

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

May 7, 2007

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, May 7, 2007, was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Shirley Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge.

Board Trustees Present: Tom Eddy, Kathy Howland, Shirley Johnson, Linda Lueth, Wendy Mazer, Deb Polderman, and Jennifer Whistler

Board Trustees Absent: None

The Board members received a presentation about the District Reading Recovery Program by teacher and reading specialist, Ms. Maggie Hills. The Board also discussed graduations and new Board Trustee transitions.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education move into closed session to discuss negotiations. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board moved into closed session at 6:55 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 7:28 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, May 7, 2007, was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by President Johnson in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 60 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board recognized students from the Central High School Debate Team, coached by teacher Mr. Randy Borden, for this year's Novice National and Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association Championships. Also recognized for their heroic efforts to revive a Central High student were the following staff members: Mr. Sam Richards, Mr. Denny Roehm, and Mr. Ray Scott.

The Board received an introduction from North Middle School teacher and student leader, Mr. Jim Moiles, and a building activities presentation from several student leaders.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board approve the minutes of the April 23, 2007 Special and Regular Meetings noting an amendment to Mrs. Mazer's comments. Page three, third line changed from "She noted the Northern Song Leaders will be performing at Western Michigan University on May 11." to "The Portage Northern High School Songleaders Chorale was selected to perform at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival on Friday, May 11, at 7:00 p.m. at Western Michigan University." Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mrs. Howland, that the Board of Education accept the following playground contract: Landscape Structures c/o Superior Play for the purpose of furnishing and installing playground equipment and surfaces including the work of all trades for Moorsbridge Elementary School for the sum of \$65,000.00. This expenditure will be allocated to the 2007/07 General Fund. Mrs. Lueth reminded the audience that the funds for all the playground updates are coming from the recent sale of District property. Motion carried unanimously.

The resolution to lay-off staff was removed from the agenda. Superintendent McFarlane explained this resolution is postponed due to staff attrition, but cautioned if the current situation in Lansing continues, the District may be forced to make future staff reductions.

President Johnson proclaimed May 6-12, 2007 as Staff Appreciation Week in the Portage District and read the following Proclamation.

STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK PROCLAMATION

Whereas, public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality; and

Whereas, by equipping young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities, schools give them hope for, and access to, a productive future; and

Whereas, Portage Public School educators and support staff members work tirelessly to serve our children and community with quality care and expert professionalism; and

Whereas, quality schools are community linchpins, bringing together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders and elected officials in a common enterprise;

Now, Therefore, I, Shirley Johnson, President of the Board of Education, do hereby proclaim May 6-12, 2007, as **Staff Appreciation Week** in the Portage School District, and encourage all citizens to support the vital role our staff plays in the success of our learning community.

Signed this 7th day of May 2007

Shirley Johnson, President
Portage Public Schools
Board of Education

A motion was offered by Mr. Eddy, supported by Mrs. Whistler, that the Board of Education approve the following proposal from Graybar Electrical Company for the wiring and electrical equipment to upgrade the electrical service at the Community Education Center for the sum of \$22,764.14. This amount would be charged to the Building and Site Sinking Fund (BSSF) for 2006/07. Motion carried unanimously.

This concluded the action portion of the agenda. Mrs. Johnson then opened the meeting for comments.

Mrs. Polderman discussed the difficulty of announcing all our District accomplishments in this portion of the meeting and encouraged the community to read “page five” of the *Portage Gazette* to stay up to date on events. She also shared Staff Appreciation Week accolades with District coaches, teachers, and parent volunteers.

Mrs. Mazer offered thanks to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Mr. Ric Perry, and the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, Mrs. Denise Bresson, for the very informative International Baccalaureate (IB) presentation at the April 23 meeting. She also offered words of thanks and appreciation to the two retiring Trustees – Mrs. Howland and Mrs. Lueth.

Mrs. Whistler encouraged attendance at the Senior IB Art Presentation that will be held in Central High’s auditorium lobby on Tuesday, May 8, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Mr. Eddy reminded the community of their rights and encouraged all to vote in tomorrow’s election. He offered thanks to all the candidates on the ballot for deciding to run and stated there has been good coverage of the ideas and passions of these candidates.

President Johnson reported on the Legislative Conference she attended last month in Lansing. She spoke about the state economic picture, the General Fund, restricted funds, state aid, Proposal A, and budget cuts. She offered thanks to the only local legislator who attended the conference luncheon, Rep. Jack Hoogendyk.

Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale, offered thanks to a long list of those who helped and encouraged him to run for a Board seat. He also informed the audience of the upcoming Park Board Scout & Guide Day event that will take place at Celery Flats on May 12.

Ms. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood St., praised all the Trustees for their efforts and asked that a questionnaire be given to the Board candidates about some of the “hot button” issues in the District.

Superintendent McFarlane congratulated the 22 District students that received Education For Employment Awards of Excellence and over \$15,000 in scholarships. He shared information just received from Northern High teacher and head forensic team coach, Ms. Laurel Scheidt, about the Northern Forensics Team celebrating an amazing first place victory from the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association State Finals tournament held at Central Michigan University last weekend. He congratulated all involved for clinching this sixth consecutive state title. Superintendent McFarlane also discussed District crisis management planning, citing lock downs

and emergency evacuation drills as examples, and reinforced the District will continue to run and improve these procedures.

Initiating the reports portion of the meeting, Mrs. Lueth presented the Treasurer's Report of Bills Approved for Payment as of April 18, 2007, General Fund bills in the amount of \$3,725,025.17, and Building & Site Fund bills in the amount of \$19,624.95, for a grand total of \$3,744,650.12.

Received Board Committee reports from Mr. Eddy regarding the Facilities and Technology Committee, Mrs. Lueth regarding the Finance Committee, and Mrs. Whistler deferred the Policy and Personnel Committee report for later in the meeting.

The Board reviewed an update on the Northern High School art department trip to Italy and Greece.

Mrs. Whistler presented the Policy and Personnel Committee changes to Policy series 5000 and 6000.

A brief legislative update was received from Mrs. Whistler pertaining to the possible date change for Kindergarten students mandatory enrollment, equalized funding, graduation requirements for students that move into Michigan, and a possible pro-ration. She also stressed that the legislators do not want to hear from the Board Trustees but would like to get feedback and comments from the community members. You can find contact information for our legislators on the District web site at www.portageps.org and look for the link titled "Contacting State Legislators About School Funding."

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary