POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

Howard S. Fernsler Academic Center
August 12, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

1. MEETING OPENING

Subject 1.1 Opening - Mr. Harry Ciavarella / Pledge

Mr. Harry Ciavarella called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at **6:00 p.m.**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Subject 1.2 Roll Call - Mrs. Krista Bevan

Present:
Mr. Kerry Ansbach, arrived at 6:04 p.m.
Mrs. Stephanie Buchanan
Mr. Harry Ciavarella
Mr. Kyle Crouse
Dr. Ashley DeWitt
Mrs. Rachael Hobbs
Mr. Craig Shields
Mr. Bob Thomas

Absent:
Mr. Chris Kelly

Eight Board members were present.

Subject 1.3 Public Comment

Adrian Portland addressed the Board regarding the proposed cell phone policy. Mr. Portland stated that he had reviewed the policy and expressed his belief that cell phones are a significant distraction for students.

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2. GENERAL

Subject 2.1 Superintendent Report - Dr. Guy Lowery

Dr. Lowery thanked the administration, Facilities Department, and staff for their work preparing for the upcoming school year. He reported that the track renovation is well underway, the John S. Clarke renovation to add classrooms is underway, and the cafeteria renovation is progressing with flooring installation expected soon. He also noted that John S. Clarke sent families a video explaining the student drop-off procedures.

Subject 2.2 Athletics and Extracurricular Activities - Mr. Craig Shields

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the Concession Agreement between the Pottsville Area School District and the Pottsville Zone, effective August 19, 2026, pending solicitor review and approval.
2. It is recommended that the Board approve the Concession Agreement between the Pottsville Area School District and CFS McGinty, LLC, effective August 19, 2026, pending solicitor review and approval.

Discussion:

Mr. Ciavarella requested that Pete, the Athletic Director, be invited to discuss the District's facility fee structure. He stated that he would like greater consistency across the Board when assessing fees. Fee structures used by Blue Mountain, Schuylkill Haven, and North Schuylkill were discussed.

A **flat fee of $500 per season** was discussed for Pottsville youth groups. It was noted that tournaments would need to be considered separately because they are different in scope.

Subject 2.3 Facilities and Grounds - Mr. Harry Ciavarella

Facilities and Grounds Agenda

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the decommission of the following antiquated items:

   a. Pottsville Area High School - Cafeteria tables and chairs
   b. DHH Lengel Middle School - sofa
   c. Pottsville Area High School - 120 classroom chairs

2. It is recommended that the Board approve the purchase of a 2027 F-350 4x4 SD Crew Cab 8' box 176"WB SRW XL (W3B) with 9' Western Pro Plus plow with rubber deflector - **$61,065.00. COSTARS contract #025-E23-611.**

3. It is recommended that the Board approve the following water meter chamber replacements:

John S. Clarke Elementary
4-inch chamber replacement
Chamber Cost $2,290.79 + Time and Material (~$250-$500 although could be higher if issues occur).

DHH Lengle Middle School
4-inch chamber replacement
Chamber Cost $2,290.79 + Time and Material (~$250-$500 although could be higher if issues occur).

Pottsville Area High School
6-inch chamber replacement
Chamber Cost $4,253.40 + Time and Material (~$250-$500 although could be higher if issues occur).

Discussion:

Use of Facilities Requests: A facilities-use request from Stoic for dates from September through November was discussed. Issues with the pool filters were also noted.

Subject 2.4 Finance - Mr. Harry Ciavarella

Finance Committee Agenda

1. Treasurer's Report (All Funds)
    - General Fund Balance as of July 31, 2026 - **$5,850,005.30**
    - Cafeteria Checking Balance as of July 31, 2026 - **$996,345.63**
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
6. Budget Transfers
7. It is recommended that the Board approve the Business Associate Agreement and a Letter of Agreement between Safety Net Counseling Inc. and the Pottsville Area School District for the 2026-2027 school year, pending solicitor review and approval.
8. It is recommended that the Board approve the one-year agreement with Language Line Services, Inc. for LanguageLine Phone and InSight Video Interpreting services pending solicitor review and approval.
9. It is recommended that the Board approve the Partnership Agreement with Keystone/Red Rock Job Corps Center and the Pottsville Area School District for the 2026-2027 school year, pending solicitor review and approval.
10. It is recommended that the Board approve the Service Agreement with Matrix for the 2026-2027 school year including Extended School Year (ESY) for Classroom Support

Staff at $55/hour and PA Licensed Behavior Support $100/hr, pending solicitor review and approval.

11. It is recommended that the Board approve the Agreement for a district-wide keynote presentation between Association of Washington School Principals and the Pottsville Area School District for professional keynote delivery for the district's opening/kickoff event on August 25, 2026 - **$5,000**, pending solicitor review and approval.

Discussion:

Mr. Shields asked about District investments.

