

POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Directors
Board Meeting/Zoom
March 10, 2021

DHH Lengel Middle School Auditorium
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 (via zoom)

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 asked for a moment of silence for D. Scott Reichert, who was a valuable member of our community and a coach for many years.

Mr. Quandel presented the following "Rising Tide" presentation:

Our Vision

We are developing a strategic plan to achieve consistent "Number One" status academically and in relation to our peers in Schuylkill County and beyond. These goals will extend to extra-curricular activities and to everything we do as an organization.

Positive Accomplishments

- ✓ Audit completed in the time frame of our goal of December 31, 2020. This accomplishment has eluded us for years. Achieving this goal has provided the District with the ability to properly forecast our long range financial plans.
- ✓ Fiscal year 19/20 audit (last year's) achieved a \$600,000 surplus. This is the first surplus the District has created since 2012.
- ✓ The forecast for Fiscal Year 20/21 is currently more than a \$1.2 million dollar surplus despite our decrease in revenue plus the other significant costs of COVID.
- ✓ PASD settled a labor contract with teachers and support staff during this fiscal year.
- ✓ Owing to our positive financial performance, we were able to have the "Going Concern Statement" removed from our annual external audit this fiscal year. This has allowed us to take another *positive* step improving our PASD bond finance rating with *Moody's*.

Navigating the Road Ahead

- We have a need to compete and offer cyber learning options to retain our students and not lose them to cyber charter schools. The current tuition (2020/2021) that we pay for this service is \$2.6 million dollars.
- Gillingham Charter School is planning to expand their campus to offer additional options to students. PASD needs to offer services to students and families to retain their attendance with PASD. The current cost of our loss of students to Gillingham is \$1,258,265.00.
- The Pottsville Area High School is an old system. If converted to hot water along with other current energy savings measures, an HVAC upgrade here would yield significant energy savings.
- DHH Lengel Middle School HVAC System was activated in 1971, had a 25-year life cycle that's useful life expired in 1996; it is now 50 years old!

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- The current system at John S. Clarke Elementary Center, activated in 1982. This had a 25-year life cycle that expired in 2007 and is still in use!
 - We have an estimate of more than \$3 Million at this time for JSC and DHHL. This estimate did not include HVAC upgrades at the high school.
 - The exterior masonry at the high school is in dire need of both preservation and restoration before further damages are caused both inside and out. The estimated cost for this last year was approximately \$2.5 Million.
 - The masonry at the press box and the exterior walls of the stadium are in dire need of restoration and preservation.
 - The parking lots at all areas need substantial maintenance and in some areas need paving overlay.
- ✓ We are currently finalizing the procurement of a \$1 million RACP grant for the preservation and restoration of our Martz Hall standing seam roof. This grant is also to include other necessary capital improvements on our campus such as the steps from Martz Hall lot to 16th Street, and additional overlay for the parking lots.
- ✓ PASD has recently refinanced our 2012 Bonds. This action refunded a prior new money issue and their 2016 Bonds, which was for an ESCO Project, to take advantage of historically low interest rates. This allowed the District to reduce their interest rate from 2.78% to 1.18%. Through this refinancing, the District did not extend the term of the payoff of debt which is May of 2031. The total savings to the District was \$287, 236.

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 said next month there will be a Board protocol for answering questions. More information will be forthcoming.

The School Board will strive to answer questions pertaining to the current agenda at the beginning of the school board meeting, in a conscious effort to maintain transparent practices. After the School Board agenda is posted online, questions may be emailed to plombel@pottsville.k12.pa.us by 2:00 PM the day of the meeting. Questions pertaining to the agenda posted online will be answered in the order received for a period not to exceed 30 minutes. If the questions are not able to be answered during the 30-minute period, the School Board will endeavor to answer the questions at the beginning of the next school board meeting. Questions pertaining to confidential personnel matters will not be addressed. Questions that require some research or further inquiry and might not be answered at the current school board meeting. The question and answer period does not replace the public's current right to public comment.

Mr. Quandel asked if there were any Questions or Public Comments.

Dr. Gerace, Acting Superintendent, read the following public comments which were received via email:
Aspen Robbins 8th Grader
Dear Dr. Gerace and Members of the Board,

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While there are many concerns as to having an 8th grade prom during a pandemic, we 8th graders believe there are several different ways to make this event fun and safe for everyone. I spoke to several students of the 8th grade class. I asked them if they can tell me how we can do prom safely and what it means to them. Their responses will hopefully convince you to let us have an 8th grade prom. Starting off, 8th grader Elizabeth Ortiz said, "A way we can do it safely is if we wear masks, or after we touch things we can use hand sanitizer, and before we enter the dance we can get our temperature checked."

8th grader Hadley Snyder said, "I think we should have a prom because it's a fun event that happens once. If we have prom we should just wear masks so we could keep everyone safe."

8th grader Maya Johnson said, "I think we can do prom safely with masks and socially distanced dancing in a big space that way we can be socially distant. The dance doesn't really mean a lot to me but I feel like it's one of those moments that could potentially be really special. I've been looking forward to the eighth grade prom "farewell dance" for a while now and I'm really hoping we can have it because it would mean a lot to my friends and me."

As an 8th grader I believe we should have a prom and do it as safely as possible but still have fun. If students touch objects or sit at tables there should be Clorox wipes or something for us to wipe down as we are done. We should also wear a mask. With those things we should be able to dance and have fun around our friends. With this dance, our plan is for us to have fun, make memories and for some kids to step out of their comfort zone which can be hard to do but it can help kids express themselves freely, as others may have a hard time doing that on a daily basis. It can be a once in a lifetime experience for some of us as we might grow apart in high school or even change schools. Hopefully these responses and ideas can convince you to let us have a prom!
Sincerely, Aspen Robbins - 8th Grader

Carolyn Quirin-Morris

Dear Pottsville School Board,

As we all know it's been a rough almost two school years for the students at DHH Lengel Middle School. I am writing to you today as a mother & PTO member to discuss our 8th grade dance.

The students have had a lot of social isolation, missing their school classmates, sports, events, etc. The teachers, staff, and Board have done a great job to make the best of an unprecedented time in the students' lives.

As a mother to an 8th grade student, and an active member of the PTO, I would like to encourage the Board to really reach deep in their hearts and give these students one last amazing memory of their childhood, and their years at Lengel by approving the request for an 8th grade prom.

I know a request was submitted for the cafeteria, and with Covid 19 we understand the era we are in, and want to promote safety. I would like to share with the Board that the prom committee & PTO have thought of every little detail.

There will be chaperones, sanitizer available, parents to help hand anything out to limit contact, and everyone will be required to wear masks. With the full return to school, and children using the cafeteria daily needing to remove masks to eat I feel we could do a dance, with only one of these grades present, very safely. The students are in class together daily, parent chaperones, teachers & staff are in contact with the same children daily so we aren't adding any new variables to the equation except a masked & socially distant DJ to play music.

The high schools formal has been approved indoors. Other schools in the area are having formals whether it be buildings, tents, or off grounds. We implore you all to consider all these students have lost & endured since last year and approve the ability to give a formal. If it would need to be outside or off grounds approve the use of the PTO, school & its resources to help provide what is needed for this event.

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We would like to open a dialogue with the board and are willing to explore options to make this happen and give the 2021 8th graders a positive & joyful event to remember!! Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Carolyn Quirin-Morris

Mr. Quandt thanked Dr. Gerace for reading the public comments.

On motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the February 10, 2021 Board Meeting. Since all members received copies, and there being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Mason, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board approved the following financial reports, the month of February 2021:

1. Treasurer's Report (All Funds)
2. General Fund Condensed Board Summary Revenue Report
3. General Fund condensed Board Summary Expenditure Report
4. Cafeteria Condensed Board Summary Report
5. Payment Summary - General Fund, Food Service
6. Ms. Budget Transfers

Motion carried.

Mrs. Mason gave a brief budget update. There was an increase in expenditures of \$342,139.00. There is an excess in the proposed budget of plus or minus \$300,000.

Discussion about a tax increase continues and is not included in the proposed budget. Next month the budget will include the ESSFR II grant money and the budget for 2020-2021 will be amended. Mrs. Mason will provide the Board with the total ESSFR III grant award. The budget will be approved at the May 12, 2021 Board meeting.

Under Solicitor's Report, Atty. Kevin Reid had no report this evening.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board approved the preapproval of the credits indicated for the following professional employees and be ratified in accordance with the negotiated agreement between the PASDEA and the PASDEA:

Deborah Lecker	-	3 credits
Amanda Purcell	-	3 credits

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, 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:

Heather Jenkins	-	\$6,552.00 (9 credits)
Neil Johnson	-	\$1,551.00
Benjamin O'Brien	-	\$ 300.00
Ashley Shappell	-	\$1,548.00

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board accepted the resignation for retirement purposes from Richard Bentz, First

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Grade Teacher, effective February 23, 2021 in accordance with his letter dated February 22, 2021. Motion carried.

Mr. Moran thanked Mr. Bentz for his many years of service.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Committee** and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the following coaches for the 2020-2021 school year and set their salaries as indicated:

<u>BASEBALL</u>	<u>SALARY</u>
Michael Welsh, Head Coach	\$5,600.00
Tyler Heffner, Jr. Varsity Head Coach	\$2,400.00
Christian Gardner, Jr. Varsity Assistant	\$2,200.00
Ben O'Brien, Varsity Assistant	\$2,600.00
 <u>SOFTBALL</u>	
Charles Rinaldo, Head Coach	\$5,300.00
Thomas Mull, Assistant	\$3,600.00
Bryanna Snowell, Jr. Varsity Assistant	\$2,200.00
Bruce Heffner, Head Junior Varsity	\$2,600.00
 <u>SPRING TRACK</u>	
Charles Schuster, Boys' Head Coach	\$5,773.00
Kelly Lombel, Girls' Head Coach	\$4,000.00
Marlin Vandermeer, Assistant	\$2,000.00
Lucas Bricker, Assistant	\$2,000.00
Peter McDonald, Assistant	\$3,200.00
William Rhoads, Assistant	\$3,200.00
Jennifer Brindle, Assistant	\$2,000.00
Jeff Dunkel, Jr. High Head Coach	\$2,400.00
Mark Laubenstine, Jr. High Asst.	\$3,200.00
James Lord, Jr. High Asst.	\$3,000.00
 <u>BOYS' TENNIS</u>	
Adrian Portland, Head Coach	\$2,600.00

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Committee** and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the following volunteer coaches for the 2020-2021 school year:

Baseball:
John Toomey

Softball:
Kendra Boris
Mike Kiehner
Ashley Shappell
Brian Spotts

Track and Field:
Robert Belcher
Robert Brouse
Jed Dunkel

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the two year agreement between the Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinic, New Beginnings and the Pottsville Area School District, effective January 20, 2021. New Beginnings offers outpatient community based mental health services to all residents of Schuylkill, Carbon, Monroe, Pike and Berks County. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the agreement between Dr. Krista Varano, Independent Consultant, and consulting partner Dr. Darlene Schoney and the Pottsville Area School District for professional development sessions. Date(s) of Service - February 10 and 17, 2021 (retroactive). Dates for March, April and May TBD. Cost is \$250/half day session or \$85.00/hour. Cost cannot exceed \$2,020.00. Funding for the Professional Development is provided through the Continuity of Education Grant for A-TSL. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the agreement between Chester County Intermediate Unit and the Pottsville Area School District for professional development sessions. Date(s) of service - March 3, 10, 17, 24, 2021. Cost is \$3,250.00 which includes travel, preparation and delivery of professional development. Funding for the Professional Development is provided through the Continuity of Education Grant for A-TSL. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the agreement between The Meadows Psychiatric Center, Centre Hall, PA and the Pottsville Area School District for psychiatric services for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year. The District also agrees to pay The Meadows Psychiatric Center \$67.00 per day for educational services. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the Repository Sale for Parcel No. 68-12-0052.000 located at 209 1/2 Peacock Street, Pottsville. Purchase Price - \$1,159,000. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the agreement between Kingspry and the Pottsville Area School District for legal services. Term of agreement - July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023. Annual fee - 2021-2022 - \$22,000.00 and 2022-2023 - \$22,000.00. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Finance and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the 2021-2022 Schuylkill Technology Center Secondary Budget in the amount of \$6,057,511. Pottsville Area School District contribution is \$786,800; an increase of \$52,343 from prior year. Each Director signed the ballots indicating their vote on the above motion. Motion carried.

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On the recommendation of the **Committee on Finance** and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the 2021-2022 Schuylkill IU Administrative and Program Budget. Each Director signed the ballots indicating their vote on the above motion. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board accepted the resignation of Joann Matina, paraprofessional at the DHH Lengel Middle School, effective February 26, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board accepted the letter of resignation for retirement from Josephine Kwiatkowski, reading aide at the John S. Clarke Elementary Center, effective April 13, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the Family Medical Leave for employee #1440, effective March 3, 2021. All completed paperwork has been received by the District. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the Special Sick Leave School Sponsored (60 Day Provision), as per the teachers' contract for Employee #375, effective February 24, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the following part-time paraprofessional at an hourly rate of \$11.25: Joelle Reed, retroactive to March 1, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the following part-time paraprofessionals at an hourly rate of \$11.25 contingent upon receipt of satisfactory clearances: Cynthia Nye and Sherry Simons, effective March 11, 2021. Motion carried.

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

- Employee #1231 - lunch aide - January 25,28,29, 2021, February 4, 2021, March 3, 2021
- Employee #888 - cafeteria aide - February 16, 2021
- Employee #70- cafeteria aide - February 4, 2021, March 1, 2021
- Employee #1228 - lunch aide - February 11, 2021
- Employee #302 - cafeteria aide - February 19, 2021
- Employee #828 - lunch aide - February 25, 2021
- Employee#1300 - lunch aide - March 1, 2021
- Employee #175 - cafeteria aide - March 5,8,9,10,11,12,15,16,17,18,19, 2021
- Employee #537 - lunch aide - March 3, 2021

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Personnel and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the following Resolution for Suspension:

"WHEREAS, the Pottsville Area School District (the "District") has experienced a substantial decline in class enrollments for the past several years; and,

WHEREAS, the District experienced this substantial decline in years prior to and leading up to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, as a result of such substantial decline, and in order to conform with the standards of organization and educational activities as required by law and recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, it is recommended that the District curtail its educational programs pursuant to the Pennsylvania Public School Code Section 1124(a)(2); and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent recommends such curtailment; and
WHEREAS, the professional employees whose positions are subject to curtailment hereunder were provided with the opportunity for a hearing before the Pottsville Area School District Board of Directors as required by Section 1125.1(f) of the Pennsylvania Public School Code and the Local Agency Law; and,

WHEREAS, the impacted professional employees have declined the opportunity for a hearing before the Board; and,

WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence to support the suspension of the professional employees based on the substantial decline in class enrollment, as necessary to conform with standards of organization and educational activities, and in order to maintain a thorough and efficient public school system; and

WHEREAS, the substantial decline in class enrollment and recommended curtailment of educational programs is not a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the employment of the following District employees is hereby suspended as a result of the curtailment of educational programs, based upon evaluations, seniority, and certification status, effective March 10, 2021:

1. Employee # 402-Teacher
2. Employee # 258 - Nurse

A copy of this Resolution of Suspension shall be sent via First Class and Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested to the aforementioned employees.

A copy of this Resolution shall be placed in the employees' permanent personnel files."

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

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Mrs. Dewitt said this was a byproduct of a resolution last year and she did not vote in favor of it. Mrs. Dewitt will once again vote Nay. Mr. Moran was not in favor of the resolution last year and will once again vote Nay.

Under Promotion, Public Relations and Social Media, Chairperson Ms. Wytovich congratulated the following:

- Congratulations to Grace Cromyak for being selected as the Artist of the Month for March.
- Congratulations to Seniors, Crystal Wolfe and Julia Malek, for being named Rotary Students of the Month for March.
- Congratulations to Payton Kleckner for being named the Female Scholar Athlete for her athletic and academic excellence at Pottsville Area High School.
- Congratulations to Nico Boris for being named Lions' Club soccer "Player of the Year".
- Congratulations to Mrs. Mary Beth Conville, PAHS School Counselor for being nominated for the College Board Counselor Recognition Program (nominated by colleagues for their work in their school and community). Congratulations and thank you to Mrs. Conville for everything she does for our students.

Mr. Moran congratulated all of the athletes for making it to District's; this includes swimmers and wrestlers.

On the recommendation of the **Technology Committee** and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Mrs. Dewitt, the Board approved a three (3) year commitment for guaranteed pricing with Skyward, Inc. Cost savings will be \$0.84 per student per year. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Curriculum Committee** and on motion of Dr. Cardamone, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board approved the afterschool tutoring program at various locations throughout the School District. The afterschool tutoring program will be funded through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) of 2021. Motion carried.

Mr. Moran noted that the Recovery Act will help all those who are impacted by the pandemic. The new Secretary of Education is Mr. Miguel Cardona, a former teacher. He is a strong defender of education.

Dr. Blankenhorn, PSBA Representative, said there is a virtual free webinar to connect with education on March 22, 2021.

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

MS

1- Middle School Cafeteria

City of Pottsville Civil Service Board

Police Testing

Saturday August 21, 2021 8:30am-1:00pm

Saturday December 11, 2021 8:30am-1:00pm

HS

1- High School Band Room

PAHS Stage Band Rehearsal

2/23/2021, 3/2/2021, 3/9/2021, 3/16/2021, 3/23/2021,

3/30/2021, 4/6/2021, 4/13/2021, 4/20/2021, 4/27/2021,

- 5/4/2021, 5/11/2021, 5/18/2021, 5/25/2021
- Time for all requested dates 5:00-8:00pm
- 2- High School Cafeteria
- Cheer Meeting
- Monday March 29, 2021 5:30-8:30

MS

- 1- Middle School Auditorium
- Schuykill Chapter of PIAA Volleyball Officials
- PIA Volleyball Mandatory Rules Interpretation Meeting
- Wednesday August 11, 2021 6:00-8:00pm
- 2- Middle School Cafeteria
- Farewell Dance May 21, 2021 5:00pm-8:00 pm (set up)
- May 22, 2021 12:00pm-11:00 pm (dance)
- * Contingent upon CDC Covid 19 Guidelines

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the 2021-2022 Operating Hours Calendar for 12 month personnel. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board accepted a check in the amount of \$1,500.00 from Capital BlueCross. This contribution can be used for health and wellness safety measures, supporting distance learning or assisting students and their families with social, emotional and academic needs. Motion carried.

An Executive Session was held from 6:35 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for personnel matters.

Mr. Quandel spoke about the exciting things that are happening within the district.

Positive Accomplishments

- ✓ Audit completed in the time frame of our goal of December 31, 2020. This accomplishment has included us for years. Achieving this goal has provided the District with the ability to properly forecast our long range financial plans.
- ✓ Fiscal year 19/20 audit (last year's) achieved a \$600,000 surplus. This is the first surplus the District has created since 2012.
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Continued Focus

- ✓ We are currently finalizing the procurement of a \$1 million RACP grant for the preservation and restoration of our Martz Hall standing seam roof. This grant is also to include other necessary capital improvements on our campus such as the steps from Martz Hall lot to 16th Street, and additional overlay for the parking lots.
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There being no further new business, on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Urban, the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

ATTEST:

Patricia A. Lumbel

BY:

Jo Ellen Spill

