

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF PORT JERVIS**  
PORT JERVIS, NEW YORK

MEETING MINUTES

***April 4, 2017 Meeting***

The Regular Meeting/Budget Workshop of the Board of Education was held Tuesday, April 4, 2017 in the High School Cafeteria.

**Members Present:** Judith Amato  
Brian Dewey  
Deborah Lasch  
Valerie Maginsky  
Tanya Parker-Hughes  
Catherine Sadaghiani  
Florence Santini (arrived at 7:32 pm)  
William Smith (arrived at 6:02 pm)  
Robert Witherow

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** Thomas Bongiovi, Superintendent of Schools  
Cynthia Benedict, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Lorelei Case, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Kristen Lopez, Clerk of the Board  
Shannon Klotz, Student Representative

**Call to Order – Agenda Item 1**

President Lasch called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Motion to Enter into Executive Session – Agenda Item 2**

Brian Dewey moved, seconded by Valerie Maginsky to enter into executive session at 6:03 pm  
Motion carried with an 8-0-1 (Santini) vote.

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Tanya Parker-Hughes to close executive session at 7:04 pm. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

**Regular Session Resumes – Agenda Item 3**

Regular Session Resumed at 7:09 pm. Bill Smith led The Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence. President Lasch asked that we keep the Maginsky family in mind.

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Judy Amato to approve the Amended Agenda. Motion carried with a 7-0-2 (Santini, Sadaghiani) vote.

## **Presentations – Agenda Item 4**

Student Representative Shannon Klotz reported on the latest happenings and important dates at the High School.

HBE's Odyssey of the Mind Competitors gave a preview of the Competition Performance that they will be performing on Saturday, April 8 in Binghamton, NY at the OM State Competition.

## **Public Comment – Agenda Item 5**

**Taxpayer Joan McBride** expressed her opinion on the topic of the Administrative raises that are on this Agenda for vote, and her concern that the Board has lost sight of the taxpayers. She would like to see that money go to hiring teachers instead .

**ASK Second Grade Teacher Jenny McElroy's** topic of discussion was reduction of staff, and she asked the Board to reconsider filling the positions that will be vacant at the end of the school year due to ASK retirees. She suggested that the monies for this could come from using the reserve fund or maybe re-thinking the two new full-time administrative positions in the current budget and instead replacing the two retirees.

**Taxpayer Lynn Hendershot** voiced her concern regarding the budget presentations and the contracts. She asked the Board to set a budget amount for this meeting and to state clearly to the public what their wants and needs are for our district.

**Taxpayer, community member and parent Christine Piscitelli** spoke on her support of making the Athletic Director a full-time position. Since Mrs. Piscitelli's time ran out before finishing, the Board Members requested the District Clerk send a copy of her entire summation to them after the meeting so they could read it in its entirety.

**Taxpayer Linda VanHorn** also expressed her opinion on the topic of Administrative raises, and encouraged the Board to table the vote on the raises and states she, as well as many people in the community, would like to know the reasoning of the Board to approve these raises.

## **Administrative Reports – Agenda Item 6**

**Ms. Case** related that the Business Office staff has been occupied with year-end preparations. She thanked her staff for assisting in projections, close-outs and preparing for the next year.

The internal auditor has been notified of the 2016-2017 audit area. In preparation for the audit, board members and administrators were notified that they should have received a confidential questionnaire from Cooper and Arias, and asked the Members to complete the form and return it to them.

Ms. Case stated that in the last board packet, month-to-month and year-to-year data on the Food Service Program was provided to the board members. A board member requested clarification on the high school December to January results, and clarified that every month she meets with the Food Service Managers and reviews month-to-month serving data to confirm program results are stable. Sometimes the results are not supportive of stability so they review root causes of a decline or increase in meals served. They ask questions about attendance, delayed openings, testing and menu options. Asking these questions monthly allows the staff to make changes, if necessary, to address concerns if decreases cannot be explained by conditions. The review also allows them to identify positive menu changes that the District would want to continue. In the course of the review, year-to-year results are examined. These comparisons are reflective of the overall trend in the

District. In December, the High School had month-to-month declines in meals served. These results improved for January. Ms. Case explained that the number of December meals served is most likely attributed to two delayed opening days and attendance. The meals served improved in January.

Updating on Sullivan Avenue, Ms. Case states that the demolition continues.

On Monday, Administrators and Ms. Case met with SAVIN Engineers to review the elementary library projects. New York State has not approved the projects as of yet. Smartbond approval for the projects is still pending. Therefore, the ASK library will not begin in the Summer of 2017.

Lastly, Ms. Case wished the students, staff and families a safe and enjoyable holiday.

**Mrs. Benedict** announced an important reminder to parents to please register their children that are entering Kindergarten for the upcoming school year and to please check the registration dates & times that are posted on the homepage of our website. She also stated that NYS grades 3-8 ELA testing is almost completed, with tomorrow being the last date for make-ups. Our three buildings reported a decline in student refusals (opt-outs) compared to last year.

Upcoming events for parents/guardians to note:

- The HS is offering a Freshman Orientation on April 27th for our current 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents at 6PM. The staff will be available to meet with both parents & students. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit the HS & become more familiar with our programs.
- This Friday third marking period report cards will be distributed and the elementary schools have half day Parent Teacher Conferences scheduled in the afternoon.
- The MS 8<sup>th</sup> grade class trip to Washington DC is scheduled for April 7-9. A mandatory parent meeting was held last week and everyone is all set to go and looking forward to 3 days in DC.

Mrs. Benedict related that the MS Students had their 2017 Health and Wellness Fair on March 31. The Health Fair talks to students about healthy eating, lifestyles, and making smart decisions. Numerous community agencies, businesses, and service providers support and attend the Fair each year to talk about good health and good living. Students visit many tables, asking questions and listening to presentations. Students participated in meditation moments, balance and agility drills, and learned about eating healthy and staying away from illegal drugs. It was a very successful Fair and a great way to end the week.

Mrs. Benedict stated that she had the opportunity to attend Friday night's production of the HS Drama Club's production of Guys and Dolls and wanted to congratulate all those involved in the show. A special thank you was announced for Dana Long, Ruth Gordon and everyone who assisted, and she said it was a great show! Mrs. Benedict again encouraged the community to refer to our website for information about all PJ programs offered.

**Mr. Bongiovi** addressed the recent discussion of class size at all levels in our district, as well as the hope of some people that two elementary retirees be replaced due to a possibility of increased class sizes at the elementary level. He explained that he has been doing some research, both pro and con regarding the impact of class size reduction and studies revealing that there is no correlation between class size and improved student achievement, and other research in support of class size reduction. He stated that any debatable points for or against class size could be supported by the right selection of published research. However, the one factor universally supported by the world of research states unequivocally that the teacher is the #1 most influential factor in students' success. He stated that in the context of Port Jervis City Schools, longstanding staff reduction practice has been from retirements and not from firing individuals or excessing professional staff and that is again the proposal for the budget and staffing plan for the 2017-2018 school year. Central Administration will continue to support education efforts diligently, but at the same time, as Superintendent of Schools, he also has the responsibility of accomplishing that task within the confines of a budget provided and

approved by the residents of the District. Lastly, Mr. Bongiovi stated that no matter the size of the class, as long as the students have a good teacher, they will have the opportunity that we as a District always provide – the opportunity for success.

### **Agenda Item 7 - Consent Items**

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to approve Agenda Item 7 Consent items as follows. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote:

- a. Minutes from the March 21, 2017 Meeting of the Board of Education (Section 1, Minutes)**
- b. Committee on Special Education Minutes (Section 1, Minutes)**
  - **CPSE Meeting Dates:** *March: 3 (2017-2018 Revised), 20, 22 (2016-2017)*
  - **CSE Meeting Dates:** *February 8 (2017-2018); March: 3 (Revised), 6, 7(Revised), 9, 9(2017-2018), 13, 13(2017-2018), 16, 16(2017-2018), 17, 17(2017-2018), 20, 20(2017-2018), 21, 24*
- c. FMLA, Intermittent and Leave of Absences per Enclosures (Section 1, Personnel)**
- d. Disposal of Surplus Textbooks (Section 1, Other Consent)**
- e. Disposal of Outdated or Irreparable Equipment (Section 1, Other Consent)**

