

Big Spring School District

Newville, Pennsylvania

Board Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2024



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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 7:30 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: All Present

Others in attendance: Nicholas Guarente, Superintendent; Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent; Cristy Lentz, Business Manager; Phyllis Martin, 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 – Nothing Offered

3. Reading of Correspondence – Nothing Offered

4. Recognition of Visitors – 49 visitors signed-in for the meeting

5. Public Comment Period

Michael Diehl offered a prayer of support for the students, staff, and School Board.

Rosie McCrea offered comments of concern for the new solicitor on the agenda.

Charlotte McDonald offered comments on the improvement of public access to information, which changed based on the efforts of a citizen's advisory group which she said speaks to the need for a new solicitor.

Dakotah Miller offered comments of concern for the selection of the school solicitor. She also said the DIG survey asks leading questions with overly negative responses and asked the Board to not vote on either of those agenda items.

John McCrea offered comments of concern for Thomas King as the choice for school solicitor.

5. Public Comment (continued)

Lawrence Flynn said the Board has been accused of being antagonistic to the community and offered comments of support for the Board and their accomplishments.

Kendra Shaffer shared words from an e-mail written by Randy Heishman concerning the term global citizen.

Chuch Burns shared words from an e-mail written by Randy Heishman concerning the term global citizen which encouraged replacing the term with United States Citizen.

Jessica Kreiger shared words from an e-mail written by Randy Heishman concerning the term global citizen.

David Ward offered comments of concern for the DIG survey and said there are grammatical errors and the survey is biased.

Laura Mackey offered comments on the first amendment lawsuits of Flynn and Reinford and said the district needs new legal representation.

Matt Soper offered comments on transparency and asked Board members to share their views as they vote on the new solicitor.

6. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the [Policy Committee Meeting Minutes](#), [Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes](#) and the [Board Meeting Minutes](#) for September 23, 2024 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. Old Business – Nothing Offered

8. New Business Personnel Items - Actions Items

Unless there is an objection, we will combine all New Business Personnel Action Items listed under #8 into one motion.

8.a. Recommended Approval of Resignation

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

- Jennie Ortiz provided a letter of resignation from the extra-duty position of Dance Team Advisor.
- Johnna Kirwan submitted a letter of resignation from the extra-duty position of Middle School After School Club Advisor.

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

8.b. Recommended Approval of Leave Request

- Ellie Piper, Middle School Social Studies Teacher, is requesting leave without pay approximately November 5 through November 15, 2024.

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

8.c. Recommended Approval of Extra-Duty Personnel

Scott Penner, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, recommends the following:

- Aleia Baker for the extra-duty position of National Technical Honor Society Advisor.
- Jake Knouse as a Volunteer for the Boys Basketball Program.

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

8.d. Recommended Approval of a Part-Time Custodian

Ms. Cheri Frank, Director of Custodial Services, recommends the following for new hire:

- James Kiner to serve as a part-time, second shift Custodian at the High School replacing Steve Bloser who resigned. The starting rate should be \$16.10 per hour for the 2024-2025 school year pending receipt of all required employment documentation. This hire is subject to the Probationary Period as spelled out in the Classified Staff Handbook.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the custodian for new hire as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman to combine and approve all items in New Business Personnel Action Items 8 (a) through 8 (d) as outlined and recommended above.

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

9. New Business - Actions Items

9.a. Recommended Approval of Proposed Updated Policies

The Policy Committee has proposed the updated policies listed below:

- [Policy 918](#) Parent and Family Engagement
- [Policy 806](#) Child Abuse

The updated policies are proposed to the Board of School Directors for approval as presented.

Motion by Mrs. Shade was seconded by Mr. Cornman

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

9.b. Recommended Approval of School Property Utilization

- Carly Zinn on behalf of PA Accelerated Athletics is requesting use of the Oak Flat gym from November - February for field hockey practices. Sunday practices would be from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Because the utilization request includes Sundays, Board action is necessary.
- Big Spring Aquatic Club is requesting use of the High School pool and balcony January 11 and January 12, 2025 for a Fitter and Faster Swim Clinic. Because the utilization request includes a Sunday, Board action is necessary.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the utilization requests 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

Lisa Shade comment – concerned about the timing and things being approved after the fact

9.c. Recommended Approval of Fundraiser

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

- Discount Card [fundraiser](#) December 2 through 19, 2024 to benefit the Middle School National Junior Honor Society.
- Bulldog Spirit Wear fundraiser to benefit the Middle School PTO.

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

9.d. Recommended Approval of Field Trip

Clarissa Nace, Middle School Principal, recommends approval of the following field trip:

- 7th Grade Class Trip to Camp YoliJwa on May 6, 2025.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the field 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

9.e. Recommended Approval of a Non-Resident Student Tuition Waiver

Christina McConnell, mother of High School senior Kylee McConnell, is requesting permission for Kylee to continue to attend Big Spring High School for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year and graduate with the class of 2025, per the conditions outlined in Board Policy 202.1. The parent is required to provide the necessary transportation to and from school.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve Ms. McConnell's request for Kylee McConnell to attend Big Spring High School for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year as a non-resident senior and graduate with the class of 2025 (if eligible) as per the conditions outlined in Board Policy.

Motion by Mr. Cornman was seconded by Mrs. Shade

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

9.f. Recommended Appointment of School District Solicitor

Dr. Nicholas Guarente, Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of School Directors reviewed four proposals and conducted three interviews for School Solicitor Services and have reviewed the [Solicitorship Contract from Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter, & Graham, L.L.P.](#)

It is recommended the Board of School Directors appoint the law firm of Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter, & Graham, L.L.P. as School District Solicitor as presented.

Motion by Mrs. Shade was seconded by Mr. D. Fisher

Mr. Cornman stated the RFP received 4 responses, the Board interviewed 3 firms, and said it was clear to him that one firm did not offer a full service, another firm was dealing with issues in another school district, and said he is in favor of switching solicitors. Mr. D. Fisher shared his thoughts and said the recommended solicitor has a good track record. Mr. Myers shared his preference to stay with Stock and Leader as district solicitor and said they served us well. Mrs. Shade explained her position and said she has zero confidence in the solicitor we have now, which is why she supports Mr. King. Mrs. Boothe shared her thoughts on Stock and Leader, said the public should have the opportunity to view all contracts voted on by the Board before a vote is taken, and said she feels King will offer better support and safety for our schools. Mr. Hippensteel said for him it comes down to trust and value, said Stock and Leader has not gained his trust, and said it is a one year contract which can be reevaluated after the year. He said King seems to be upstanding. Mr. Over said he has seen petitions for King and for Stock and Leader and said politics do not belong in schools and only confuse what should be happening here. Mr. K. Fisher said he doesn't believe Stock and Leader thoroughly informed the Board in past issues, said he is ready to try someone new, and said King presented himself very well during the interviews. President Wardle said the solicitor selection process was fair, said we must move forward and cannot let this issue divide us, and asked the Board and community to unify.

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

Voting No: Myers and Over

Motion Carried. 7-2

9.g. Recommended Approval of Capital Project Fund Payments

The following invoices are for payment within the Capital Project Fund:

- BSN Sports LLC - Pool Bleachers - [Invoice 926796405](#) - 09/11/2024 - \$22745.00
- McClure Company - Mount Rock/ Admin Roof Replacement - [Invoice 24186-7](#) - 09/30/2024 - \$52,968.00

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the invoices to be paid from the Capital Project Fund.

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

9.h. Recommended Approval of Extra Duty Coaching Positions

Scott Penner, Director of Athletics and Student Activities with agreement by the Athletic Council, recommends the following:

- Adding a Middle School Assistant Coach for each of the Boys and Girls Wrestling Programs. Each position would be paid **\$3,936.00** for the winter season.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the addition of 2 extra-duty coaching positions for the middle school wrestling program 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

9.i. Case A

The parents of Case A of the 2024-2025 school year waived their right to a formal student discipline hearing before the Board of School Directors. The student will be excluded for 25 days pending completion of the Student Assistance Program which may reduce the 25 day exclusion by 15 days to a 10 day exclusion. During the period of exclusion, the student is not permitted to attend or participate in any school activities nor appear on school property at any time for any reason without direct approval from the high school principal.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors exclude the student in Case A of the 2024-2025 school year 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

9.j. Recommended Approval of the Disenrollment Survey

The DIG Committee has prepared a [Disenrollment Survey](#) and explanation letter and is requesting permission to distribute the survey by e-mail to disenrolled families from the 2020-2021 school year through the 2023-2024 school year and requests the survey be mailed by USPS for non-responders with support from the administration.

Approval of the explanation letter and survey is recommended by the DIG Committee as presented.

Motion by Mrs. Boothe was seconded by Mr. Cornman

Mr. Hippensteel asked once the survey results are received what the Board is going to do with the results and Mr. Cornman said the results will be reviewed and the top categories will be discussed and brought to the full Board to determine what comes next.

Mrs. Shade said the process was shared and a live link to the survey provided during the DIG Committee Meeting earlier in the evening. The Board continued to discuss the survey prior to voting.

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

Voting No: Myers and Over

Motion Carried. 7-2

10. Board Reports

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

10.b. Building and Property Committee - David Fisher, Mike Hippensteel, Robert Over, and John Wardle – President Wardle announced tonight's meeting was cancelled and Cristy Lentz was introduced as the new Business Manager.

10.c. Capital Area Intermediate Unit - Seth Cornman – Nothing Offered
[September Board Highlights](#)

10.d. Cumberland Perry Area CTC - John Wardle – Nothing Offered

10.e. DIG Committee - Julie Boothe, Chair Seth Cornman and Lisa Shade – Nothing Offered

10.f. Finance Committee - Julie Boothe, Frank Myers, Robert Over, and Lisa Shade – Nothing Offered

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

10.h. Policy Review and Development Committee - Seth Cornman, Julie Boothe, David Fisher, and John Wardle – Nothing Offered

10.i. South Central Trust - Seth Cornman - Nothing Offered

10.j. Tax Collection Committee - David Fisher – Nothing Offered

10.k. Wellness Committee - Seth Cornman – Nothing Offered

10.l. Future Board Agenda Items – Nothing Offered

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

Dr. Guarente said we had a great homecoming week, a successful football game, and approximately 500 students attended the homecoming dance, which went very well.

Dr. Guarente said the FFA has been very active the past few weeks. They participated in a fall leadership conference in Blaire County, attended a conference at Cumberland Valley High School, and had students compete and place in the Fall Career Development events. They also sold out of milkshakes by half-time at the football game.

Dr. Guarente shared that he attended a National Junior Honor Society Induction last week at the middle school and congratulated those students.

Dr. Guarente said the District is focused on academic improvement and described a few of those efforts and also reminded everyone Monday, October 14 is a Staff Development Day with no school for students.

11. Meeting Closing

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

Mr. Cornman thanked and welcomed the new Business Manager.

Mr. Myers thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and expressed his concern for the DIG survey.

Mrs. Shade shared some details of schools offered in 1859 in Newville as a collective effort of the county.

Mr. Hippensteel thanked the staff and students for the success of homecoming, said they did a wonderful job and welcomed Cristy Lentz.

President Wardle thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone to be thankful for what we have at Big Spring and referenced all the struggles for the people following the hurricane's down south.

11.b. Adjournment

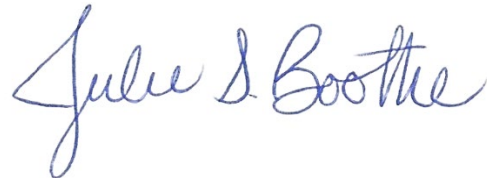
Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. D. Fisher was seconded by Mrs. Shade

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 9-0

Meeting adjourned at **9:21 pm, October 7, 2024**

Next scheduled meeting is **October 21, 2024 at 7:30 pm**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie S. Boothe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'B'.