

Minutes for the Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held in the High School Media Center on Wednesday, October 15, 2025.

I. Mr. Carpenter called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

The regular monthly Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District Board of Directors on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 called to order.

II. Mr. Carpenter asked all present to rise as the Economy Elementary Student Council leads us in the Flag- salute.

Economy Elementary Student Council

III. Mr. Carpenter read the following Notice This meeting is being recorded for District purposes. It is or may be published in part or in its entirety on the district's website without the express permission of meeting participants.

IV. Roll Call

Mr. John Carpenter, President
 Mrs. Valerie Scott, Vice President
 Mr. Garrett Kovacevic, Treasurer
 Mrs. Adina Ferragonio
 Mrs. Cathy Fischer
 Miss Amy Fitsko
 Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe
 Mrs. Kelly Romasco
 Mr. Matthew Zatchey

Others Present:

Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent
 Dr. Amy Filipowski, Assistant Superintendent
 Mrs. Michelle Amadio, Business Manager / Director of Operations
 Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor
 Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

V. Mrs. Mueller read the following Sunshine Law

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session on Wednesday, October 15th to discuss:

- Personnel matter(s)
- Matters subject to attorney-client privilege and other confidentiality laws

VI. Correspondence

No correspondence

VII. Motion to accept or correct the Minutes of Wednesday, September 10th Meet and Discuss Meeting, and Wednesday, September 17th Board Meeting

Miss Fitsko moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mrs. Scott. All in favor.

VIII. Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report dated: September 2025

Mrs. Scott moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Miss Fitsko. All in favor.

IX. Amendment/Addendum to Agenda/Approval of Agenda

X. Recognition/Presentation

September Students of the Month

High School Student of the Month

- Hannah Hoke, 12th Grade
- Evan Francis, 11th Grade
- Alejandro Castro Perez, 10th Grade
- Robert Calvin, 9th Grade

High School Extra Effort Award

- Pablo Malla Armijos, 12th Grade
- Jiavanna Necci, 11th Grade
- Katarynia Benkowski, 10th Grade
- Rosella DeMuth, 9th Grade

Middle School Student of the Month

- Brayden Cupp, 8th Grade
- Ava Grace Akella, 7th Grade
- Garrin Tierney, 6th Grade

Economy Elementary Student of the Month

- Margo Saxon, 1st Grade

Highland Elementary Student of the Month

- Madison Chandler, 5th Grade

State Street Elementary Student of the Month

- Amiya Cobbs, 5th Grade

Employees of the Month

High School Employee of the Month

- Tony Amadio, Athletic Director

Middle School Employee of the Month

- Cori Cooper, 6th Grade All Subject Teacher

Economy Elementary Employee of the Month

Nicole Toney, Paraprofessional

Highland Elementary Employee of the Month

Adam Ross, Maintenance

State Street Elementary Employee of the MonthDeanna Young, 3rd Grade Teacher**KD Quiz**

On October 8, Senior Janna Rusnak and Juniors Faith Aguirre and Charlotte Hill competed in the KD Quiz show against Taylor Allderdice and Valley High Schools. The show will be aired on October 25 at 11:00 a.m. The second airing of the show is on November 25 at 11:30 a.m. The quiz show tests general knowledge of a variety of subjects. Our students performed admirably.

Boys' Golf Accolades

Please join us in recognizing **Colton Hisiro** for an incredible, record-setting performance in the **WPIAL AAA Individual Golf Playoffs!**

Colt's season was defined by consistent excellence and dedication:

- **Historic Achievement:** Colton is the **first Ambridge golfer** to qualify for all three rounds of the WPIAL playoff system since the three-round format was adopted, according to Coach Yanessa.
- **WPIAL Finals Run:** He started strong in the local section qualifier, finishing **3rd out of 36 golfers**. He then advanced through the first round by shooting a **76** at Peasant Ridge and shot another **76** at Willowbrook Country Club in the second round, finishing tied for 16th among top competitors.
- **Top Golfer Status:** In the WPIAL AAA Finals, Colt finished tied for 34th overall. This places him as the **34th best golfer** out of all the golfers in all school districts.
- **Remarkable Improvement:** This success is a testament to his determination. Last season, he finished in the second round; this year, through hard work and playing rounds of golf, he made it to the finals!

Congratulations, Colton, on your historic achievements and for representing Ambridge with such dedication!

Update by: John McShane of Stifel Public Finance

The Board received an encouraging report from Mr. John McShane of Stifel Public Finance on the refinancing of a past bond issue. By refunding the outstanding Series of 2014 bonds at a lower rate, the district will significantly reduce its future interest payments. This is a strategic financial move that saves the district money without increasing its principal debt. This is at a savings of 550,000.00.