Subject 2.5 Technology - Mr. Bob Thomas

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the purchase of two Apple Mac Mini's. **Additional quotes are being obtained.**
2. It is recommended that the Board approve the quote from CDW-G for five Newline 75 Q Ultra 4K Touch Displays with mobile stands - PEPPM contract #548362-161 - **$16,260.**
3. StormWind Studios - professional development for Technology - **$3,450.**

Subject 2.6 Curriculum - Mrs. Stephanie Buchanan

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the LIEP Service Agreement between the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 and Pottsville Area School District for the provision of Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP) Services for the Fiscal Year 2026-27, pending solicitor review and approval.
2. It is recommended that the Board approve the pilot for the 2026-2027 school year with SAVVAS Learning Company for D'Nealian Handwriting grades 1-4, to be paid with Ready-to-Learn grant funds - **$13,961.05.**
3. It is recommended that the Board approve the pilot for the 2026-2027 school year with Learning Without Tears for Handwriting Without Tears grades 1-4, to be paid with Ready-to-Learn grant funds.
4. It is recommended that the Board approve the 2026-2027 Schoolwide Plans for the following school locations:

   John S. Clarke Elementary Center (Schoolwide Title I)
   D.H.H Lengel Middle School (CSI)

Discussion:

The Board discussed the proposed handwriting pilots, including the possibility of conducting the pilots with **grades 3 and 4**. Mrs. Buchanan and Dr. DeWitt requested additional time to review

the handwriting programs. Discussion also included whether Ready-to-Learn funds could be used for an after-school program and whether a free handwriting curriculum could be identified.

Dr. Gerace reported that he participated in a Zoom meeting with one of the providers. He explained that the program transitions students to cursive letters in second grade and noted that some current teachers did not receive cursive instruction themselves while they were in school.

Mrs. Buchanan requested a Curriculum Committee meeting for further discussion.

Subject 2.7 Transportation - Dr. Ashley DeWitt

Discussion: N/A

Subject 2.8 Policy & Procedure - Mrs. Rachael Hobbs

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the second reading of the proposed revisions to Pottsville Area School District policy 237, Electronic Communication Devices.
2. It is recommended that the Board approve the second reading of the proposed revisions to Pottsville Area School District policy 204, Attendance.
3. It is recommended that the Board approve the revision to Pottsville Area School District policy 804, School Day.

Discussion:

The Board held an open discussion regarding the proposed revisions to Policy 237 and the use of cell phones by students. It was noted that the elementary and middle schools have no-cell-phone policies. Discussion regarding the high school centered on requiring phones to be put away during the school day while potentially permitting their use during lunch.

The Board discussed the difficulty of enforcing a prohibition during lunch, particularly with approximately 300 students in the cafeteria supervised by four staff members. It was noted that a significant amount of staff time could be spent directing students to put their phones away.

Mrs. Buchanan referenced feedback from other school districts regarding the use of a progressive approach to enforcement. The Board also discussed surveying teachers regarding classroom conditions following lunch if students are permitted to use their phones during the lunch period.

Subject 2.9 Food Services - Mr. Kerry Ansbach

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the following bids for the 2026-2027 school year:

   a. Hershey's Ice Cream - ice cream products
   b. Guers Dairy - milk, 100% orange juice, iced tea, 20% orange drink, lemonade, and spring water
   c. Moribito Baking Co. Inc - bread and baked goods, with option to purchase specialty rolls from an alternate vendor should these products not meet our standards

2. It is recommended that the Board approve the following second meal breakfast and lunch prices for students, the adult meal prices and milk prices for the 2026-2027 school year:

Breakfast Prices:
Elementary student - $2.10
Secondary student - $2.30
Adult - $3.50
Extra milk - $0.80

Lunch Prices:
Elementary student - $3.10
Secondary student - $3.30
Adult - $5.25
Extra milk - $0.80

Subject 2.10 Promotion, Public Relations & Social Media - Mr. Kyle Crouse

No discussion was noted.

Subject 2.11 IU Representative - Mr. Bob Thomas

No discussion was noted.

Subject 2.12 Safety and Security - Board Secretary

1. It is recommended that the Board approve the 2025-2026 Safe Schools Annual Report and the Memorandums of Understanding between The Pottsville Bureau of Police and John S. Clarke Elementary Center; The Pottsville Bureau of Police and DHH Lengel Middle School; The Pottsville Bureau of Police and Pottsville Area High School; and The Pottsville Bureau of Police and Pottsville Area School District.

2. It is recommended that the Board approve the quote from Advanced Communication Solutions for two Ubiquiti Nanobeam 5AC Gen 2 point-to-point access points in the elevator car, including installation, at the Pottsville Area High School - **$1,750.**
3. It is recommended that the Board approve the Quote from Greens Communications for twenty Portable Radios, COSTARS Contract #012-E23-317 for **$23,952.00.**

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3. ADJOURNMENT

Subject 3.1 Adjourn

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at **7:34 p.m.**

An **Executive Session was held from 7:37 p.m. until 8:45 p.m.**