

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Palmerton, PA

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

An executive session was held Wednesday, November 8, 2023 after the board meeting concerning legal and personnel matters.

The regular board meeting of the Palmerton Area School District Board of School Directors was held in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 680 Fourth Street, Palmerton, PA, on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 5:36 p.m. President Recker presided.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Present: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Larvey (via telephone), Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, Recker, and Snyder

OTHER ATTENDANCE

Jodi Frankelli – Superintendent, Ryan Kish – Business Manager, Jacqueline McCandless – Board Secretary, and Shawn Lochinger– Solicitor

STUDENT REPORT:

Junior High School – Dublyn Getch, grade 8

- Life Skills – created a pumpkin volcano to celebrate a pumpkin exhibition in Germany they recently learned about
- After-School Escape Room – 8-12 students attending each week; students enjoy challenges of opening the locks from clues and content given
- NJHS – began peer tutoring program, meet with a study buddy once a week; 20 members volunteered at the 10K trail race fundraiser at the Lehigh Gap Nature Center
- Band & Chorus – preparing musical selections for winter concert on December 13th
- Student Council – hosting its annual student/faculty volleyball tournament
- Girls’ wrestling – open practices have shown an increase in interest; 6 girls consistently attending
- Digital News Club – developing new teams and writing crews; broadcasted first show today
- What’s So Cool about Manufacturing? – filmed their footage for this year’s competition, working with Nestle Purina PetCare; focusing on automation with an emphasis on human labor needed to allow the robots to work; voting will occur March 13-15, 2024

High School – Cody Walkowiak and Sonia Dias, grade 12

- Blood Drive – NHS students coordinated the drive with Miller-Keystone Blood Center with 48 staff/students donating which surpassed their goal
- Scholastic Scrimmage – started league matches, runs through March
- PYEA – started observations and helping out in the classrooms; each member is scheduled for 5-6 sessions through the end of January
- Environmental Science class – Lehigh Gap Nature Center did a presentation to help educate students on the environmental history of Palmerton
- Marching Band – performed in Halloween parade; recognized senior members on Senior Night; small group played downtown after JV football team’s final practice; participated in Veteran’s Day parade in Nesquehoning
- Concert Band – first performance was at Veterans Day assembly on November 9th; preparations for the winter concert on December 13th are underway
- Jazz Band – interest forms have been distributed
- General Music – trophies from past years now on display in Band Room; filing cabinets have been cleaned out and reorganized thanks to the assistance of Zane Himmelwright

- NHS – student induction held November 16th; participated in Halloween parade; observed National Kindness Day, November 13th; members volunteered for the annual Bo Tkach Foundation Turkey Trot in Palmerton
- Mock Trial – received second place of \$300 and trophy in competition on November 18th
- Classroom event – Mr. Justin Petersen had alumni guest speakers to his class on November 17th. Each speaker talked to the students about their academic and professional journey and then were placed in small groups for more conversation.
- Football – congratulations on the team’s undefeated season; players and coaches volunteered at the Palmerton Lighting Committee with holiday set-up of trees in the park
- Newspaper – launched a website, mybombernation.com where they publish articles as well as more time-sensitive information on the site

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

- Received a book entitled “Memoirs of a Parrot” from PSBA as recognition for the commitment to growth and development of students and our community; will be placed in our school library
- Acknowledged CCTI students, Brooklynne Winger and Haley Kuehner, who attended a Palmerton chamber meeting recently to talk about their DECA project and have an opportunity for networking
- Thank you to Ms. Rebecca Sabo, Art Teacher at Towamensing, for the student artwork on display currently in the Boardroom
- Attended the CLIU’s Superintendents’ retreat earlier this month in Hershey which was the first year with new IU executive director attending; the central theme was “advocacy”

BUSINESS MANAGER’S REPORT:

- Single audit completed yesterday which focused on federal programs
- Annual financial report will be submitted next week; full audit available in February
- Motion on agenda tonight to approve the resolution not to exceed the Act 1 index as it is unnecessary for the district to go for referendum to raise taxes higher than the 7.2%. Based on our recent assessment, the 7.2% would generate approximately \$1.4m in tax revenue should the Board decide to go to the index.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

- Director Larvey – LCCC:
 - Students eligible to participate in Early College and receive an Associate’s degree simultaneously with their high school diploma; also students can qualify for Honors College for two years of free tuition
- Director Haas – Library/IU:
 - *Library*: National Novel Writing month offering brainstorming and writing sessions; homemade auction has 37 prizes, drawing day is December 4th; craft corner created offering excess supplies for free and accepting donations for same; 13–18-year-olds can begin a 5–6-week coding program in January where they will build a website, learn coding practices, and how to troubleshoot; winter festival in January
 - *IU*: acknowledged a letter written by Dr. Frankelli to the IU Board regarding the Superintendents’ retreat and the good job the interview committee did in selecting Dr. Koons; testimonial given from mother of student who has succeeded in the early intervention program; basket raffle winners will be announced on December 18th; second facility service dog for emotional support will be placed soon in honor of Dr. Bold for his long-time board service
- Directors Earl & Danielle Paules – CCTI:
 - Mr. Paules asked why the CCTI director doesn’t attend the monthly Carbon County Superintendents meetings as he believes the director should attend. Director Larvey stated the JOC should be directing this.

- Had Veterans Day ceremony and luncheon, students participated in flag ceremony, learning the proper way to fold a flag
- Pre-NOCTI exams have outstanding results of 95 out of 98 students scoring competent or advanced
- Hosted many 9th graders in participating districts for a presentation and tour of their technical areas
- At next month's meeting, need to select a community-at-large member for a five-year appointment to CCVATS

OLD BUSINESS:

- *Towamensing roof* – in October 2023 it was reported that there were some ceiling tiles getting wet, maintenance found that the flashing/curbing around two exhaust fans needed to be re-flashed with three others being questionable; roofer (NT Associates) quoted a price to reflash the five exhaust fans; work was completed on November 13th
- *S. S. Palmer elevator* – had a programming issue with the new control car floor leveler which has been adjusted by Thyssen Krupp with no alarm issues since
- *Parkside windows* – Due to the safety concern of a 3rd floor window slipping down in its frame, CMG of Easton was called in, who rented a 60' lift to support and stabilize the window frame. While the lift was onsite, an inspection of all windows was done and 54 other windows in the building are starting to show early signs of the same issue as the 3rd floor window. To be proactive, all 55 windows were supported to prevent any further movement. This temporary repair will allow us time to design and budget for replacing all the windows at Parkside.
- *Weight room renovation* – the Board received the latest design of the weight room renovation dated November 16th. Per the Board's request, this design expands the blue locker room area from 156 sq. ft. to 209 sq. ft. by moving the storage and utility room wall back 4'6". As per the Athletic Director and wrestling coach, the wall on the other side of the weight room currently has a 6' opening. They would like to see the opening expanded to 16' to have a better line of sight. The drawing shows the opening being expanded to a 16' opening. A structural engineer from Pany & Lentz was onsite today to verify the opening can structurally be expanded. The engineer commented the opening can be expanded with some minimal modifications such as a C-channel support across the existing lintel that he will design on a structural plan.
- *Feasibility study/S. S. Palmer renovation* – a lengthy discussion was held on the scope of work and process required for the proposed districtwide comprehensive feasibility study to assess the condition of existing school buildings and plan for future infrastructure and enrollment needs; the last feasibility study completed in 2006. The timeline of the study was discussed with consideration for potential delays, holidays, and the bidding process of the S. S. Palmer Elementary renovation which is set to create a more secure front entrance, relocation of front offices, elimination of the staircase upon entering the building, and adding a secure vestibule to the entrance, and a handicapped-accessible ramp to the main door. Overall, the directors would like a study to be done but do not wish for it to impact the start of the proposed renovation at S. S. Palmer and agreed they need to identify and outline what is requested in the study.
- Director Haas questioned Mr. Faenza on the sewage smell last Friday at the high school. He reported it was an isolated issue of a broken vent pipe on the JHS roof causing the air handler to suck in exhaust from the bathroom. It was corrected quickly, in less than 45 minutes, and there was no risk to students or staff.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- Constance Banko – read data on the poverty level, adjusted gross income of residents, and home ownership rates in Palmerton; questioned which entity receives the 1% local income tax; stated to keep this data in mind when choosing projects to complete; completing the renovation of S. S. Palmer Elementary is a good idea as far as security goes; questioned the Act 1 index

- Richard Banko – other district buildings seem more at risk than S. S. Palmer if someone were to drive into the entrances; referred to a news article about bricks crumbling at a Lehigh school which is only five years old so cautioned the district to think carefully about building new schools in Palmerton because we will be covering those costs if something goes wrong
- Mary Farquhar – stated Director Earl Paules did a good job last meeting by taking the weight room plan and trying to design it to bring the costs down which will look after the taxpayers; feels like he was attacked for this and we should be thanking him instead; we should be looking for alternatives to the plan

MEETING MINUTES

Director Haas moved, seconded by Director Earl Paules, to approve the board meeting minutes from October 17, 2023 and November 8, 2023.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to approve the attached consent agenda with the addition of the word “prorated” for Motion 2, Item A, salary prorated for Building-Based Substitute Teacher.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Approved Accounts Payable Reports

Approved Treasurer’s Reports

Approved Budget Transfers

DONATIONS

Accepted the following donations:

\$250.00 to the FBLA Activity Club	From Robert & Kerry Palumbo
\$100.00 for woodshop materials	From Carbon County Chapter of Pennsylvania Association School Retirees
Upright piano for the Junior High School music room	From Joseph & Jane Farkas

BUILDING-BASED SUB

Approved Stephanie Bles as Building-Based Substitute Teacher at the Junior High School at Bachelor’s, Step 1, at a salary of \$47,743 prorated effective November 28, 2023 through the end of the 2023-2024 school year

FOOD SERVICE WORKER

Approved Michele Altemose as Food Service Worker at a rate of \$15.75 per hour effective November 22, 2023

ELEMENTARY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Approved the following staff to work in the Towamensing Elementary After-School Program from January 4, 2024 through March 14, 2024:

<i>Teachers at the Professional Services rate per the PAEA Collective Bargaining Agreement:</i>	
Stacey Behler	Kathryn Malay
Felicia Fischer	Joey Roetz

HORIZONTAL MOVEMENTS

Acknowledged the following horizontal movement effective the second semester of the 2023-2024 school year:

Laura Reichard	From Bachelor's to Bachelor's +24
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Approved retroactively the \$1,500.00 horizontal salary adjustment for the 2022-2023 school year for Kimberly Carlson

UNCOMPENSATED LEAVES

Approved the following uncompensated leave requests:

Employee #129	April 26, 2024; May 1, 2024
Employee #594	Retroactively November 21, 2023

FMLA

Approved the following for Family & Medical Leave:

Employee #207	Effective from approximately February 1, 2024 through February 29, 2024
Employee #4679	Effective from approximately December 8, 2023 through December 15, 2023
Employee #6552	Effective from January 2, 2024 through January 23, 2024

CLUB ADVISOR

Approved the following Advisor for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year effective November 22, 2023:

Katherine Baumgardt	Book Club	--
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SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Approved the following Substitute Teacher at a daily rate of \$110.00 effective November 22, 2023:

Kendra Smiley

RESIGNATION

Accepted the following resignation:

Stephanie Bles	Instructional Assistant	Effective November 27, 2023
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TUITION REIMBURSEMENTS

Approved tuition reimbursements

AROUND THE CLOCK NURSING

Approved the contract with Around the Clock Nursing, Inc., for nursing services from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024

CONFERENCES

Approved the following conferences:

Ryan Kish	Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) Annual Conference in Hershey, PA	March 5, 2024 through March 8, 2024	Estimated cost of \$1,099.00
Demi Rohlfing; David Sodl	Safety Care Certification Training, CLIU #21, Lehighon, PA	January 29, 2024 through January 31, 2024	Estimated cost of \$503.89

FIELD TRIPS

Approved the following field trip requests:

High school wrestling team	Competition at Carlisle HS, Carlisle, PA	December 15, 2023 through December 16, 2023
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High school wrestling team	PIAA state wrestling individual tournament, Hershey, PA	March 6, 2024 through March 9, 2024
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**2ND READINGS
POLICIES 101-107-
108-110-111-126-
127-130-226-702-
830-830.1**

Approved the second reading and adoption of the following policies:

- Policy #101 Mission Statement/Vision Statement
- Policy #107 Adoption of Planned Instruction
- Policy #108 Adoption of Textbooks
- Policy #110 Instructional Supplies
- Policy #111 Lesson Plans
- Policy #126 Class Size
- Policy #127 Assessment System
- Policy #130 Homework
- Policy #226 Searches
- Policy #702 Gifts, Grants & Donations
- Policy #830 Security of Computerized Personal Information/Breach Notification
- Policy #830.1 Data Governance-Storage/Security

**2ND READINGS TO
REPEAL
POLICIES 109.2-
120**

Approved the second reading to repeal the following policies:

- Policy #109.2 Library Collections
- Policy #120 Human Development Program

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

**ACT 1
RESOLUTION**

Director Larvey moved, seconded by Director Mazepa, to adopt the 2024-2025 Act 1 Resolution stating that the Palmerton Area School District will not increase taxes by more than its 2024-2025 adjusted index of 7.2%, as determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

**FEASIBILITY
STUDY**

Director Earl Paules moved, seconded by Director Connell, to authorize the Request for Proposal to be advertised for the completion of a districtwide feasibility study.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

**ALLOY5
ARCHITECTURAL
SERVICES
(Weight room)**

Director Haas moved, seconded by Director King, to approve the ALLOY5, Bethlehem, PA, architectural services billing rates for the weight room renovation dated November 10, 2023.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

**ALLOY5 MEP
SERVICES
(Weight room)**

Director Connell moved, seconded by Director Earl Paules, to approve the ALLOY5, Bethlehem, PA, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing services billing rates for the weight room renovation dated November 10, 2023.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- Josann Harry – thanked Director Recker for her board service and for keeping our kids a priority; stated the community will miss her
- Richard Banko – hiring local people for projects is good for the community as those businesses must keep their good reputations intact

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

- Director Earl Paules said we will be picking a new Board President in December; there are three candidates for the position, think about it beforehand who to vote for
- Director Mazepa thanked Directors Larvey and Recker for teaching him a lot and for their long-term support. He said Ms. Larvey taught him to think before speaking and Ms. Recker has empowered him to stand up and speak.
- Director Haas thanked Director Recker for being such a large part of getting the marching band back for our students
- Director King stated both of our outgoing directors have given her invaluable advice; thank you for what you have done for our community
- Director Earl Paules said he had a lot of fun and will miss Ms. Larvey; part of what makes the Board work well is that we can disagree but then still look out for each other; had a lot of fun working with Ms. Recker for the last two years as Vice President
- Dr. Frankelli read statements regarding Directors Larvey and Recker’s service to the Board which outlined both of their specific contributions to the district. Ms. Larvey completed a four-year term and Ms. Recker completed a twelve-year term. Both directors believe in the value and worth of public schools and their impact on society. Dr. Frankelli also presented Ms. Larvey with a framed certificate for her service, and Ms. Recker was recognized with a plaque from the district.
- Dr. Frankelli also presented a framed certificate to Director Haas from PSBA’s Honor Roll in recognition of her 16-year board service milestone.

ADJOURNMENT

Director Haas moved, seconded by Director Larvey, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline McCandless
Board Secretary