### **Agenda Item 8 - Appointments (Section 1, Personnel)**

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded Bob Witherow by to approve Agenda Item 8 as follows. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote:

#### **A. Instructional Staff**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Lisa Cunningham</b>
Position:	Earth Science Teacher
Assignment:	Middle School
Reason:	Vacancy No. 1965
Probation:	N/A
Effective:	On or About April 18, 2017 – June 23, 2017
Salary:	\$ 53,532 – Step 1
	1,500 – Masters
	<u>2,714</u> – Credits (59)
	\$ 57,746 (Prorated)

#### **B. Support Staff**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Amy Eckerson</b>
Position:	Food Service Helper Substitute
Assignment:	District Wide
Reason:	Per Diem
Probation:	N/A
Effective:	April 5, 2017 (pending fingerprint clearance)
Salary:	\$14.46 – Step 1

**Name:** Rebecca Nolan  
**Position:** Food Service Helper Substitute  
**Assignment:** District Wide  
**Reason:** Per Diem  
**Probation:** N/A  
**Effective:** April 5, 2017  
**Salary:** \$14.46 – Step 1

**Name:** Stacy Shaffer  
**Position:** Food Service Helper Substitute  
**Assignment:** District Wide  
**Reason:** Per Diem  
**Probation:** N/A  
**Effective:** April 5, 2017 (pending fingerprint clearance)  
**Salary:** \$14.46 – Step 1

### **C. Home Instructional Staff for the 2016-2017 School Year**

Joseph Becker	Heather Gass	Timothy Leonard
Diane Bloodgood	Regina Gibson	Kathy Little
Carol Brown	Tony Goff	Jenny McElroy
Nancy Caporusso	Sarah Grieb	Nancy Northup
Kathy Conboy	Caitlyn Gunderman	Elke O'Connell
Joseph Coniglio	Jason Gunderman	Christine Piscitelli
Erin Cross	Jody Hanlon	Nina Scudieri
Judy Dawson	Eric Hartmann	Mark Trotta
Mike Dunleavy	Amy Hoverstock	Lisa Vilord
Christine Fini	Tammy Lara	Tracy West-Barnes

#### **Agenda Item 9 - Resolution to Accept the Connect Kids Grant Program Award of \$1,224.80 (Enclosure no. 1)**

Tanya Parker-Hughes moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to approve Agenda Item 9. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

#### **Agenda Item 10 - Approval of PJTA Contract Ratification - Roll Call Vote (Enclosure no. 2a)**

Brian Dewey moved, seconded by Valerie Maginsky to approve Agenda Item 10. Roll Call Vote as follows:

Ayes: Amato, Dewey, Lasch, Maginsky, Parker-Hughes, Sadaghiani, Santini, Smith, Witherow. Nays: None

Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

#### **Agenda Item 11 – Approval of Side Letter of Agreement between the Board of Education and the PJTA Concerning National Junior Honor Society (Enclosure no. 2b)**

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 11. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

#### **Agenda Item 12 – Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of \$3,000,000 of Excess Fund Balance to the Capital Reserve Fund (Enclosure no. 3a)**

Tanya Parker-Hughes moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 12. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 13 – Approval of Resolution Authorizing the Expenditure of \$125,000 of Fund Balance to Pay a Portion of the Cost of a Certain Capital Project (Enclosure no. 3b)**

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Bill Smith to approve Agenda Item 13. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 14 - Approval of the Orville G. Morgan Jr. Scholarship (Enclosure no. 4)**

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 14. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 15 – Approval to Apply Herbicide Treatment to Glennette Field at the PJMS (Enclosure no. 5)**

Bob Witherow moved, seconded by Valerie Maginsky to approve Agenda Item 15. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 16 - Resolution for PJCS D to Appoint Orange-Ulster Cooperative Bid Committee to Represent the District to Bid Jointly for General Supplies, Paper Supplies, Cafeteria Supplies, Custodial Supplies, Health Supplies, Milk, Ice Cream, Bread and Building Materials for the Period Beginning July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 (Enclosure no. 6)**

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Tanya Parker-Hughes to approve Agenda Item 16. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 17 - Approval of Contract between the Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Network and the Port Jervis City School District (Enclosure no. 7)**

Tanya Parker-Hughes moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to approve Agenda Item 17. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 18 - Approval of Donation of Commercial Grade Popcorn Machine to PJHS SADD (Enclosure no. 8)**

Judy Amato moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 18. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 19 - Adoption of revised NYSED CAP (Corrective Action Plan) (Enclosure no. 9)**

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Valerie Maginsky to approve Agenda Item 19. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 20 - Approval of Professional Development Plan for the 2016-2017 School Year (Enclosure 10)**

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Bill Smith to approve Agenda Item 20. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 21 - Discussion on date(s) of Building Tours**

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to bring discussion of this Item to the floor. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote. Dates available for tours are Tuesday, April 11 at 9am, Thursday April 13 at 1pm and Tuesday, April 18 at 6pm. Sign-up sheets were passed around to the Members to sign up.

**Agenda Item 22 - Approval of Central Office Administration Salary Adjustment Retroactive to July 1, 2016 for Assistant Superintendent for Business Lorelei Case for \$730 addition to current salary and an additional 3%**

Bob Witherow moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 22. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

**Agenda Item 23 - Approval of Central Office Administration Salary Adjustment Retroactive to July 1 2016 for Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Cynthia Benedict for 3%**

Bill Smith moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 23. Brian Dewey moved, seconded by Tanya Parker-Hughes to Table this Item. Motion to table defeated with a 4-5(Lasch, Maginsky, Sadaghiani, Smith, Witherow) vote.

Motion to approve Agenda Item 23 carried with a 5-4(Amato, Dewey, Parker-Hughes, Santini) vote.

**Agenda Item 24 - Approval of Central Office Administration Salary Adjustment Retroactive to July 1, 2016 for Superintendent Thomas M. Bongiovi for 5%**

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Bob Witherow to approve Agenda Item 24. Brian Dewey moved, seconded by Tanya Parker-Hughes to Table this Item. Motion to table defeated with a 4-5(Lasch, Maginsky, Sadaghiani, Smith, Witherow) vote.

Motion to approve Agenda Item 24 carried with a 5-4(Amato, Dewey, Parker-Hughes, Santini) vote.

**Agenda Item 25 – Committee/Liaison Reports:**

**Policy Committee Liaison Cathy Sadaghiani** states the next Policy Committee meeting will be April 27 at 11 am at Thompson Street.

**Safety Committee and Health/Wellness Committee Liaison Flo Santini** stated that meetings are coming up soon. Report to follow.

**Port Jervis Liaison Valerie Maginsky** reminded the public that there is a Common Council meeting on April 10 at 7:30 pm.

**Deerpark Liaison Flo Santini** reported that the reason she was late to the Board Meeting this evening because she was attending the Crime Victim's Candelight Vigil in Deerpark. She stated that it was a moving ceremony, put on by the Department of Probation and emceed by David Hoover. Crime victims' family members spoke out, Chief Cherry read the victim's names, Orange County Color Guard played the bagpipes, and a pear tree was planted at the Senior Center, which Mrs. Santini encouraged everyone to come to the Center to see. She stated that over 100 people attended the ceremony. She thanked participants for taking part and the Department of Probation for hosting this event and encouraged the public to take part in next year's ceremony.

**Education Liaison Bob Witherow** noted that the next Education Committee meeting will be held Thursday, April 6 at 9:30 am at the Middle School. Report to follow.

**OCSBA & NYSSBA Liaison Bill Smith** relayed that some of the bills that he had reported on at previous meetings are being held up in the Senate, and some are at a stalemate. He does feel that the ELL votes will go through easily. He gave the numbers for the Senate switchboard (518)455-2800 and the Assembly switchboard (518)455-4100 for the public to advocate for the bills or to express their opinions.

**Agenda Item 26 - Board Member Comments**

**Member Judy Amato** showed a graph that she had made from the data that was received by the Board relating to TASC program attendance. She said by looking at the graph you could clearly see that a large number of the students in the program are not attending half of the time. She stated that we should think about that when we are thinking of continuing to spend the amount of money to fund this program. She said that at this time she could not continue to further support this program.

