

Minutes for the Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held in the High School Auditorium on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

I. Mr. called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

The regular monthly Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District Board of Directors on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, is now called to order.

II. Mr. Carpenter asked all present to rise for the Flag salute-please.

III. Mr. Carpenter read the following notice This meeting is being recorded for District purposes. It is or may be published in part or in its entirety on the District's website without the express permission of meeting participants.

IV. Roll Call

Mr. John Carpenter, President
Mr. William Metz, Vice President
Ms. Valerie Young, Treasurer
Mrs. Cathy Fischer
Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe
Mr. Garrett Kovacevic
Mrs. Kelly Romasco
Mr. Mathew Zatchey

Others Present:

Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent
Dr. Amy Filipowski, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor
Mrs. Michelle Amadio, Business Manager / Director of Operations
Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

V. Mrs. Mueller read the following Sunshine Law

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session on Wednesday, September 18th to discuss:

- Personnel matter(s)
- Matters subject to attorney-client privilege and other confidentiality laws
- Litigation or threatened litigation matters
- Salary schedule and labor relations

VI. Correspondence

No Correspondence

VII. Motion to accept or correct the Minutes of Wednesday, August 14th Meet and Discuss Voting and Non-Voting Meeting and Wednesday, August 21st Board Meeting

Ms. Young moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Metz. The vote in favor was unanimous with Mr. Zatchey abstaining.

VIII. Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report dated: August 2024

Mr. Zatchey moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Kovacevic. All in favor.

IX. Amendment/Addendum to Agenda/Approval of Agenda

Tabled item 4 under Finance and Budget

Mr. Kovacevic moved to table item 4 under Finance and Budget, seconded by Mr. Metz. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Amended item 3 under Personnel to be effective with current pay period.

Mr. Kovacevic moved to amend, seconded by Mrs. Romasco. All in favor.

X. Recognition/Presentation

Boys State and Boys Nation
Anthony Speicher, 12th Grade

Presentation by ABC Transit

Public Comment (Regarding Agenda Items Only)

At this time, DISTRICT RESIDENTS may come forward to comment on agenda items only. Each person must state their first and last name and address prior to speaking. Each resident will be allowed three minutes and can speak only once. This period for public comment prior to the standing committee reports will be limited to one-half hour. Although not required, board members desiring to address questions or concerns may do so after the residents’ comments/questions or at the conclusion of the committee reports. There will still be an opportunity for residents to comment on any business relevant to the Ambridge Area School District under Old and New Business at the end of the meeting.

No Comment

XI. Committee Reports**Education and Technology****Mrs. Romasco**1. Sweetwater Center for the Arts Program

It is recommended to approve a program between the Ambridge Area High School and Sweetwater Center for the Arts in Sewickley, PA to bring digital arts to the district's high school art students. This is at no cost to the district.

Mrs. Romasco moved to approve item 1, seconded by Mr. Kovacevic. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Finance and Budget**Mr. Zatchey**1. School District Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly school district bills in the amount of \$1,693,400.58 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$983,552.28 be paid.

2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria bills in the amount of \$142,074.76 and the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$14,774.94 be paid.

3. Tax Exoneration

It is recommended to approve the tax exoneration regarding the collection of Real Estate Tax, conditioned upon mutual municipal and county reciprocal exoneration for the same years, relevant to the following property:

- a) Tax Parcel 13-005-0318-000, 391 Prospect Street, Baden, PA, for the real estate taxes for 2022 and 2023, purchased by Baden Borough.

4. Tax Exoneration - **TABLED**

It is recommended to approve the Borough of Ambridge's request dated August 6, 2024, to exonerate delinquent 2024 school taxes pursuant to the Pennsylvania Property Donation Statute for the following tax parcels, with the condition that should either property sell in the future to a non-tax exempt entity, a pro-rata share of the proceeds will be remitted to the District, less the Borough's direct costs of acquisition.

- a) Tax Parcel 12-006-0101-010, 0 Merchant Street, Ambridge, PA
- b) Tax Parcel 12-006-0101-002, 1401 New Economy Drive, Ambridge, PA

Mr. Metz moved to approve items 1-3, as amended, seconded by Ms. Young. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Building and Grounds

Mr. Metz

1. Economy Elementary HVAC Units

It is recommended to accept a proposal from Building Control Systems, Inc. to replace and program two existing Trane Rooftop Units at Economy Elementary. This is at a total cost of \$36,420.00 through the State bidding process (Co-Stars).

2. Riding Floor Scrubber

It is recommended to accept a proposal from Castle Maintenance Products for a Riding Floor Scrubber for the high school. This is at a total cost of \$10,995.00 through the State bidding process (Co-Stars).

Mr. Metz moved to approved items 1-2, seconded by Mrs. Fischer. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Athletics

Mrs. Fischer

Public Relations

Miss Fitsko

Steering and Rules

Mrs. Kehoe

Legislation

Miss Fitsko

1. PSBA Officer Elections

It is recommended the Board Secretary be directed to cast the vote of the Ambridge Area School Board for the election of the following PSBA Slate of Candidates for 2025:

President-elect Sabrina Backer, Franklin Area School District

Vice President Matt Vannoy, Sharon City School District

Western Zone Kristy Bolte

Insurance Trust Nathan Mains
 Richard Frerichs
 William LaCoff

Mrs. Fischer moved to approve item 1, seconded by Ms. Young. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Salary Schedule and Labor Relations

Mr. Kovacevic

Personnel

Ms. Young

***ALL NEW HIRES, PENDING RECEIPT OF SATISFACTORY AND CURRENT CLEARANCES, SATISFACTORY DRUG SCREENING, TB TESTING, RESPONSES BY CURRENT/FORMER EMPLOYERS TO ACT 168 SCREENING, AND PDE CERTIFICATIONS IF APPLICABLE.**

1. Posted Positions: Clubs / Activities

It is recommended the following individuals who have applied for the specified posted positions for the 2024-2025 school year be approved at the rate of pay as per the collective bargaining agreement, provided the school year allows and sponsors can hold activities as normal.

<u>ACTIVITY/CLUB (High School)</u>		<u>SALARY</u>
Senior High School Play Director	Jessica Patterson	\$2,050.00
JR Drill Team	Emily Gregory	\$1,200.00
Thespian Club	Jessica Patterson	\$ 470.00
Ecology Club	Pamela Green	\$ 470.00

<u>ACTIVITY/CLUB (Middle School)</u>		<u>SALARY</u>
MathCounts	Noah Rinker	\$1,100.00
TSA Club	Scott Setzenfand	\$ 470.00
Newspaper	Amy Braund	\$ 470.00
Student Council	Sara Yannessa	\$ 470.00

2. Clubs / Activities Co-Sponsor Ratification

It is recommended to ratify Pamela Green as an additional co-sponsor, in addition to Ben Holmes and Kristen Holmes who were previously approved, for the Technology Student Association (TSA) Club. The stipend should be split as follows:

- Pamela Green - \$450.00
- Ben Holmes – \$450.00
- Kristin Holmes - \$450.00

3. Salary Increase

It is recommended the Cafeteria Non-Contractual Workers hourly pay rate be increased, effective for the current pay period, as follows:

<u>Current Pay Rate per Hour</u>	<u>Proposed Pay Rate per Hour</u>
Starting rate at \$10.00	Starting rate to increase to \$11.00
Middle rate at \$10.25	Middle rate to increase to \$11.25
Top rate at \$10.40	Top rate is to increase to \$11.40

4. Paraprofessional

It is recommended to ratify the following individuals as a Paraprofessionals as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Support Professional Association (ESPA/PSEA/NEA), pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

Anton Deluca, Middle School, effective date September 16, 2024

Sayra Frausto-Marquez, Highland Elementary, effective date September 17, 2024

5. Credit Recovery

It is recommended that the following individual be approved as instructor for the Credit Recovery Program at the high school. Teachers will be paid as per the collective bargaining agreement.

Pamela Green – Science

6. 2024-2025 Musical Staffing

It is recommended to approve the following musical staffing positions for the 2024-2025 musical at the designated stipend, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening:

Play Director	Jessica Patterson	\$3,000.00
Music Director	Robert Armstrong	\$1,800.00
Assistant Director	Andrea Cary	\$1,200.00
Producer	Todd Hartman	\$1,500.00
Choreographer	Elyse Perciavalle	\$1,200.00
Technical Director	Jacob Craig	\$1,200.00

7. Retirement

It is recommended to accept the resignation of Tammy Zalewsky, due to her retirement from the position of a 5.25 hour cafeteria cook at the high school, effective September 20, 2024, with regret.

Ms. Young moved to approve items 1-7, seconded by Mrs. Fischer. The vote in favor was unanimous.

XII. President’s Report

Mr. Carpenter congratulated the Girls’ Flag Football for their outstanding achievement.

Mr. Carpenter stated he has a daughter in the district and is experiencing similar busing issues but feels we are on the right path for improvement.

Mr. Carpenter stated there are many positive things happening in the community with the Administration, Staff and students and all of the fall sports are off to a great start and students doing well academically.

XIII. Solicitor's Report

Ms. Turnbull stated she will reach out to Ambridge Borough Manager and invite him to speak at a meeting regarding property tax exoneration.

XIV. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Pasquerilla congratulated Mr. Amadio. Excellent Flag Football and fall sports. It was a positive homecoming event thanks to all of the staff, which is greatly appreciated.

A special thanks to Dr. Filipowski and ABC Transit.

Dr. Pasquerilla apologized to families and stated that the Administration and ABC Transit are working diligently to fix the transportation issues.

Thanked ABC Staff, appreciates all they do every day for our students.

Dr. Pasquerilla stated ABC and the district would do better with communications.

XV. Old and New Business

It is now time for old and new business. Any DISTRICT RESIDENT who desires to comment on any business relevant to the Ambridge Area School District should now come forward. Each person must state their first and last name and address prior to speaking. Each person will be allowed three minutes and can speak only once.

Beverly Kovich, Baden PA

- As a Baden resident, why did the district cut the \$6,000.00 funding to Baden Library?
- Baden Library is a great program for our kids.
- Now it is up to the residents to keep up the funding for these programs.
 - Ms. Turnbull stated that the Board is engaging in communication with the Baden Library and communicated the district's concerns around safety. Baden's Attorney is to address the concerns with the district and continue to keep the lines of communication open.

Karen Otich, Ambridge

- What is the proper communication chain for the community to receive callbacks regarding transportation? Calls not being answered.
- Where do things stand with Baden Academy Charter renewal?
 - Ms. Turnbull stated that the BAC charter renewal process is ongoing between the two parties.
 - Dr. Pasquerilla stated the chain of communication is to first call ABC Transit and second to reach out to the district by calling the Building Principal or Dr. Filipowski for help.

Dorothy Trautmam, Baden, PA

- Has custody of four grandchildren who attend the district schools.
- Bus didn't show up first day of school.

- Six year old getting home at 5 p.m. in the evening, that is too long of a day.
- Has the most respect for the bus drivers.
- Hopes that the Administration gets it together.
- Received a truancy letter from the district for 4 tardiness and 2 truancies due to busing and no car at home to take him to school. This is not fair.
- Go Bridgers!
 - Dr. Pasquerilla stated he will definitely follow-up on this.
 - Mrs. Romasco stated that if the tardiness are due to late buses they should automatically be removed.
 - Dr. Pasquerilla will double check with the principal and if buses are late the homerooms should hold off on attendance.
 - Dr. Pasquerilla will follow-up with principal and social worker.
 - Ms. Young asked if there is someone checking in the students who come in to get a late pass, why do the not mark it if it is due to a late bus.

Baden Academy Parent

- The district failed the students with busing.
- This should be a top priority to fix this.
- Who contracted with this company?
- The district has other options. Consider other companies.
- ABC failed the district contractually.

Jen McDowell, Ambridge, PA

- Put signs on the bus with bus numbers.
- Average CDL driver make \$34 an hour, ABC is not paying enough.
- Drivers and Aides are not being treated right at ABC and that is why they can't get help.
- Highland has Opportunity Scholarships.
- The district is letting the community down.
- Issues follow the Superintendent.

Jen Montellanico

- Bus has been late for three years.
- Dropped my 7 year old grandson off at a stop that was unknown to him, the bus stop was changed from the year before.
- Grandson crossed over 11th street by himself at 7 years old.
- What if something would have happened to him?
- Transportation and the district are failing our parents.
- Elementary students are losing an hour a day of schools due to busing.
- It is not fair 1st and 2nd graders are getting home at 5 p.m. in the evening.
Do better for my grandson!

Shaun Duguay, Ambridge, PA

- Came to school to follow up on child's transfer, which the transfer was denied.
- Asked to speak to the secretary.
- The employee lacks constructive communication.

- I was escorted out by two Ambridge police officers for being disorderly.
- Following the incident at school, the secretary she had her husband, an Ambridge Police Officer, remove me from my daughter's basketball game after.
- The district needs more of Mr. Amadio
 - Mr. Carpenter stated he would be happy to speak with Mr. Duguay in regards to this incident.
 - Dr. Pasquerilla stated he was not made aware of this incident and will look into it and reach out to Mr. Duguay.

Kasi Devinney, Economy Borough

- Bridgers are broken.
- Need to fix the problems in the district.
- What is the protocol for public comment?
- Asking the same questions multiple times and not receive an answer:
 - 1) What is the Superintendent's goals?
 - 2) Dr. Pasquerilla made phone calls regarding busing, why didn't he want to send communications?
 - 3) Not enough good for the district.
 - 4) Are we meeting IEPs with the recommendations?
 - 5) In the handbook, it states if the student is going to be late the parent need to call into the school.
 - 6) Why didn't the district delay the start of school?
 - 7) What are the standardized test scores, not the presentation, the actual results?