Fiscal Responsibility Pays Off: District Achieves Historic Bond Rating Upgrade

While the district can't control market interest rates, financial advisor Mr. McShane emphasized that the Administration and Board *can* control budgetary practice, and their hard work has delivered historic results.

The district's journey was challenging. Around 2010, the fund balance dwindled to under a million dollars, leading Moody's to downgrade the district to an A-minus and place it on "negative watch," anticipating a further decline.

However, over the last five years, a concerted effort by the Administration and the Board to focus on fiscal management, build the fund balance, and pay down debt has completely reversed this trend. This commitment saw the district's total debt plummet from \$75 million to approximately \$45 million today, which will be paid off in less than 10 years.

The success was highlighted during the current bond issue process. The district experienced the largest one-time rate increase category jump Mr. McShane has seen in his 25-year career. It has been placed in a completely different category than any other Beaver County school—a truly remarkable achievement. If the Administration and the Board continue their current efforts from the past five years, it is working, as shown by the refinance rates they secured. Mr. McShane remarked that if there was an award to be given, he would give one. He congratulated Dr. Pasquerilla, the Administration Staff, and the Board for making fiscally responsible decisions.

This financial turnaround directly led to the successful refinancing of the 2014 bonds, lowering the rate from 3.48% to 2.68%. The district replaced the old \$21 million debt with only \$20 million in new bonds, reducing interest costs while maintaining the original payoff date of 2033. The bond payments were not increased; instead, the interest debt was reduced, and it will still be paid off in 2033.

The Board discussed the timeline for accepting the Stadium Solutions bid for the bleacher project, as well as potential sponsorships and grants to offset the cost. Mr. Klopfer (Stadium Solutions) explained that the cost would be deducted on a monthly basis and estimated the project's completion to be by the end of April.

Presentation from Stadium Solutions – Mark Klopfer

Mr. Mark Klopfer of **Stadium Solutions** presented and reviewed his company's bleacher stadium quote. The presentation detailed two distinct options for seating capacity:

- **Option #1:** Features three center seating sections, providing a total capacity of **1,298 seats**.
- **Option #2:** Offers four center seating sections, accommodating a total of **1,580 seats**.

Mr. Klopfer successfully addressed the Board's subsequent questions and concerns regarding the specifications and quote details for both seating configurations.

Public Comment (Regarding Agenda Items Only)

At this time, DISTRICT RESIDENTS may come forward to comment on agenda items only. Each person must state their first and last name and address prior to speaking. Each resident will be allowed three minutes and can speak only once. This period for public comment prior to the standing committee reports will be limited to one-half hour. Although not required, board members desiring to address questions or concerns may do so after the residents' comments/questions or at the conclusion of the committee reports. There will still be an opportunity for residents to comment on any business relevant to the Ambridge Area School District under Old and New Business at the end of the meeting.

Randy Dawson, Ambridge, PA

- Referenced the difficulty of the Economy Ambulance project, where all nine members reportedly wanted something different for the brand new building being constructed in Economy Borough.
- Suggested the board's best approach would be to select a builder first, then work collaboratively to give that builder conceptual ideas and direction on what the board wants.

Board discussions focused on the logistics and cost of the electrical work. It was noted that Yates Electric requires stamped drawings and a building permit to provide an accurate bid, as they need to know the structure that will house the electrical components.

Mrs. Romasco requested a separate motion to approve the Field House Bleacher specs/bid.

Ultimately, the board agreed to place the following distinct items on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Bleacher Project (Option 1 or 2)
- Field House Bleachers (Specs/Bid for approval)
- Drainage Plan for \$18,500.00
- Concession Stand for \$23,00.00

Miss Fitsko made a motion to schedule a special meeting for the Bleacher Project Items, seconded by Mr. Carpenter. Mr. Kovacevic and Mr. Zatchey voted against the motion.

XI. Committee Reports**Education and Technology****Mrs. Kelly Romasco**1. Penn State University Affiliation Agreement

It is recommended to approve an Affiliation Agreement between the Ambridge Area School District and Penn State University Master of Professional Studies in Nutritional Sciences, **pending solicitor's review.**

2. High School Club Formation

It is recommended to approve the formation of a new high school club, Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) Club. The club sponsor will be paid a stipend of \$470.00, in accordance with the contracted rate.