**Member Tanya Parker-Hughes** went to the production of Guys and Dolls and wanted to thank the many members of the community who gave of their time to participate in the play. She also wanted to publicly thank the speakers who signed up for Public Comment. She acknowledged that it is not easy to speak in a public forum, but she does truly like to hear their feedback and opinions. She wished to congratulate Nicole Ey for her receiving her award. She stated that for her final note, she wanted to ask the question of why tonight's agenda items 22, 23 and 24 were not on a previous Agenda. Board President Debbie Lasch said that she believed this to be because they were waiting for the Teacher's contract to be ratified and approved, as it was earlier tonight, before the items were put on the Agenda and the Teacher's contract was not completed in time to be put on an earlier Agenda for approval.

**Member Bill Smith** commended Mrs. Ey on her award and stated that it was a testament to our District. He also stated that he enjoyed tonight's OM performance and that he loves the Odyssey of the Mind program and previously participated as a judge himself. He wished the best of luck to our HBE OM Team at their upcoming competition. Lastly, he stated he fully supports the full-time Athletic Director Position and thanked Christine Piscitelli for her comments during Public Comment. He is also in favor of the Data Coordinator position.

**Member Valerie Maginsky** read additional information that was just gathered about the TASC program. She relayed a "day in the life" of a student attending the TASC program and a recommendation and report from Mr. Gotham, who heads the program. She also clarified that even though there are 10 active students in the program, some are not eligible to take the TASC graduation exam until after the original date of their scheduled graduation (had they stayed enrolled in HS). She pointed out that the students taking the TASC graduation exam have to travel to other locations to take the exam; it is not offered in-house. She stated that 80% of the students enrolled in TASC program have jobs and are balancing work schedules with TASC classes.

**Member Cathy Sadaghiani** congratulated Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Prundl, and our student representatives Abigail Ilizirov and Shannon Klotz for their participation in the play, and to Shannon also for her ADAC poster contest win. She congratulated the members of the HBE OM team and wished them luck going to states. Mrs. Sadaghiani is very, very proud of Nicole Ey and congratulated her. She is in agreement with Christine Piscitelli's comments during Public Comment. As to the concerns of the elementary community – please realize that the numbers in the classrooms will not be staggering; you may be up three or four students max or down up to as many as five in the classroom based on the referenced chart, and she does not feel that it will be detrimental to the teacher or students.

**Member Brian Dewey** attended the Guys and Dolls production and wanted to say congratulations and thumbs up – he really enjoyed the show. HBE OM Leader Mrs. Kahmar as well as the OM teachers were thanked for the mind-boggling amount of time spent helping the students with their competition problem skit. Mr. Dewey also stated that he does not agree with not hiring teachers to replace those retiring, but would like to discuss it further in the budget workshop. He thanked all who spoke during Public Comment and stated there was great input on many topics, and he may have even changed his position on the full-time AD because of Mrs. Piscitelli's comments.

**Member Debbie Lasch** also thanked those who spoke in Public Comment. She feels that all of the kids in our District are great, and thanked the staff for all of their hard work and she knows they do it



because they love the kids. She stated that she is sympathetic to the concern of the community, but she states that she truly believes in what we are doing here, and even with the dissension, she always bases her decisions on the betterment of our kids.

#### **Agenda Item 27 - Dates to Remember**

President Lasch read the dates to remember.

#### **Agenda Item 28 - Adjournment**

Tanya Parker-Hughes moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to adjourn the Regular meeting at 8:53 pm and re-enter Executive Session following the budget presentation/workshop. There will be no action taken after executive. Motion carried with a 9-0-0 vote.

#### **Agenda Item 29 – Budget Presentation/Workshop**

There was a Budget Presentation/Workshop after the Adjournment of this meeting.

**The Port Jervis City School District Board of Education will hold its next meeting on THURSDAY, April 20, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Cafeteria. The purpose of this meeting will be for the BOCES Budget Vote and for the Board to Adopt the Budget for the 2017-2018 school year.**

Transcribed by *Kristen M. Lopez*  
Kristen M. Lopez, Clerk of the Board  
*Port Jervis Board of Education*

04/04/2017