Josh Gill, Economy Borough

- ABC Contract – referenced contract clauses that are not being followed:
 - 1) 8d & 8f Prevent Overcrowding – yet students sitting on floor
 - 2) 8e Transport child to designated stop – yet students are being lost
 - 3) 3.12 Functional radio system
 - 4) 3.15 Communicate with district delays – receive late notices
 - 5) 7.9b ABC promptly meet or speak with district to resolve issues and communicate concerns in a timely manner.
 - 6) 3.7 District will compensate contractor if vehicles removed from prior year
- Why approve an eight-year contract with ABC instead of Rhodes>
- Re-negotiate with ABC
- Board VP also manage of ABC
- Safety Concerns
- The district owes the taxpayers and ensure that every dollar is spent wisely.
- Financial Irresponsible!

Dr. Pasquerilla

- The district extended Rhodes agreement for 5 years and at the end of the first year Mr. Rhodes called for a meeting to inform the district that he was no longer going to be in business, this was in June of 2023.
- Based on that meeting the district reached out to transportation companies. Mr. Rhodes recommended ABC. Other busing companies could not take on the district.
- At the time that ABC Transit Agreement was discussed and voted on by the Board Mr. Metz was not on the Board.

- ABC honored Rhodes rates for the first year.
- Unlimited CPI
- At the time no other busing company
- The district and ABC anticipated a lot smoother start to the school year.
- ABC routes for the district, not other districts.
- ABC offers a sign on bonus also increase the pay.
- I do think they are working diligently to fix the problems.
- ABC came with good references and a great company.
- There is a shortage of bus drivers beyond Ambridge School District.
- Administration are out driving buses to help solve the problems.
- ABC is a competitive contract and needs to be held accountable.
- We will continue to talk as a Board and Administration.
- If the district were to penalize ABC it would become a legal matter and that is not our goal. Our goal is to work with ABC to fix the problems and get the appropriate services to get the students to and from school.
- ABC is working diligently with us to rectify this.

Ms. Turnbull

- According to PA State Ethics Acts, Mr. Metz in no way violates the PA State Ethics Act.
- At no time did Mr. Metz participate in deliberations or votes involving any component with his employer with ABC Transit
- Mr. Metz has exceeded the law by abstaining from all voting to do with ABC Transit.
- Mr. Metz role has no way violated law or local policy.

Joe Horn, Economy Borough

- Does not envy the Board in this situation and wishes them the best.
- Would like to know if the problems with transportation are the same next year what is the plan?
- We need accountability and if we cannot what is the next step.

Mr. Carpenter

- This year's busing was a surprise to him as well, caught off guard.
- The district and ABC are working diligently to fix it.
- Issues with transportation is nationwide in the industry.
- We will fight through it
- Believes that the district, the board members and the administrators all have good intentions.
- The focus is to get student to school and get it fixed.

Dr. Pasquerilla

- We hope to reduce/limit, hopefully illuminate late buses.

Chris Upchurch, Baden, PA

- Thanked ABC
- Believes ABC should be penalized and give district reimbursement
- Why the district was surprised day one?
- Why didn't the parents know before school started?
- No communication.
- What is the mitigation plan for next year and when will communication on busing go out to parents.

Mr. Carpenter

- The week prior to school ABC sounded good.
- It was later that the district received information that there was an issue.
- The district took action immediately and spent hours with ABC to try and reconcile.
- Asked ABC representative to update on when communications will be sent out beginning of the school year.
- ABC Representative stated they were already working on putting timelines and deadlines in place for a letter to be sent to the parents prior to the start of school.

Kelly Kazor, Ambridge, PA

- New to the district.
- Three to a seat on the buses.
- Recommended the district not continue the contract with ABC
- The pay rate of 24 per hour is not enough for workers working four hour days
- Didn't receive bus information until day before school started.
- Third day of school buses 20 minutes late every day.

Mr. Carpenter

- Welcomed to the district.

Dr. Pasquerilla

- Observed middle school dismissal and it looked to run smoothly. Mr. DiCaprio will continue to monitor.
- Observed Economy Elementary first day changes in procedures – parents stay in cars for safely, buses were not slowed down.
- Economy Elementary second day - did not show delays.
- Mrs. Galitisis will continue to monitor Economy Elementary's drop off procedures.

Heather Kilvington, Ambridge, PA

- Hearing too many excuse for transportation issues.
- What is the district doing to follow an improvement plan?
- Discussed base funding and verified expenditures of 2023-2024 budget.
- Could not find the 2024-2025 budget online.
- Not transparent.
- Super disappointed in the gaps.

Mrs. Amadio

- Pointed out where to find 2024-2025 budget online. www.ambridge.k12.pa.us under the Business Office Page

Mrs. Romasco

- Can we have working cameras on all buses
- ABC answered yes, there are two radios on all vehicles and all buses have cameras.
- Would like wellness checks on those radios and cameras on vehicles done.
- ABC will look into overcrowding and bus numbers will be addressed tomorrow.

XVI. Motion to Adjourn

At approximately 9:15 p.m. Mrs. Fischer moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Romasco. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary.