

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

MEETING MINUTES

May 2, 2017 Meeting

The Regular Meeting/Budget Workshop of the Board of Education was held Tuesday, May 2, 2017 in the High School Cafeteria.

Members Present: Judith Amato
Brian Dewey
Deborah Lasch
Valerie Maginsky
Tanya Parker-Hughes
Catherine Sadaghiani
Florence Santini
Robert Witherow

Members Absent: William Smith

Others Present: Thomas Bongiovi, Superintendent of Schools
Cynthia Benedict, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Lorelei Case, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Abigail Ilizirov, Senior Student Representative
Shannon Klotz, Junior Student Representative
Deborah Rutt

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

Tanya Parker-Hughes moved, seconded by Flo Santini to enter Executive Session at 6:01 pm.
Motion carried with an 8-0-1(Smith) vote.

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to close Executive Session at 7:05 pm.
Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

Public Budget Hearing – Agenda Item 3

President Lasch called the Public Budget Hearing to order at 7:10 pm.

Ms. Case gave the Budget Presentation. Ms. Linda VanHorn signed up for public comment, speaking on the topic of the budget in the capacity of taxpayer of the district.

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to close the Public Budget Hearing at 7:29 pm.

Regular Session Resumes – Agenda Item 4

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Flo Santini to resume Regular Session at 7:29 pm. Flo Santini moved, seconded by Valerie Maginsky to accept the Amended Agenda. Abigail Ilizirov led The Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

Presentations – Agenda Item 5

Student Representatives Abigail Ilizirov and Shannon Klotz reported on the upcoming events at Port Jervis High School.

Jaclyn Ellefsen presented on Model Schools.

Public Comment – Agenda Item 6

Taxpayer Linda Van Horn spoke about why she was not in favor of this year's budget and recommended that people get out and vote and said whom she would be voting for.

Residents Ian Gardner, Brandon Benson, Lindsay Carroll, Lisa Randazzo and Barry Benson all spoke on the lack of drug and alcohol education in our community as a result of the tragedies related to the drug epidemic in Port Jervis, and offered suggestions and ideas for better educational programs for the students and community members to raise awareness of the epidemic.

Administrative Reports – Agenda Item 7

Mrs. Benedict addressed issues that were brought up at previous BOE meetings. She stated that it was her intention to provide accurate information so that the taxpayers could make informed decisions when voting on the upcoming school budget.

At the April 21st meeting, Mrs. Benedict relayed that it was stated several times that the 2017-2018 budget is cutting 5 teachers, and that statement was inaccurate. She clarified the following:

- 5 teachers will be retiring this June and one teacher in January 2018. That is a total of 6 teacher retirements for the next school year
- Based on class size projections for next year (2017-2018), 2 new teachers will be hired for September and the January retirement will be replaced
- Therefore 3 of the 6 positions due to retirement will not be filled

At the last BOE Meeting during public comment, a speaker expressed concern about adding an administrator and compared PJ to Goshen school district. The speaker stated that the Goshen district is a similar sized school district and does not currently have a technology director and that the Goshen Assistant Superintendent's title includes Instruction, Curriculum and Technology. The speaker requested an explanation why Goshen can run their district without a Director of Technology position and PJ has this position in the new budget. Mrs. Benedict stated that the structure of the Central Administration at Goshen mirrors PJ. Both PJ and Goshen have a Superintendent, and 2 assistant superintendents, one for Business and one for Instruction. A significant difference is that Central Administrative expenses at Goshen exceeds those in Port by \$251,356.00. This is more than the cost of a Director of Technology and Data Analysis which was proposed in the upcoming PJ budget. She further added that the speaker chose to compare Port and Goshen however, Goshen has almost 300 more students than Port. And there are other substantial differences. While Goshen Central School District is considered an average needs district, Port is a high needs school district. Demographics from the two districts are very different and therefore educational programs cannot be equitably compared. It was also stated by the speaker that PJ has more administrators than Goshen, 13 – 10 respectively. Mrs. Benedict states that the statement was also inaccurate. Port has 15 administrative positions, and as per Mrs. Benedict's discussion with the Goshen Assistant

Superintendent for Instruction, Goshen has 17 administrators, plus a full-time data coordinator position. In the area of technology, Goshen has a K-12 Technology Coordinator, an Educational Technology Specialist plus a computer-teaching assistant *in each school*.

Mrs. Benedict pointed out that every school district, large or small, has independent variables based on demographics that determine the most effective program model for that district. It is not effective or productive to compare Goshen and PJ to determine the programs our district needs to support learning and teaching. She stated that PJ has a completely different profile compared to Goshen; Our student population is more that 65% economically disadvantaged and our SWD is almost at 20% compared to Goshen's profile with economically disadvantaged students at about 20% and SWD at less than 14%. This vast disparity requires that we provide our students with different supports and different programs. Our high percentage of economically disadvantaged students provides us with Title I funding, making Port subject to more state and federal oversight. This accountability requires us to provide far more data reporting and collation than a non-title school. These accountability demands assure that we receive the proper state aid and use the funds according to the federal guidelines. The community needs to focus on our own history and traditions, our own community values and our own students to decide what works best for PJ. Mrs. Benedict opined that if we consider our unique backgrounds we will determine how to best support our Port students; we can't simply look at other districts solely because it is almost the same size and say let's do what they are doing. She stated that our goal has always been to develop educational programs that will set our students up for success and enable them to compete for colleges and careers with students from every school district, and applauded the BOE for including the full-time administrative position in the 2017-18 school budget and for having the foresight to see that a Technology Director is both critical and a cost-effective position for Port Jervis.

Mr. Bongiovi stated that he attended the BOCES Senior Scholarship Humanities Breakfast, and congratulated Lili DeGraw and Kaitlyn May for being honored this year. He extended his thanks to the teachers and staff members who were able to join him to honor our students.

Mr. Bongiovi reminded the public that the Kuykendall Awards ceremony would be on Friday, May 5 at 9:30 am at the Middle School. He also stated that he and Ms. Case have been on the road, bringing the budget presentation to the public and relayed the upcoming dates and locations for the remaining dates, in case anyone wanted to catch them on "the road".

Mr. Bongiovi extended thanks to Mr. Marotta, Mrs. Nyland and Mr. Rickard, as well as the entire HS Faculty and Staff who were on hand to assist the students during the freshman orientation program, which he attended recently. He stated that the program was beautifully presented and put together, and that the HS is always improving the presentation from year to year and they did a great job. He also thanked our public comment speakers tonight, especially Ian and Brandon. He stated it was good to see them so well, and he echoed their comments that this is a community issue as well as a country issue. He stated that we have come a long way with programs since they were in school here, and we are headed in the right direction with education, but that we still had a long way to go.

Lastly, Mr. Bongiovi shared that they would be accepting Mrs. Benedict's retirement request on July 29th, and shared that she came to Port Jervis 11 years ago as the Assistant Principal at the Middle School, then was the Principal there for many years after that and has been doing a great job as the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and that we all wish her the very best in her retirement.

Agenda Item 8 - Consent Items

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Flo Santini to approve Agenda Item 8 Consent items as follows. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote:

- a. Minutes from the April 20, 2017 Meeting of the Board of Education (Section 1, Minutes)**

b. Committee on Special Education Minutes (Section 1, Minutes)

- **CPSE Meeting Dates:** *April: 18*
- **CSE Meeting Dates:** *March: 30(2017-2018)
April: 6, 6(2017-2018), 7(2017-2018), 18, 19, 19 (2017-2018)*

c. Financial Reports for March, 2017 (Section 1, Financial Reports):

- Treasurer's Report (Section 1, FR-1)
- Appropriation Status Detail Report (Section 1, FR-2)
- Revenue Status Report (Section 1, FR-3)
- Check Warrant Report (Section 1, FR-4)
- Budget Transfer Schedule Report (Section 1, FR-5)

d. FMLA, Intermittent and Leave of Absences per Enclosures (Section 1, Personnel)

e. Retirement:

Name: Cynthia Benedict (11 years)
Position: Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Assignment: District Administration Office
Effective: July 29, 2017

Appointments (Section 1, Personnel) – Agenda Item 9

Judy Amato moved, seconded by Cathy Sadaghiani to approve Agenda Item 9 as follows. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote:

A. Support Staff

Name: Shawn Galligan
Position: Cleaner - Probationary
Assignment: District Wide – B&G
Reason: Vacancy No. 1973
Probation: 8-26 weeks
Effective: May 3, 2017
Salary: \$15.07 – Step 1
.25 (2nd shift diff.)
.15 (heavy lifting)
\$15.47

Name: Carlona Haggerty
Position: Cleaner - Probationary
Assignment: District Wide – B&G
Reason: Vacancy No. 1970
Probation: 8-26 weeks
Effective: May 3, 2017
Salary: \$15.07 – Step 1
.25 (2nd shift diff.)
.15 (heavy lifting)
\$15.47

Name: James Lain
Position: Cleaner Substitute

Assignment: District Wide – B&G
Reason: Per Diem
Probation: N/A
Effective: May 3, 2017 (pending fingerprint clearance)
Salary: \$15.07 – Step 1

Name: Dominick Pascullo – Leave Replacement
Position: Social Studies Teacher
Assignment: Middle School
Reason: Vacancy No. 1974
Probation: N/A
Effective: May 11, 2017 – June 23, 2017
Salary: \$54,201 – Step 1 (Prorated)

B. Substitute Teachers/RNs:

Ross Potter – “A” Substitute Robert Breault – “C” Substitute Diane Cole-RN

C. Home Instructional Staff for the 2016-2017 School Year – Vacancy No. 1975 - \$41.04/hr.

Claire Dillon Michele Grabiec Anthony DiGiantommaso

D. Stipend Positions for the 2017-2018 School Year

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Deborah Rutt	School District Treasurer	\$8,801
Kathy Smith	Internal Claims Auditor	\$6,153
Kristen Lopez	School District Clerk	\$5,150
Michele O'Donnell	Budget Vote & Election Preparation	\$2,880

Resolution to Approve the Terms and Conditions of Employment for Confidential and Administrative Employees as follows: (Enclosure no. 1) - Agenda Item 10

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Brian Dewey to approve Agenda Item 10. Motion carried with An 8-0-1 vote.

Adoption of 2017-2018 Board of Education Meeting Schedule (Enclosure no. 2) - Agenda Item 11

Cathy Sadaghiani moved, seconded by Tanya Parker-Hughes to approve and adopt Agenda Item 11. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

Committee/Liaison Reports (as available) - Agenda Item 12

Policy Committee Liaison Cathy Sadaghiani reported that the Committee met on April 27th. The March Minutes will go out with the next Board packets. They reviewed two policies, one was on Title 1 Parent Engagement, and one was to delete Fluoride distribution, which is no longer being done. Mr. Preiss is working on Facilities Policy 5630 with BOCES and states all school districts are in the same boat, so action on this policy is therefore tabled, but he did state that whatever is decided will need to become part of the Emergency Management Plan.

Mrs. Sadaghiani states that since they have been unable to find a crowd-funding policy in surrounding school districts that the committee is going to tweek what they have found in North Carolina and come up with one specific to the PJCS D. The three tabled policies from February remain so. The committee is checking with Quality Bus to make sure their surveillance cameras will comply with the suggested policy, and have also asked Mr. Hipsman to work on forming a committee

to look into revising our attendance policy and are checking with other county agency regarding education on head lice before we put those policies in place.

The committee has also had time to review Policies 7515-7540, and Mrs. Sadaghiani states that Mrs. Pagano has made sure that the table of contents on Policies are up to date, and stated that Mrs. Pagano is truly an invaluable member of the committee. The next meeting is May 23 at 11 am at Thompson Street.

Health/Wellness Committee report was given by Mrs. Benedict who states that the Committee met on April 18th in the Library and they had representation from all four buildings and there were presentations from the four outside agencies that are part of the Committee, as well as all building levels reporting on the various events they have going on in their buildings in the coming months. Moving forward, Mrs. Benedict states that one of the goals of the Committee is to create a more appealing cafeteria environment in the buildings and to promote healthy food options in all of our cafeterias.

Port Jervis Liaison Valerie Maginsky reminded the public that May 6 was the city-wide yard sale from 9 am-4 pm, and that on May 11th at 7pm was the program "Battling the Heroin Epidemic in our Community" at the Drew Methodist Church. Also, on May 13th, she encourages anyone who is willing to donate a bit of their time between 9 and 11 am to come to Riverside Park with their rakes and shovels to help in the general clean-up of the Park.

Deerpark Liaison Flo Santini stated that Deerpark is quiet, but that the bridge is still closed on 92/47, urging the public to be careful. She reminded the public that this past weekend was the NYC/JFK first inaugural Honor Flight, which took 88 Veterans from JFK to Washington DC. Mrs. Santini made the trip to JFK to welcome the Veteran's back after their flight, and hopes that they continue flights out of JFK.

Board Member Comments - Agenda Item 13

Member Debbie Lasch thanked everyone who got up to speak during public comment, and would like all to know that the Board is hearing what you are saying, and as long as she sits on this Board she will support any initiative to help our kids and educate them. She stated that raising kids is tough and we all need to do what we can to teach them from a very young age that drugs are not the right choice to make and she's looking forward to working with everyone in the hope that we can really make a difference with our kids and the drug epidemic in our community.

President Lasch thanked those Board Members who turned in their evaluations at this meeting, and reminded everyone that the remainder are due by the next meeting. If any Members need an evaluation form, please contact Board Clerk Kristen Lopez for a copy.

Member Bob Witherow wanted to congratulate Cindy Benedict on her retirement and hopes she has many happy years of retirement. He also thanked all of the speakers at tonight's meeting.

Member Judy Amato stated that she also supports educating our kids more about drugs and fully supports talking and doing more as a whole Board.

Member Tanya Parker Hughes stated that she also supports increased education for alcohol and drug abuse and welcomes the opportunity to serve our community. She congratulated Cindy Benedict on her retirement, but stated that as a Board Member she was disappointed to hear of said retirement as an Agenda Item instead of from an email sent to the Board directly from her.

Member Flo Santini thanked everyone that came out this meeting to speak to the Members. She stated that everyone in the community has been affected by this and it has touched everyone's lives. She said that as much as we wish we could blink an eye and it would all go away, it won't and the more we can get together and do something about it, the better. She stated that she wishes she had an answer for it, but she doesn't know what it is, but if someone out there does have an answer, she is on board to listen. Whatever we can do, we are willing to do it.

Member Cathy Sadaghiani commented that she was very moved by the two former students who spoke this evening, and hopefully there is something we can do to instill in all the kids the dangers of drugs and alcohol. She stated that she attended a presentation at the Middle School where family members of addicts told their stories of how the addiction affected them and she hoped the message got through to the 7th and 8th graders that day, and she feels these programs are something that we need to continue.

Mrs. Sadaghiani also extended sincere congratulations to Mrs. Benedict on her retirement. She also wanted to address Mr. Benson's question and answer that she believes that all of our school nurses have Narcan and have been instructed in its use.

Member Valerie Maginsky followed up on the discussion of drug and alcohol abuse in the area of Operation PJ Pride. She stated that in 2013, Operation PJ Pride was initiated after a period like we are going through now, where people were dying from drug overdoses. She stated that here we are, in 2017, and we are going through a similar issue. She believes, however, that the time difference between 2013 and 2017 has been a sea change because when they started, drug addiction wasn't something that was talked about, it was quiet, and as a result, deadly and she feels that Chief Worden and his commentary that "you can't arrest your way out of the issue" and Martin Colavito from Catholic Charities phrase that "Prevention is the only way to stop it – you stop it before it starts" are helpful. These days there is a three-prong approach: Prevention, addressing the issue with regards to the dealers and finding rehab for those ready to go for it. She stated that our local hospitals are working very hard to find help if help cannot be found locally. She stated that the grants we receive yearly help immensely with the prevention process, and that our schools have been a working partner with the coalition since it started. She encouraged everyone to become involved and to come to the next open meeting, being held May 18th at 12:30 at the Erie. She states everyone comes together, buys lunch, and proceeds to have good conversations, discussing the problem and working towards solutions.

Member Brian Dewey reported that he had the pleasure to attend this year's Senior Class trip to Disney World. He wanted to say that he has been on this trip many times, and he knows how hard it is to get 70 some odd students through Disney World with 7 or 8 chaperones, but that the trip is a well-oiled machine because of Deb Cassara and Jim Santos. He wanted to thank this year's chaperones, as well as the students who were all so well behaved. He stated that he was very happy to be a part of this year's trip.

Dates to Remember - Agenda Item 14

President Lasch read the dates to remember.

Adjournment - Agenda Item 15

Tanya Parker Hughes moved, seconded by Judy Amato, to adjourn the Regular meeting at 8:45 pm. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

The Board agreed to re-enter Executive Session at 8:50 with a motion by Tanya Parker-Hughes, seconded By Judy Amato. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

Flo Santini moved, seconded by Valerie Maginsky to close Executive Session at 9:26 pm. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

Brian Dewey moved, seconded by Flo Santini to adjourn at 9:27. Motion carried with an 8-0-1 vote.

The Port Jervis City School District Board of Education will hold its next Meeting on Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Cafeteria. The Purpose of this meeting is the Regular Meeting/Canvass of the Vote.

Transcribed by *Kristen M. Lopez*

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

05/02/2017