits
Elizabeth Sophy	-	3 Credits

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved the following professional employees be reimbursed as indicated for the successful completion of preapproved credit courses in accordance with the negotiated agreement between the PASD and the PASDEA:

Jacquelyn Butz	-	\$1,551.00
Lisa Falkowski	-	\$1,551.00
Allison Hughes	-	\$1,551.00

Kayla Kurtz	-	\$1,971.00
Jennifer Lipton	-	\$2,316.00
Elizabeth Sophy	-	\$1,614.00
Katelyn Reichard	-	\$2,025.00

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the following salary adjustments be made effective in the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year: Lucas Bricker – Master’s +15 and Jeremiah Lynn – Master’s+15. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the following resignations in accordance with their submitted letter:

Christy Clemson – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA – letter dated September 1, 2020

Pamela Imler – Special Education – letter dated August 22, 2020

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the resignation from Amy Digris as 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lead Teacher, as per her letter dated August 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved the advisors for the 2020-2021 school year at the stipend indicated in accordance with the current Memorandum of Understanding between the PASD and the PASDEA approved August 18, 2020.

Ashley Shappell – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Lead Teacher - \$2,200.00

Leandra Maley – Asst. Director of Dramatics (Choreographer) - \$700.00

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved the Language Instruction Education Program Agreement (LIEP Services) and payment schedule between the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit #29 and the Pottsville Area School District be approved for the 2020-2021 school year October 1 - 50% - \$7,420.33 and February 3 - 50% - \$7,420.33. Motion carried.

Dr. Gerace, Acting Superintendent, presented an update regarding transition to full in-person instruction as follows:

“We are meeting with the pandemic planning team on Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 7:00 AM to discuss how our school reopening has been going. We will determine what has been going well, what can be improved.

We will discuss the possibility of a transition to full in-person instruction. Discussion topics will include the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff and the logistics regarding transportation, food service, and social distancing.

Our return to full in-person instruction is dependent upon the level of community transmission table from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

We will discuss possible scenarios and timelines for return to full in-person instruction.”

On the recommendation of the Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board accepted the following resignation:

- Cody Blankenhorn – Football Equipment Manager, effective August 24, 2020

Motion carried by roll call vote: Dr. Cardamone, Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, and Mr. Quandel, Aye. Dr. Blankenhorn, Abstain.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board accepted the following resignation:

- Lucas Bricker – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Assistant Football Coach, effective August 24, 2020

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved Tony Barone as Football Equipment Manager for the 2020-2021 season, effective September 16, 2020, at an annual salary of \$2,600.00. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved Tyler Heffner as 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Football Assistant Coach, effective September 16, 2020, at an annual salary of \$2,600.00. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Facilities and Grounds, and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the proposal from Island

Pump and Tank for Cathodic Protection System Up-Grades/Repairs for the 8,000 gallon diesel and 10,000 gallon gas underground tanks at a cost of \$13,400.00. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the contract between the Pottsville Area School District and Progressive Pediatric Therapy to provide occupation therapy services to the students of the district at an hourly rate of \$63.00. Term of Contract: August 20, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Motion carried

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the Customer Agreement with Forecast 5 Analytics for the 5Cast module at a cost of \$4,455.00. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board agreed NOT to take part in the Payroll Tax Deferral Program. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board authorized the Interim Business Manager to perform all year-end budget transfers and to make all necessary revisions to the district budget upon the auditor's final adjustments to financial records. The Interim Business Manager will report said revisions to the Board during the meeting following the completion of the fiscal year audit. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the following Repository Sales:

- Parcel No. 68-26-0330.00 – 615 W. Race Street, Pottsville - \$1,262.50
- Parcel No. 68-35-0059.000 – 802 Mahantongo St., Pottsville - \$1,261.22
- Parcel No. 68-35-0060.00 – 804 Mahantongo St., Pottsville - \$1,262.12
- Parcel No. 68-34-0251.000 – 927 W. Norwegian St., Pottsville - \$1,199.00
- Parcel No. 68-13-0125.00 – 669 N. Second St., Pottsville - \$1,274.00
- Parcel No. 68-26-0032.000 – 405 N. Ninth St., Pottsville - \$1,081.75
- Parcel No. 57-04-0045.000 420 W. Bacon St., Pottsville - \$1,074.00
- Parcel No. 59-03-0036.000 – Fourth St., Port Carbon Borough - \$2,333.84
- Parcel No. 59-03-0037.000 – Fourth St., Port Carbon Borough - \$2,333.84
- Parcel No. 57-4-45 – 420 W. Bacon St. Palo Alto -\$1.00 (Building condemned)

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the following resignations:

- Sandy Paulshock, paraprofessional at JSC Elementary Center, effective August 24, 2020
- Casey Schock, paraprofessional at JSC Elementary Center, effective August 30, 2020
- Karen Schock, paraprofessional at JSC Elementary Center, effective August 28, 2020
- Hannah Sponenburg, paraprofessional at JSC Elementary Center, effective August 24, 2020
- Loretta Wonchalk, paraprofessional at JSC Elementary Center, effective August 25, 2020
- Annetta Yakenchick, paraprofessional at JSC Elementary Center, effective, August 28, 2020

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter of resignation for retirement from Lisa Hoak, van driver for the Pottsville Area School District, effective August 25, 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter of resignation of Florence Berger, bus driver for the Pottsville Area School District, effective August 1, 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter of resignation of Zabrina Andrews, transportation aide for the Pottsville Area School District, effective August 19, 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter of resignation for retirement from Theresa Tassone, cafeteria employee for the Pottsville Area School District, effective June 1, 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter of resignation for retirement from Michelle Aungst, paraprofessional at the DHH Lengel Middle School, effective August 26, 2020. Motion carried.



On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter of resignation for retirement from Diane Schweikert, paraprofessional at PAHS, effective August 26, 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved Sherry Ashman as a part-time ticket aide at John S. Clarke Elementary Center at an hourly rate of \$9.70, retroactive to August 26, 2020. Ms. Ashman was a substitute cafeteria lunch aide. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved an FMLA for employee #439, effective August 14, 2020. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board approved the following Leave Without Pay as per School Board Policy(s): 334, 434 and 534:

- Employee #1385 – paraprofessional – September 14 through 18, 2020
- Employee #537 – lunch aide – September 1, 2020
- Employee #1349 – lunch aide - September 3, 2020
- Employee # 1231 – lunch aide – September 1, 2020

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board accepted the letter from Dr. Jeffrey Zwiebel indicating his intention to not seek reappointment as Superintendent for a new term at the end of his current contract due to his announcement of his retirement effective April 5, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Shields, the Board directed the Board Secretary, as per the existing superintendent contract, to provide written notice to Dr. Jeffrey Zwiebel that the Board intends to consider another or other candidates for the position of District Superintendent. Motion carried by roll call vote: Dr. Cardamone, Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, Dr. Blankenhorn and Mr. Quandel, Aye.

Mr. Moran, Labor Relations Chairperson, noted that dialogue will soon be opening up.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board approved the Revenue Report for August 2020, which included local, state and federal sources. (Local Sources - \$5,981,317.97; State Sources - \$2,653,314.81; Federal/Other sources - \$150,324.47. Total \$8,784,957.25). Motion carried by roll call vote: Dr. Cardamone, Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, Dr. Blankenhorn and Mr. Quandel, Aye.

Under New Business:

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel and on motion of Dr. Cardamone, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the following Salary & Benefits Report for August 2020 (2 payrolls): Total Salaries \$1,082,426.30; Total Employer share Retirement - \$370,481.47; Total Employer Share FICA - \$81,470.99; Total Employer Paid Insurance Benefits - \$519,294.68. Grand Total for August 2020 - \$2,053,673.44. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel, and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Mrs. Dewitt, the Board approved the following Use of Facilities:

**DHHL:**

1. Football Boosters Meeting 9-16-2020 Top of Martz Hall (outside) 7:00 pm
2. Football Boosters Meeting 10-14-2020 Top of Martz Hall (outside) 7:00 pm
3. Football Boosters Meeting 11-04-2020 Top of Martz Hall (outside) 7:00 pm

Motion carried.

There were three additional Public Comments:

1. Who is the Interim Business Manager?
2. Mr. Scott Thomas, Taxpayer – “My concern is the amount of hours we are using the Interim Business Manager on a weekly basis, is that really needed? Also congratulation to Pottsville Area Alumnus Travis Blankenhorn on his first major league start. A great addition to an already positive day for the PASD.”
3. Mr. Scott Thomas added that, Ms. Mason, Interim Business Manager, did not say anything tonight. Yet, she’s getting paid for attending. Does that make financial sense?

An Executive Session was held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for personnel matters.

Mr. Moran congratulated Travis Blankenhorn on his major league start with the Minnesota Twins. “Tide Pride.”

There being no further new business, on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

*Patricia A. Lombel 10/30/20*

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Patricia A. Lombel (Date)

Board Secretary