

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING AND  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION**

**March 8, 2010**

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, March 8, 2010, was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by President Posthumus in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge.

Board Trustees Present: Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

Others Present: Tom Noverr, Assistant Superintendent of Operations; Ric Perry, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction; Marsha Wells, Superintendent; Tom Zahrt, Director of Human Resources; and Kevin Harty, Legal Counsel

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Motion offered by Mr. Rathburn, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy [Section 8 (c) of the Open Meetings Act]. Upon a roll call vote, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.**

The Board moved into closed session at 5:02 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 6:00 p.m. and called a recess.

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, March 8, 2010, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Posthumus in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. He welcomed an audience of 10 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

**COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS**

President Posthumus opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board. Seeing no citizens come forward, President Posthumus opened the floor for Board Trustee comments.

Mrs. Kurdys inquired about the schedule for electronic Board materials on the District web site and submitted an Agenda Item Request to discuss the Chinese Language Proposal. Superintendent Wells clarified the time frame for posting Board items on the District web site.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Bond Project Updates:**

**Recommendation to Delay Bus Purchases.** The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, provided background information on the recommendation to delay the bus purchases from the 2008 Bond Fund #1. He stressed that it is the intention of the District to purchase the busses; however, the delay would allow opportunity for discussion on additional options. Mr. Noverr and Superintendent Wells responded to Trustee questions pertaining to leasing buses, purchasing through the General Fund, prioritizing all remaining Bond purchases for the Board, a historical listing of District buses that includes purchase dates and mileage, finance charges, and safety. President Posthumus requested a compromise to this purchase delay be three months as opposed to six, allowing the Bond Advisory Committee further review and sharing feedback to the Board.

**Recommendation to Purchase Teacher Computers.** The Information Systems and Assessment Director, Mr. Dan Vomastek, shared details on the recommended purchase of 45 touchscreen all-in-one desktops from CDW-G in an amount not to exceed \$57,105, using proceeds from the 2008 Bond Funds #1 and #2. Mr. Vomastek responded to Trustee questions regarding: bid specifications, ratings on the recommended equipment, purchasing equipment locally, comparison of vendors to the state contract, warranties, replacement, and cloud computing. President Posthumus noted this recommendation with appear as an Action Item on the March 22 Agenda.

**Elementary Attendance Boundaries.** Mr. Vomastek reviewed background on the contingency plans for elementary attendance boundaries previously approved and provided updated student numbers. Mr. Vomastek, Superintendent Wells, and the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Dr. Ric Perry, responded to Trustee questions that pertained to: the notification and roll-out of this phase of the elementary boundary plan, grandfathering requests, new student enrollment, as well as teacher and program options.

**12<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary Sidewalk.** Mr. Noverr shared 12<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary sidewalk plans and a timeline for discussions and decisions on the project. This sidewalk is considered part of the safe walk zone to 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions regarding: secondary bus stops, expanding walk zones, tree removal, the sensitive issue of right of way and additional easements funded from Bond Fund #2, and bid timelines.

**Building and Site Sinking Fund, Recommendation to Award Contract for West Middle School Tennis Courts Reconstruction.** Mr. Noverr provided detailed information on the base bid and alternates from Apex Contractors, Inc. of Dorr, Michigan, in the amount of \$254,100 for the reconstruction of eight tennis courts at West Middle School contingent upon passage of the Building and Site Sinking Fund millage renewal on May 4, 2010. Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions pertaining to: the court locations, historical background on the initial installation and a

resurfacing project, trees and fencing around the courts, contractor reference checks, similar projects in the District, and confirmation the tennis courts will not impact the cross-country course.

**2010/11 Fiscal Planning, Financial Overview.** Mr. Noverr presented a budget impact analysis containing revenues and expenses for both best and worst case scenarios for the 2010/11 and 2011/12 school years. Trustee discussion and questions pertained to: salaries, balancing the budget, the retirement rate, fund balance, textbook purchases, acknowledging a starting point to prioritize potential future cuts in a transparent manner, the impact of an election year, minimizing borrowing and the loss of stimulus funds.

**2010/11 Fiscal Planning, Key Considerations:**

**Pay to Participate.** Dr. Perry provided background on a draft proposal that includes a combination of Pay To Participate (PTP), Activity Fee (AF), increased ticket prices, a potential reduction in salaries paid, and a reduction in operations budgets. Due to the uncertainty about funding from the State and other variables, no proposed dollar figures are included at this time. Trustee questions pertained to: specific sports, funds already paid for certain activities, cost and savings estimates, cost reductions and limitations, consequences of after school activities conflicting with sports, non-athletic designation, dissemination of information to families, percentages of students involved, the possibility of moving some high school classes to after school activities, and support for the burden to be shared by all students through an Activity Fee. Superintendent Wells noted this proposal will be discussed further with various groups and requested Trustees contact Dr. Perry with additional thoughts, questions and feedback.

**Transportation Adjustments for 2010/11.** Mr. Noverr discussed a concept being refined regarding transportation adjustments at the secondary level. These adjustments would consolidate bus stops in subdivisions resulting in cost savings in reduced miles driven and staff time. Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions pertaining to policy, safety concerns, and savings estimates. Superintendent Wells commented the Administration would move forward refining the concept if it met with the approval of the Board and all Trustees voiced approval.

**2010/11 Staffing Process.** Dr. Perry shared a draft timeline and procedures for the 2010/11 staffing process.

**COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood, a citizen and Parents for Excellence in the Performing Arts (PEPA) Facilitator, shared concern about the Pay To Participate (PTP) and Activity Fee (AF) requesting more details on the non-athletic group.

**Policy and Bylaw Revisions:**

**Policy 2.5, Financial Condition and Activities.** Mrs. Polderman led a discussion pertaining to two different suggested revisions to the Financial Condition and Activities Policy. Upon further dialogue, Mrs. Polderman asked that further revisions be submitted to her prior to the March 22 Board meeting.

**Policy 3.4, Agenda Planning.** Mrs. Polderman briefed the Board on specific date changes to the Agenda Planning Policy and Trustees voiced approval.

**Policy 3.9, Board Committee Structure.** Mrs. Polderman shared revisions made to the Policy regarding Board Committee Structure and upon discussion, President Posthumus requested that further proposed changes are sent to Mrs. Polderman.

**Policy 3.9, Addendum.** Mrs. Polderman provided background on the changes made to the Policy Addendum regarding the CEO Evaluation and Trustees agreed to attach the Evaluation Form to the Addendum.

**Appendix B.** Mrs. Polderman shared revisions made to the Appendix B evaluation form.

**Bylaws, Board Development.** Mrs. Polderman discussed suggested changes to the Board Development Bylaws.

**Bylaws, Board Vacancy.** Mrs. Polderman shared revisions to the School Board Vacancy Bylaws. Mrs. Polderman reminded Trustees to route further changes to any of these Policies and Bylaws to her attention.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent  
Recording Secretary