

MINUTES
LASALLE-PERU TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #120
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026, 4:45 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Matt Merboth, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:49 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mr. Matt Merboth, Committee Chair, Mrs. Sally Taliani (via phone), and Mrs. Carol Alcorn (via phone)

ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs. Ingrid Cushing, Assistant Superintendent/Interim Superintendent, Mrs. Lori Whalen, Business Manager, and Mrs. Jennifer Riva, Board Secretary

REVIEW/APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 15, 2026, COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MOTION by Mrs. Taliani, seconded by Mrs. Alcorn, to accept to recommend the Board of Education approve the meeting minutes from January 15, 2026, as presented. Voting Aye: Mrs. Taliani, Mrs. Alcorn, and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried.**

MONTHLY FINANCIALS

Mrs. Whalen presented the financials for the month ending January 31, 2026, noting that the fiscal year is 58.3% complete. Revenue stands at 69.4% and expenditures at 49.3%. She reported that additional fund entries for the month are required, which will not affect the bottom-line cash value amounts, and will include the Board-approved balance transfer from the previous month as well as Tort adjustments.

FY2025 AUDIT UPDATE

Mrs. Cushing and Mrs. Whalen updated the committee that Newkirk and Associates will be unavailable to present the final audit to the Board until April or May due to tax season. We received a draft of the audit, which identified three findings which have not yet been addressed in the corrective action plans:

1. Title I Grant – duplicate entry of \$24,000.00.
2. Eligibility Issue – incorrectly claimed a student as free or reduced.
3. Food Reimbursement (May 2025) – lunch served but not claimed.

The audit noted these as deficiencies in internal controls and classified them as material weaknesses. season.

SERIES 2025/2026 DEBT CERTIFICATES-GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS UPDATE

Mrs. Cushing and Mrs. Whalen updated the committee on the recent due diligence and S&P rating call, executed bond insurance documents, and an action item is scheduled for the February agenda to approve the parameters resolution to begin issuing the \$4,500,000 funding bonds, which we anticipate will be sold during the week of March 2nd.

ACCEPT TO RECOMMENDED THE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVE THE SERIES 2025/2026 DEBT CERTIFICATES-GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS PARAMETERS RESOLUTION AS PRESENTED

MOTION by Mrs. Taliani, seconded by Mrs. Alcorn, to accept to recommend approving the 2025/226 debt certificate-general obligation bonds parameters resolution as presented. Voting Aye: Mrs. Taliani, Mrs. Alcorn, and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried.**

TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

Wireless Refresh

Mrs. Cushing presented the Wireless Refresh project through Presidio to update routers and network equipment campus-wide, including the Ag Building. The total project cost is \$258,439.14, with 60% funded through E-Rates, covering \$133,036.20 of the total cost.

ACCEPT TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVE THE WIRELESS REFRESH PROJECT AT \$258,439.14 WITH E-RATE FUNDS TO COVER \$133,036.20 OF THE TOTAL COST
MOTION by Mrs. Alcorn, seconded by Mrs. Taliani, to accept to recommend the Board of Education approve The Wireless Refresh project at \$258,439.14 with e-rate funds to cover \$133,036.20 of the total cost as presented. Voting Aye: Mrs. Alcorn, Mrs. Taliani and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried.**

AG BUILDING CHANGE ORDERS AND ALLOWANCE

Mrs. Cushing updated the Committee on the progress of the Ag Building and following Change Orders: CO #5 – Access to Elevator Disconnects (\$3,790.00); CO #6 – Add Keyed Removable Mullion to Door (\$879.00); and CO #7 – Add Water Main Valve (\$5,845.00). She also recommended approval of Allowance #001 – Purchase of Kitchen Equipment in the amount of \$196,449.00 which was approved by the Building and Grounds Committee.

INSURANCE UPDATE

Mrs. Cushing shared the EBC 2026–2027 Preliminary Renewal Rates. The projections indicate almost a 22% increase due to being in the highest rate and loss adjustment categories. A final meeting is scheduled for March 19th to review the confirmed rates.

MOU AGREEMENTS WITH TEACHERS LOCAL 604 RECOMMENDATIONS

Mrs. Cushing recommended the following MOUs:

1. MOU with Teachers Local 604 – to correct Cheer Coach language in the 2024–2027 contract, addressing a typo and incorrect category listing.
2. MOU with Teachers Local 604 – to clarify scenarios when a Head Coach also serves as an Assistant Coach; teachers will receive their full stipend plus 60% of the Assistant Coach stipend, consistent with current positions such as Cheer.

ACCEPT TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVE THE MOU WITH TEACHERS LOCAL 604 TO CORRECT CHEER COACH LANGUAGE NOT UPDATED IN THE 2024-2027 CONTRACT AND MOU WITH TEACHERS LOCAL 604 TO REFLECT SCENARIOS WHEN A HEAD COACH WILL ALSO SERVE AS THE ASSISTANT COACH

MOTION by Mrs. Taliani, seconded by Mrs. Alcorn, accept to recommend the Board of Education approve the MOU with Teachers Local 604 to correct Cheer Coach language not updated in the 2024–2027 contract and MOU with Teachers Local 604 to reflect scenarios when a Head Coach will also serve as the Assistant Coach as presented. Voting Aye: Mrs. Taliani, Mrs. Alcorn, and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried.**

AG BUILDING DONATIONS

Mrs. Cushing distributed the L-P Agriculture Center flyer that was shared at the November Ag fundraising meeting, noting that it reflected the revised sponsorship amounts updated in October. She also asked the Committee for guidance on handling Major Gift sponsorships for naming rights, specifically whether such sponsorships would be sold exclusively or remain open to other sponsors. The committee agreed that the sponsorship for naming rights will be considered as “sold.”

IMRF AUTHORIZED AGENT RECOMMENDATION

Mrs. Cushing recommended the appointment of Mrs. Lori Whalen as IMRF authorized agent.

ACCEPT TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVE APPOINTING MRS. LORI WHALEN AS THE IMRF AUTHORIZED AGENT

MOTION by Mrs. Alcorn, seconded by Mrs. Taliani, to accept to recommend the Board of Education to approve appointing Mrs. Lori Whalen as the IMRF Authorized Agent, as presented. Voting Aye: Mrs. Alcorn, Mrs. Taliani and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried.**

CONTRACT WITH SOLUTION TREE: 1-YEAR EXTENSION

Mrs. Cushing recommended extending the current contract with Solution Tree for one year, not to exceed \$43,000. The contract provides professional development and support with SMART goals, PLCs, data, and assessments. It will be reduced to four coaching sessions and one professional development day as compared to the last 3 years.

ACCEPT TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVE THE 1-YEAR SOLUTION TREE CONTRACT NOT TO EXCEED \$43,000

MOTION by Mrs. Taliani, seconded by Mrs. Alcorn, to accept to recommend the Board of Education to approve the 1-year extension of the Solution Tree contract not to exceed \$43,000, as presented. Voting Aye: Mrs. Taliani, Mrs. Alcorn and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried.**

1% SALES TAX DISCUSSION

Mrs. Cushing informed the committee of a recent V.O.I.C.E. meeting at which area superintendents requested that each district formally declare its Board's position regarding the proposed countywide 1% sales tax referendum. If approved, the tax would provide additional funding directly to school districts. The committee referenced prior discussions in which the Board did not support placing the initiative on the April ballot during an election year. The proposal would place the referendum on the April 2026 ballot. Mr. Merboth stated that the committee determined it would not recommend district support at this time; however, additional Board discussion is necessary.

DOLAN BUILDING EMERGENCY HLS AMENDMENT

Mrs. Cushing explained that the elevator is non-functional because the original hydraulic plunger is deteriorated and continues to leak oil, causing the cab to creep when stopped and creating an immediate safety issue. She recommended approval of the Emergency HLS Resolution for repairs totaling \$5,192.53, which is included in the new HLS Amendment 13. Work is expected to begin next week. The Building and Grounds Committee approved the amendment.

OTHER

Mrs. Cushing and Mrs. Whalen updated the Committee on two potential forensic audit firms and the scope of services offered. CLA proposes a more in-depth, phased approach that includes comprehensive data collection, such as financial records, emails, statements, and staff interviews. RSM offers a more targeted, sample-based approach to identify control weaknesses and potential irregularities. Once a firm is approved by the Board, work could begin within two to four weeks, with CLA potentially able to start sooner. The forensic audit could take up to three months to complete, with estimated costs of approximately \$100,000. Given the concerns related to the Budget, Title I, and IDEA, the committee expressed support for the more comprehensive approach, pending further discussion and approval by the full Board. Mrs. Taliani exited the call at 5:27p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Alcorn, seconded by Mr. Merboth, to adjourn. Voting Aye: Mrs. Alcorn and Mr. Merboth. Voting Nay: None. **The motion carried. Time 5:42p.m.**



Mr. Matt Merboth
Committee Chair



Mrs. Jennifer Riva
Board Secretary