3. Middle School Club Formation

It is recommended to approve the formation of a new middle school club, the Dungeons and Dragons Club. The club sponsor will be paid a stipend of \$470.00, in accordance with the contracted rate.

4. PASBO's 71st Annual Conference

It is recommended that Michelle Amadio, the District Business Manager and Director of Operations, be approved to attend PASBO's 71st Annual Conference and Exhibits being held at the David L. Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA, on March 24-27, 2026. The purpose of this conference is to provide members with education, training, professional development, and timely access to legislative and policy news. All expenses (registration, fees, travel, lodging, meals) will be paid as per Board Policy 331, Job Related Expenses. The approximate cost will be \$993.00.

Mrs. Romasco moved to approve items 1-4, seconded by Mrs. Fischer. Mrs. Scott and Mr. Zatchey voted against item 3.

Finance and Budget

Mr. Matthew Zatchey

1. School District Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly school district bills in the amount of \$3,231,782.37 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$1,347,141.72 be paid.

2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria bills in the amount of \$109,023.75 and the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$57,874.20 be paid.

3. Grant Acceptance

It is recommended to accept the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant for the following elementary schools from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Bureau of Food and Nutrition (BFN) for the 2025-2026 school year. This award is to provide free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. Mrs. Leigh Anne Holman was instrumental in securing this grant.

- a) Highland Elementary in the amount of \$19,180.00
- b) State Street Elementary in the amount of \$16,590.00

Mr. Zatchey moved to approve items 1-3, seconded by Miss Fitsko. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Building and Grounds

Mrs. Adina Ferragonio

Mrs. Ferragonio thanked Mrs. Amadio for her work and for inviting Mr. Klaopfer of Stadium Solutions to present.

Athletics**Mrs. Cathleen Fischer****Public Relations****Miss Amy Fitsko****Steering and Rules****Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe****Legislative****Miss Amy Fitsko****Salary Schedule and Labor Relations****Mr. Garrett Kovacevic****Personnel****Mrs. Valerie Scott**

***ALL NEW HIRES, PENDING RECEIPT OF SATISFACTORY AND CURRENT CLEARANCES, SATISFACTORY DRUG SCREENING, TB TESTING, RESPONSES BY CURRENT/FORMER EMPLOYERS TO ACT 168 SCREENING, AND PDE CERTIFICATIONS IF APPLICABLE.**

1. **FMLA**

It is recommended that Employee #1237 be approved for a leave of absence under Board Policy 435, Family and Medical Leave, beginning November 25, 2025, not to exceed twelve (12) weeks.

2. **Paraprofessional**

It is recommended to retroactively hire Karen Argueta as a Paraprofessional at Economy Elementary, as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Support Professional Association (ESPA/PSEA-NEA) collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

3. **Jones Resolution**

It is recommended to approve Resolution 2025-2026-05, a Jones Resolution for Employee # 3221.

Mrs. Scott moved to approve items 1-3, seconded by Miss Fitsko. The vote in favor was unanimous.

XII. President's Report

Mr. Carpenter began by congratulating the students and staff recognized at the meeting. He proudly mentioned attending the Beaver County Band Festival, noting that the Ambridge band was "awesome" and "wiped the field." He also encouraged the community to attend the two remaining home games.

He then highlighted the historic bond rating upgrade reported by Mr. McShane as the key reason he joined the board. Mr. Carpenter offered a personal thank you to Dr. Pasquerilla, the administration, and the staff for their work in bringing the district to its current strong financial position compared to five years ago.

XIII. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Pasquerilla thanked Mr. Carpenter for his kind words and reiterated congratulations to the recognized students and staff, stating that seeing the students is a constant reminder of the district's purpose. He acknowledged that the district's current financial success was achieved through hard work and tough decisions made by both the administration, current and past boards, noting the current position is a credit to all involved. He expressed gratitude that the district is now able to strategically plan for projects and emergency expenses without risking a return to past financial difficulties. Dr. Pasquerilla concluded by expressing appreciation for the board's support and his excitement to move forward in maintaining facilities, technology, and academics, and making Ambridge a sound place. He closed by saying he's proud of the district's athletes and the arts programs. Go Bridgers!

XIV. Solicitor's Report

Ms. Turnbull had nothing to report.

XV. Old and New Business

It is now time for old and new business. Any DISTRICT RESIDENT who desires to comment on any business relevant to the Ambridge Area School District should now come forward. Each person must state their first and last name and address prior to speaking. Each person will be allowed three minutes and can speak only once.

XVI. Motion to Adjourn

At approximately 8:40 p.m. Miss Fitsko motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Scott. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary