

Big Spring School District

Newville, Pennsylvania

Board Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2025



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1. Opening Meeting: Call to Order/Pledge - President John Wardle

The Board of School Directors for the Big Spring School District met in the Big Spring Middle School Auditorium at 7:47 pm with nine (9) Board of School Directors present: John Wardle, President; Michael Hippensteel, Vice-President; Lisa Shade, Treasurer; Julie Boothe, Secretary; Seth Cornman, David Fisher, Kenneth Fisher, Frank Myers, and Robert Over.

Absent: No absences

Others in attendance: Nicholas Guarente, Superintendent; Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent; Cristy Lentz, Business Manager; Thomas King, Solicitor; Donna Minnich, Board Minutes; Rob Krepps, Director of Technology; and Darin Baughman, Technology Support.

President Wardle led all individuals present in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. Student/Staff Recognition and Board Reports - High School Staff members Mr. Myers, Dr. Kraus, and Mrs. Detwiler provided high school updates to the Board.

3. Reading of Correspondence – Nothing Offered

4. Recognition of Visitors - 46 visitors signed in for the meeting.

5. Public Comment Period

Michael Deihl offered a prayer for the students, staff, administration, Board, and community. Lawrence Flynn offered comments on Orange Frog, complimented Dr. Guarente on phenomenal customer service skills despite philosophical disagreement and said quality customer service training for every staff member is something we need. He said the geometry lesson during Committee of the Whole was impressive.

Elizabeth Flynn offered comments on the importance of foundational knowledge for high school algebra testing, said we need to stop making excuses and ignoring test results, and said we cannot improve if we ignore reality.

5. Public Comment Period (continued)

Arlene Reinford offered comments on students receiving therapy, thanked the Board for their diligence, countless hours and tons of research, and offered her opinion on comments made by a Board member at the last meeting. She said the Board should speak respectfully to each other and suggested the Board member apologize.

Jefferson Gurganious offered comments of concern for the Board monitoring students receiving therapy and said collecting that data is none of the Board's business. He said the services are between the parents who sign giving permission, the counseling service provider, and the school who is already following guidelines. He said we have a large IEP student ratio and it is important we have the money needed in our budget to accommodate IEP services and the Board has no right to get involved.

6. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the [DIG Committee](#), [Committee of the Whole](#) and [Board Meeting](#) Minutes for March 3, 2025 as presented?

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

7. Financial Reports

7.a. Payment of Bills

<u>Fund Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Fund Accounting Payment Register</u>	<u>Fund Accounting Payment Summary</u>
General Fund - Procurement Card	\$13,465.75	Procurement Card - Detail	See Procurement Card Detail
General Fund - Checks/ACH/Wires	\$4,226,738.26	General Fund - Detail	General Fund - Summary
Special Revenue	\$4,552.02	Special Revenue - Detail	Special Revenue - Summary
Capital Projects Reserve Fund	\$0.00	No Payments	No Payments
Cafeteria Fund	\$148,863.21	Cafeteria Fund - Detail	Cafeteria Fund - Summary
Student Activities	\$24,214.32	Student Activities - Detail	Student Activities - Summary

Total amount of all funds **\$4,417,833.56**

Motion to approve the Payment of Bills as presented

Motion by Mrs. Shade was seconded by Mr. Myers

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

7.b. Treasurer's Fund Report

- [General Fund Report](#)
- [Special Revenue Report](#)
- [Capital Project Report](#)
- [Cafeteria Fund Report](#)
- [Student Activities Fund Report](#)
- [Student Activities Account Summary](#)
- [Investment Report](#)
- [Earned Interest and Bank Fees YTD for General Fund, Special Revenue, Capital Projects, ESCO and Cafeteria](#)
- [Earned Interest YTD Student Activities](#)

Treasurer's Fund Reports are noted.

7.c. YTD General Fund Report and YTD Taxes

The administration prepared the [YTD General Fund Report](#) and the [YTD Taxes](#) for the Board. The General Fund report looks at our revenue and expenses for this year against the budget and compares those amounts to last year. The YTD Tax Summary shows the monthly collections and cumulative collections and compares that to the two previous years.

The Year-To-Date General Fund and Tax Reports are noted.

8. Old Business – Nothing Offered

9. New Business Personnel Items - Actions Items

Unless there is an objection, we will combine all New Business Personnel Action Items listed under #9 into one motion.

9.a. Recommended Approval of Extra Duty Positions

Scott Penner, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, recommends the following extra-duty staff:

- Mark Graham to serve as Co-Assistant High School Baseball Coach replacing Dylan Johnson who resigned.
- Madison Tack to serve as Assistant Middle School Volleyball Coach.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the extra-duty positions as presented.

9.b. Recommended Approval of Resignations

Administration received the following professional staff resignation:

- Cherie Williams provided a resignation from the position of High School Special Education Teacher.

Cheri Frank, Director of Custodial Services, received the following resignation:

- James Kiner provided a resignation from the position of part-time High School Custodian effective March 21, 2025.

Scott Penner, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, received the following extra-duty staff resignations:

- Bailey Lehman provided a resignation from the position of Assistant Field Hockey Coach.
- Heath Myers provided a resignation from the position of Assistant Field Hockey Coach.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the resignations as presented.

9.c. Recommended Approval of a Director of Student Services - Dr. Trisha Neibert-Reed

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors appoint Dr. Trisha Neibert-Reed to serve as Director of Student Services, replacing Dr. Abigail Leonard who resigned. Dr. Neibert-Reed's compensation for this position should be established at \$108,000.00 for the 2024-2025 school year, per the Act 93 Agreement.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve Dr. Trisha Neibert-Reed as Director of Student Services as presented.

9.d. Recommended Approval of Transfer of Classified Personnel

As per Board Policy 309 Assignment and Transfer, the administration will transfer the classified employee listed below:

- Jacob Lautsbaugh from General Maintenance Technician to Maintenance Technician Electrical & Security Systems with no change in placement on the classified pay scale.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the classified staff transfer as presented.

9.e. Recommended Approval of Leave Without Pay

Section 6.09 of the contract between the Big Spring Education Association and the Big Spring School District provides "The Board may grant leave without pay to an employee who requests prior approval for such leave." Superintendent Dr. Nicholas Guarente received a request for leave without pay from the following employee:

- Genelle Walden, High School Special Education Teacher, is requesting leave without pay for a half day on February 26, and full days on February 27 and 28, 2025.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the leave without pay request as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman to combine and approve all items in New Business Personnel Action Items 9 (a) through 9 (e) as outlined and recommended above.
Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle
Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

10. New Business - Actions Items

10.a. Approve LIU Joint Purchasing Board Electric Group Participation Agreement and Fuel Group Participation Agreement

The District has participated in the Lincoln IU Joint Purchasing Board electric group purchasing since December 2015. LIU Joint Purchasing Board is able to receive highly competitive pricing due to hedging. This agreement would extend the use of the Joint Purchasing Board to purchase electricity through 2027.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the continuation of the [Lincoln IU Joint Purchasing Board Electric Participation Agreement](#) and [Electricity Transaction Confirmation with Direct Energy](#) to December 31, 2027. The administration is authorized to sign the associated documents and contracts with this agreement.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade
Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle
Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

10.b. Recommended Approval of Student Travel

High School Principal, Dr. Michael Carnes, is requesting permission for high school students and two advisors to travel to and participate in the following competition:

- Technology Student Association State Conference and Competition at Seven Springs Resort in Seven Springs, PA - April 23 - 25, 2025.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the student travel and participation as presented.

10.b. Recommended Approval of Student Travel (continued)

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

10.c. Recommended Approval of Fundraisers

Scott Penner, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, recommends the following 2024-2025 fundraisers:

- Bake Sale during Community Night on April 12, 2025 to benefit National Honor Society.
- Serve-A-Thon March 13 through April 16, 2025 to benefit the Middle School Volleyball Team.

Clarissa Nace, Middle School Principal, recommends the following 2024-2025 fundraisers:

- Student Bistro March 24, 2025 during morning WIN to benefit Student Council.
- [Rada Cutlery](#) sale to benefit middle school students.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the fundraisers as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

10.d. Recommended Approval of School Property Utilization

- Nadja Liptak on behalf of Nikolic Soccer, Inc. is requesting use of the High School Turf Field on April 6 and April 12, 2025 for State Cup Games. Because the utilization includes a Sunday, Board action is necessary.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the utilization request as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

10.e. Recommended Approval of Agreement

Following an RFP in 2022, the Board approved a three-year agreement with Cross Safe at the March 18, 2024 Board Meeting to secure crossing guard services for Big Spring School District. Cross Safe has been purchased by All City Management Services, Inc. who has provided us with a [Consent Assignment of Crossing Guard Services Agreement](#).

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the agreement as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

10.f. Recommended Approval of Student Trip

Clarissa Nace, Middle School Principal, recommends the following student trip:

- Horseback Riding at King's View Acres on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 for 8 middle school students selected through PBIS.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the student trip as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

11. New Business - Information Item

11.a. Contracted Staff Update

Dr. Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent, provides the following Contracted Staff Update:

- David Colistra to serve as ESS Paraprofessional at the High School beginning March 18, 2025.
- Arianna DeVitis to serve as ESS Paraprofessional at the Middle School beginning March 18, 2025.
- Alexis Fearnbaugh to serve as ESS Paraprofessional at Newville Elementary beginning March 18, 2025.
- Amy Staver to transfer from the position of ESS Specialist MDS Paraprofessional at the Middle School to the position of Direct Care ESS Paraprofessional at the High School effective March 17, 2025.
- Hannah Young to serve as Behavior Technician in the New Story classroom at Oak Flat Elementary School.

11.b. Long-Term Substitutes through ESS the District's Substitute Agency

Dr. Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent, recommends the following candidate to serve as long-term substitute teacher during the 2024-2025 school term:

- Bonnie Shields Mehls to serve as a long-term substitute Teacher at the Middle School from April 2, 2025 through May 28, 2025 during Jessica Kindon's leave of absence.

11.c. Public Notice of DIG Committee Meetings

Two additional 2024-2025 meetings for the DIG Committee will be held on March 31 and April 14, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Middle School Commons and have been [advertised](#) in the March 12, 2025 edition of the Valley Times Star.

11.d. Local Advisory Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

The Local Advisory Executive Committee met on March 7, 2025 and Dr. Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent, provided a copy of the [Meeting Minutes](#) from the committee.

12. Board Reports

12.a. Athletic Council - Ken Fisher, Mike Hippensteel, Frank Myers, and John Wardle – Nothing Offered

12.b. Building and Property Committee - David Fisher, Mike Hippensteel, Robert Over, and John Wardle – Nothing Offered

12.c. Capital Area Intermediate Unit - Seth Cornman - Nothing Offered

12.d. Cumberland Perry Area CTC - John Wardle and Mike Hippensteel – Mr. Wardle said new building project bids are coming back tomorrow, said we are having good success for some of our students who are doing well in local and state contests, and said new students are being accepted for next school year.

12.e. DIG Committee - Julie Boothe, Chair Seth Cornman and Lisa Shade – Mrs. Boothe said the extra meetings (March 31 and April 14) have been advertised and will be in the MS Commons at 6:00 pm.

12.f. Finance Committee - Julie Boothe, Frank Myers, Robert Over, and Lisa Shade – Mrs. Boothe said we had a finance meeting tonight and received interesting information.

12.g. Future Ready Comp Plan Board Reps - Ken Fisher and Lisa Shade - Nothing Offered

12.h. Policy Review and Development Committee - Seth Cornman, Julie Boothe, David Fisher, and John Wardle – Mr. Cornman said we are outdoing ourselves a little bit and said the Solicitor has just recommended a bunch of policies that have gone to Dr. Guarente and will be coming to the Board soon. He said the committee just passed one policy up to the Board which will be on the agenda next meeting and they tabled another policy for solicitor review.

12.i. South Central Trust - Seth Cornman – Nothing Offered

12.j. Tax Collection Committee - David Fisher - Nothing Offered

12.k. Wellness Committee - Seth Cornman – Mr. Cornman said they will be meeting on March 20 at 3:00 in the District Office Board Room.

12.l. Future Board Agenda Items - Nothing Offered

12.m. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Nicholas Guarente

Dr. Guarente thanked Dr. Gruver and Mr. Ginter and the High School Team for their presentations this evening.

Dr. Guarente said we have 61 kindergarten students registered for next year and encourage the public to register new kindergarten age students as soon as possible so we can make preparations for them.

Dr. Guarente shared enrollment numbers for February:

Total Students Active Enrollment	Cyber Charter School Enrollment Regular Ed	Cyber Charter School Enrollment Special Ed	Approved Home Education	CPACTC
2354 (82 CAOLA and 2 CVA)	147	92	223	118

Dr. Guarente said he attended Friday's showing of "The Little Mermaid" at the high school and was so impressed with the talent and musical abilities of our students.

Dr. Guarente reminded everyone that Friday, March 21 is a Staff Development Day and students will be off.

13. Meeting Closing

13.a. Business from the Floor/Board Member Comment

Mr. D. Fisher asked if the high school celebrated pie day and was told yes. He said he attended the school play and was very impressed and said the orchestra made the experience better.

Mr. Cornman said it was very nice to hear from the math teachers who gave some hope for our math scores to turn around. He thanked Dr. Gruver and Mr. Ginter and said we are hoping for success going forward.

Mr. Over said he would like to thank Deitch Bussing for 67 years of good service to Big Spring and said he hopes everyone is healthy.

Mrs. Shade said she saw "The Little Mermaid", thanked everyone involved and said it was fantastic that we have so much talent in our district. She said last week she learned about the school district smart phone app from the technology department and thanked Mr. Krepps. She said the app has been around a while and shared instructions on how to access and download the app which provides a personalized window into Big Spring School District.

13.a. Business from the Floor/Board Member Comment (continued)

Mrs. Boothe thanked the teachers who came out to share this evening and thanked the math teachers and said she appreciated hearing from them. Mrs. Boothe extended a personal thank you to Mr. Myers and Ms. Lehman who stepped away from field hockey coaching and said they will be missed.

Mr. Wardle said two thirds of the year is done and students are getting ready for their next phase of development. He said there was a lot of budget information tonight which is a working document and a lot to digest. He said we will establish a budget for our community and our students.

13.b. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. D. Fisher

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Over, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

President Wardle announced the Board will adjourn this evening to an Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

Meeting adjourned at **8:39 pm, March 17, 2025**

Next scheduled meeting is **April 7, 2025 at 7:30 pm**

