

**Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Voting and Non-Voting Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held in the High School Cafeteria on Wednesday, October 8, 2025.**

**I. Mr. Carpenter called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.**

The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, October 8, 2025. This meeting is being held to review the agenda for the regular monthly Board Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Media Center.

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

**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  
Mrs. Valerie Scott, Vice President  
Mr. Garrett Kovacevic, Treasurer  
Mrs. Adina Ferragonio  
Mrs. Cathy Fischer  
Miss Amy Fitsko  
Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe  
Mrs. Kelly Romasco  
Mr. Matthew Zatchey

Others Present:

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

**V. Mrs. Mueller read the following Sunshine Law**

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session(s) on Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss:

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

**VI. Correspondence**

No Correspondence.

**VII. Amendments to the Agenda/Approval of the Agenda**TABLED Items 1-4 under Building and Grounds

Mrs. Romasco made a motion to Table items 1-4 under Building and Grounds, seconded by Mr. Zatchey. Miss Fitsko and Mr. Carpenter voted against this amendment, and Mrs. Kehoe voted against Tabling item 3.

**VIII. Recognition/Presentation****Dr. Meghan Watelet – Personal Finance Class****IX. 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.

Rodger Kowal, Economy Borough

- Expressed concerns with items 1-4 under Building and Grounds
- Urged the board to prioritize spending on education and financial planning for the upcoming Teachers Contract negotiations.
- Stressed the overall importance of the district being fiscally responsible.
- The anticipated 450 to 500 new homes being built in the area (priced between \$400,00 and \$500,00 each) are expected to generate significant new funds for the district.
- The district should focus on academics, as this new development and the influx of new residents will boost academic quality.

Felicia Mycyk, Baden

- Expressed pride in her 9th-grade daughter for resisting peer pressure after being offered an edible in school, and for immediately admitting to possession when questioned.
- The daughter initially received a 3-day suspension notice, followed by an informal hearing notice.
- The student has now been placed in the "Disruptive Youth" category and mandated to attend an AEDY school for 45 days.
- The parent argued that this placement is inappropriate as her daughter does not meet the definition of "disruptive youth" and has no prior disciplinary record.
- Noted that the daughter turned the edible in and the police chose not to press charges.
- Questioned the cost the district pays for this AEDY school placement.
- Stated that no investigation into the incident was conducted.
- Urged the board to rescind this decision, asking the district to prioritize making students feel "seen, heard, and valued," and to "not be a pipeline" to AEDY schools.

Joshua Gill, Economy Borough

- Questioned the disciplinary consistency: A student who brought a firearm to school was reportedly given only two weeks of discipline.
- Asked why a student who turned in a narcotic would receive a 45-day placement in an AEDY school.
- Noted that all students were indirectly punished for the firearm incident by the mandate of clear backpacks.
- Agreed with the goal of maintaining safe facilities, but felt the capital projects discussion was moving too quickly.
- Pointed out that the visitor bleachers have not been used in years.
- Inquired about the exact number of bids received for the projects.
- Urged the board to be fiscally responsible, given the approaching Teachers Contract negotiations.
- Suggested tabling the items to:
  - Gather additional bids.
  - Solicit community input on the projects.

Mrs. Scott

- Contended that the student does not meet the requirements of a "disruptive youth".
- Expressed a strong feeling that the mandated AEDY placement is "horrible" for the child.
- Argued that the district's action sets a poor example for students.
- Questioned who students should trust, if not the school, given this punitive outcome for a student who was honest.

Mr. Carpenter

- Noted that as a board, they cannot speak on student matters.

### **Building and Grounds Board Discussion**

The board held an extensive discussion on Buildings and Grounds items 1-4, focusing heavily on capital project funding and the proposed bleacher replacement.

Mr. Carpenter and Dr. Pasquerilla urged the board to vote on at least items 1 or 2 in some capacity and for item 3, with Dr. Pasquerilla stressing the district's strong financial position—achieved in the last five years without raising taxes—and ability to afford facilities repairs and forthcoming CBA negotiations without needing to seek additional loans. He assured the board that the administration is focused on fiscal responsibility and continuously adding to the capital fund. Dr. Pasquerilla added that he appreciates Mr. Kowal's comment and agrees with being fiscally responsible.

However, several members expressed caution. Mr. Zatchey and Mrs. Ferragonio felt the project was rushed and were uncomfortable voting without more detailed information on bidding and total costs. Mr. Kovacevic was concerned about immediate spending, given future unexpected expenses, and suggested seeking public opinion. Mrs. Romasco questioned the necessity of bleachers, noting the large upcoming cost of replacing the turf in 3-5 years, and requested a full scope of the bleacher project before moving forward. Additionally, Mrs. Romasco would like to

see a cost for fixing the bleachers in the Field House. Mrs. Romasco thanked the administration for answering her questions sent via email.

Mrs. Amadio noted she has already applied for a UPMC grant and is awaiting the opening of state and county grants to help fund the project.

To move forward, Mrs. Amadio suggested inviting Mr. Klopfer from Stadium Solutions to present the bleacher project at next week's meeting. The board agreed to table items 1-4, pending Mr. Klopfer's presentation.

## **X. LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR THIS MEETING**

### **Building and Grounds**

**Mrs. Ferragonio**

#### **1. Visitor Bleachers Option 1 – ITEM TABLED**

It is recommended to approve the proposal from Stadium Solutions for the 1,298-seat bleachers, installation, as described in option 1, at a total cost of \$590,230.00 through state contracting pricing.

#### **2. Visitor Bleachers Option 2 – ITEM TABLED**

It is recommended to approve the proposal from Stadium Solutions for the 1,580-seat bleachers, installation, as described in option 2, at a total cost of \$736,575.00 through state contracting pricing.

#### **3. Bleacher Drainage System – ITEM TABLED**

It is recommended to approve the proposal from Stadium Solutions to complete the drainage system and asphalt work at a total cost of \$18,500.00 through state contracting pricing.

#### **4. 20x32 Structure - ITEM TABLED**

It is recommended to approve the proposal from Stone Creek Structures for the purchase and installation of a 20x32 structure at a total cost of \$23,053.20, through the bidding process.

#### **5. 10x14 Structure**

It is recommended to approve the purchase of a 10x14 standard building with a roof, vent, and two (2) doors from Stone Creek Structures at a total cost of \$5,574.70.

#### **6. Heat Exchanger**

It is recommended to approve the quote from Huckestein to replace the heat exchanger at Economy Elementary at a total cost of \$5,104.98.

Mrs. Scott moved to approve items 5-6, seconded by Mr. Zatchey. The vote in favor was unanimous.

**Personnel****Mrs. Scott**

**\*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. **Mentor Teacher**

It is recommended to approve the following mentor teacher assignment for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years, as per the negotiated agreement:

Mentor Teacher  
Jamie Wellman

New Teacher  
Emily Lentz

2. **Orton Gillingham Training**

It is recommended that the following elementary teachers be compensated for 35 total hours to complete Orton Gillingham Training on their own time, upon completion of the Orton Gillingham Comprehensive OG+ Training and submission of the certificate, at the rate of pay as per the collective bargaining agreement. Salary and benefits are to be paid by grant funding. To be paid for through the Title II Grant monies.

Mia Boccabella  
Emily Lentz  
Kellee Gnipp  
Michelle Druga

3. **Posted Positions: Clubs / Activities**

It is recommended that the following individuals who have applied for the specified posted positions for the 2025-2026 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.

| <b><u>ACTIVITY/CLUB (High School)</u></b> |                                    | <b><u>Stipend</u></b> |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ski Club                                  | Terri Moon-Kutzavitch (co-sponsor) | \$235.00              |
|                                           | Zach Dugan (co-sponsor)            | \$235.00              |

4. **Rescind**

It is recommended to rescind Carrie Malinich as an Economy Elementary Before and After School Childcare caregiver.

5. **Employee Agreement**

It is recommended to approve the Employee Agreement relating to Employee #591, subject to finalization.

6. FMLA

It is recommended that Employee #3093 be approved for a leave of absence under Board Policy 535, Family and Medical Leave, beginning September 23, 2025, not to exceed twelve (12) weeks.

7. FMLA

It is recommended that Employee #2716 be approved for a leave of absence under Board Policy 535, Family and Medical Leave, beginning October 24, 2025, not to exceed twelve (12) weeks.

8. Resignation

It is recommended to accept the resignation of Sherman McBride from his position as the Ambridge Area High School Head Football Coach, effective October 24, 2025, at the conclusion of the last game, with regret.

9. Resignation

It is recommended to approve the resignation of Crystal Cain from her position as a Four-Hour Cook at the middle school, effective September 22, 2025, with regret.

10. Resignation

It is recommended to approve the resignation of Kristi Allen from her position as a Five-Hour Cook at the high school, effective October 21, 2025, with regret.

11. Cafeteria Food Service Union Worker

It is recommended to retroactively hire Melissa Hayes as a Five-Hour Cook at the high school, effective October 1, 2025, in accordance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses from current or former employers to Act 168 screening.

12. Food Service Assistant

It is recommended to retroactively approve Ashley Glass as a food service assistant, effective October 7, 2025, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

13. Paraprofessional

It is recommended to retroactively hire the following individuals as Paraprofessionals in the specified buildings, as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Support Professional Association (ESPA/PSEA-NEA) collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

Emilie Walker, Highland Elementary, effective September 24, 2025  
Kristin Hites, Economy Elementary, effective October 1, 2025

14. Special Education Secretary

It is recommended to retroactively hire Michele Askar as the Special Education Secretary at an annual salary of \$29,698.50, pro-rated, effective October 7, 2025, as per the negotiated agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

15. Hall Monitors

It is recommended to ratify Eric Lalama as a Hall Monitor at the middle school, effective October 6, 2025, 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.

16. ABC Transit Bus Driver/Aide

It is recommended to approve the individuals listed as operators, attendants, and maintenance for ABC Transit, Inc. for the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

Van Driver

Robert Gillin (Aide)

Michael DeLuigi

Liana Saenz

Melissa Scouten

Bus Drivers

Debra Bayle

Evelyn Dean

Charter Trips Only

Daniel Fennell

Mrs. Scott moved to approve items 1-16, seconded by Mrs. Romasco. The vote in favor was unanimous.

**XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS (NON-VOTING AGENDA ITEMS)****Education and Technology****Mrs. Romasco**1. Penn State University Affiliation Agreement

It is recommended to approve an Affiliation Agreement between the Ambridge Area School District and Penn State University Master of Professional Studies in Nutritional Sciences, **pending solicitor's review**.

2. High School Club Formation

It is recommended to approve the formation of a new high school club, Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) Club. The club sponsor will be paid a stipend of \$470.00, in accordance with the contracted rate.

3. Middle School Club Formation

It is recommended to approve the formation of a new middle school club, the Dungeons and Dragons Club. The club sponsor will be paid a stipend of \$470.00, in accordance with the contracted rate.

4. PASBO's 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference

It is recommended that Michelle Amadio, the District Business Manager and Director of Operations, be approved to attend PASBO's 71st Annual Conference and Exhibits being held at the David L. Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA, on March 24-27, 2026. The purpose of this conference is to provide members with education, training, professional development, and timely access to legislative and policy news. All expenses (registration, fees, travel, lodging, meals) will be paid as per Board Policy 331, Job Related Expenses. The approximate cost will be \$993.00.

**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 \$3,231,782.37 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$1,347,141.72 be paid.

2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$57,874.20 be paid.

### 3. Grant Acceptance

It is recommended to accept the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant for the following elementary schools from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Bureau of Food and Nutrition (BFN) for the 2025-2026 school year. This award is to provide free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. Mrs. Leigh Anne Holman was instrumental in securing this grant.

- a) Highland Elementary in the amount of \$19,180.00
- b) State Street Elementary in the amount of \$16,590.00

### Building and Grounds

**Mrs. Ferragonio**

### Athletics

**Mrs. Fischer**

### Public Relations

**Miss Fitsko**

### Steering and Rules

**Mrs. Kehoe**

### Legislative

**Miss Fitsko**

## **XII. President's Address**

Mr. Carpenter commended the administration for their work on the difficult bleacher project, specifically expressing his appreciation for their time, effort, and thoroughness in securing multiple bids and addressing the board's questions and concerns. Mr. Carpenter also appreciated the commentary amongst the board regarding this difficult subject and discussion.

## **XIII. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Pasquerilla stated that it was a nice Homecoming celebration, and it's been great catching some of the senior nights and seeing all of the good going on in the district for the start of the school year.

## **XIV. Solicitor's Report**

Ms. Gannon had nothing to report.

## **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. This period for public comment prior to the standing committee reports will be limited to one-half hour.

Fabiola Gergerich, Ambridge, PA

- Thanked the board for approving the OG (Orton-Gillingham) training.
- Questioned how much taxpayer money is allocated to fund school clubs.
- Expressed a personal Christian belief and stated opposition to the Dungeons and Dragons Club.

- Regarding the bleacher project:
  - Stated there are no guarantees for the student population over the next four years.
  - Encouraged the board to approve only the drainage plan for the bleachers for now.
  - Asked for the current seating capacity of the stadium's home side. (answer: 24,000 to 25,000)

Felicia Mycyk, Baden

- Acknowledged the board has a tough job but does not believe that everything should be "black and white," while stating she is doing her best trying their best to understand the system.
- Asked for specifics on the district's committed resources for AEDY, including transportation and tuition costs, and requested data on the number of students currently and since the start of school that have been placed in AEDY.
- Stated that another student received 45 days of out-of-school discipline for having a Swiss Army knife on a keychain.
- Noted that her daughter missed Homecoming due to the disciplinary action.
- Questioned the consistency, stating the initial letter sent home cited only a 3-day suspension, and asked why that letter was sent if the final decision was 45 days.
- Asked where the emotional security for students exists within a zero-tolerance policy.
- Indicated a willingness to work with the board as a team to resolve the issue.
- The district should encourage students to say "Ambridge cares."

#### **XVI. Motion to Adjourn**

At approximately 9:20 p.m. Mrs. Scott made a motion to return to Executive Session, seconded by Mrs. Romasco. Miss Fitsko and Mr. Zatchey voted against the motion.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary**