

# **Big Spring School District**

## **Newville, Pennsylvania**

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

#### **April 7, 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 7:58 pm with eight (8) 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. Mr. Hippensteel participated virtually.

Absent: Robert Over's resignation effective March 18, 2025 was accepted.

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.

President Wardle announced the Board met in Executive Session following the March 17, 2025 meeting to discuss legal matters and also met in Executive Session at 6:00 pm this evening to discuss personnel matters.

#### **2. Student/Staff Recognition and Board Reports – Nothing Offered**

#### **3. Reading of Correspondence – Nothing Offered**

#### **4. Recognition of Visitors - 34 visitors signed in for the meeting**

#### **5. Public Comment Period**

Michael Deihl offered a prayer for the students, staff, administration, Board and community.

Lara Kauffman offered comments on the DIG Committee and shared reasons her family chooses to keep their students enrolled here.

Adam Oldham offered comments on his residency status and his right to attend Board meetings and offered comments on agenda item 9j and encouraged the Board to vote against it.

## 5. Public Comment Period (continued)

Charlotte McDonald offered comments of concern for the furniture purchase, said the Board is not following policy on purchases and said wasteful spending must stop.

Lawrence Flynn offered comments on the budget, said we have a 5-million-dollar surplus and encouraged a budget that cuts taxes by 1%.

Sally Winder offered comments on agenda items 6, 9i, and 9j, said the Board needs to follow the rule of law and offered comments of concern for the motion to ratify the lawsuit. After exceeding her time limit to speak, President Wardle asked her to stop speaking so the Board could hear additional public comment.

President Wardle asked if Solicitor Tom King wanted to speak to the public comment on the ratification of the lawsuit and Sally Winder spoke from the audience stating Mr. King was not counsel for the lawsuit.

Solicitor King said he has been involved with the discussion of the lawsuit, said tonight's vote to ratify the settlement is so the public is fully aware of what happened, said the matter has been discussed with the entire Board with legal counsel on several occasions and said the Sunshine Act does not strictly apply to discussions between the School Board and their attorneys.

Sally Winder returned to the podium to continue to offer additional comments of concern for due process and returned to her seat.

Arlene Reinford suggested a compromise on agenda item 9l and said an appropriate amount to spend would be \$100,000, said the Board was elected and owes a responsibility to those who live in the district.

Kendra Shaffer offered comments on furniture, said she is not comfortable with one option and said the Board should see what else is out there.

Laura Mackey offered comments on desks and chairs, encouraged the Board to look for less expensive options, and said chairs with wheels are a distraction.

## 6. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the [Policy Committee](#), [Finance Committee](#), [Committee of the Whole](#) and [Board Meeting Minutes](#) for March 17, 2025 and [DIG Committee Meeting Minutes](#) for March 31, 2025 as presented?

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

## **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 Resignations**

Dr. Guarente, Superintendent, received the following professional staff resignation:

- Brent Duffy provided a resignation from the position of High School Business Teacher effective June 1, 2025.

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

- Douglas Barnes provided a resignation from the position of High School Custodian effective July 1, 2025 for the purpose of retirement.
- Jennifer Spahr provided a resignation from the position of High School Custodian effective April 4, 2025.

Nicole Donato, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, received the following extra-duty staff resignation:

- Lorraine Ferrell provided a resignation from the extra-duty position of Wellness/Professional Development Committee Member effective the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year.

Scott Penner, Director of Athletics and Student Activities, received the following athletic resignation:

- Bambi Henke provided a resignation from the position of Head Middle School Cheer Coach.

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

### **8.b. Recommended Approval of Classified Staff Transfer**

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

- Alysia Hockenberry from the position of Health Room Assistant at Newville to Floating Health Room Assistant 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.

### 8.c. Recommended Approval of Custodial Staff

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

- Heidi Smith for the position of full-time, second shift Custodian at Mount Rock Elementary School replacing Summer LaFrance. 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.
- Reid Wilson for the position of part-time, second shift Custodian at the High School replacing James Kiner. 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 for hire the custodial staff as presented.

### 8.d. 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 requests for leave without pay from the following employees:

- Riley Brown, High School Teacher, is requesting leave without pay for March 28 and 31, 2025.
- Jessica Winesickle, Home & School Visitor, is requesting leave without pay for a half day March 27 and full day March 28, 2025.
- Heather Wolf, Oak Flat Paraprofessional, is requesting leave without pay for March 26, 27, and 28 and April 25, 2025.

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

### 8.e. Recommended Approval of Professional Staff Transfer

The administration will transfer the professional staff listed below for the 2025-2026 school year. The transfer is in accordance with Board Policy 309, Assignment and Transfer:

Teacher	Transferring From	Transferring To	Replacing
Tiffany Warner	1st Grade Oak Flat Elementary	Elementary Intervention Specialist Oak Flat Elementary	Denise Ginter who is retiring

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the staff transfer for 2025-2026 as presented.

#### **8.f. Recommended Approval of Extra-Duty Personnel**

Dr. Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent, recommends the following extra-duty staff:

- Tracey Cook to serve as Mentor to Tiffany Warner at Oak Flat Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

- Anna Mianulli to serve as a Volunteer for the Track and Field Program.
- Eli Reeder to serve as a Volunteer for the Track and Field Program.

The administration recommends the Board of school Directors approve the extra-duty staff 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 (f) as outlined and recommended above.

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

### **9. New Business - Actions Items**

#### **9.a. Recommended Approval of Agreement**

Administration has reviewed the Vista-District Classroom [Agreement](#) for Educational Services to provide educational services and support to students with intensive needs related to Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the 2024-2025 agreement as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Mrs. Boothe asked how many student spots were included in the agreement and Dr. Dr. Guarente said we don't have a prescribed number. Mrs. Boothe asked about costs and Dr. Guarente said cost depends on the related services based on the supplemental resources needed. Mrs. Boothe said the agreement references 4 classes and 5 classes which is confusing and Dr. Guarente said he could check with student services for clarification.

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

**9.b. Recommended Approval of the Proposed CAIU 2025-2026 General Operating Budget - Resolution 250407-01**

A summary of the [Capital Area Intermediate Unit General Operating Budget](#) for the 2025-2026 fiscal year has been reviewed by administration. The budget represents no change in District contribution from the 2024-2025 budget.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the Capital Area Intermediate Unit's [Resolution](#) for the 2025-2026 General Operating Budget as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

**9.c. Recommend Approval of Capital Project Fund Payment**

The following invoice is for payment within the Capital Project Fund:

- Mako Home Solutions, LLC-Central PA Concrete Leveling - [Invoice 104](#) - 3/21/25 - \$30,000.00

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the invoice to be paid from the Capital Project Fund. This project was approved at the March 5, 2025 Board meeting.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

**9.d. Resignation - Mr. Robert Over**

Robert Over, Borough of Newville Board of School Director, has submitted his resignation as School Board Director effective March 18, 2025.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors accept Mr. Over's resignation as Newville Borough Board of School Director as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

#### **9.e. Authorization for the Administration to Advertise the Vacant Seat on the Board of School Directors**

The administration requests authorization from the Board of School Directors to advertise the vacant seat on the Board of School Directors for Newville Borough due to the resignation of Robert Over.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

#### **9.f. Recommended Approval of Fundraiser**

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

- Pottery Sale Fundraiser to benefit the High School Art Club.
- [Italian Taxi](#) Fundraiser April 9 - 23, 2025 to benefit Tempus Leo Club and Dawg Pound.

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

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

#### **9.g. Recommended Approval of Building Utilization for PMEA Song Fest**

Lori Shover, Melissa Kiehl, and Dena Kilian are requesting permission to host the 2026 District Seven PMEA Elementary Song Fest in the Big Spring Middle School Auditorium on Saturday, March 28, 2026.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the request to utilize the Middle School Auditorium to host the 2026 PMEA Elementary Song Fest as presented.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

#### **9.h. Approve Electricity Transaction Confirmation with Direct Energy**

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 2029.

#### **9.h. Approve Electricity Transaction Confirmation with Direct Energy (continued)**

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the [Electricity Transaction Confirmation with Direct Energy](#) to December 30, 2029. 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, Shade, and Wardle

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

#### **9.i. Recommended Motion to Ratify Settlement**

I move that the Big Spring School District ratify the settlement of the case captions LAWRENCE FLYNN et al., v. BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT et al., which was filed in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

The Ratification confirms the payments entirely by the district's insurance carrier of the legal fees and nominal damages in the amount of \$81,000.00 to the Plaintiffs and their counsel. No district funds are being utilized to pay the settlement.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

Mrs. Boothe offered comments on the settlement process, said she received little information and said the document ratifying the settlement was not available to the public.

Solicitor King said the ratification document is available for the public to see tonight and said the Board may vote on the issue if they choose.

President Wardle granted two additional minutes of comment to Sally Winder who returned to the podium and offered additional comments on the county court case which she said is still outstanding and needs to be resolved.

Mr. Cornman confirmed there were 2 cases and updates will be shared as they are available.

David Fisher abstained from the vote due to a conflict of interest involving a personal relationship.

President Wardle called the Roll for the Vote:

Seth Cornman: yes

Ken Fisher: yes

Frank Myers: yes

Lisa Shade: yes

Julie Boothe: yes

Mike Hippensteel: yes

John Wardle: yes

Motion Carried. 7 yes with 1 abstention

#### **9.j. Motion to Authorize Attorney-Client Fee Contract**

A Motion is made to authorize the District to enter into an [Attorney-Client Fee Contract](#) with the Frantz Law Group, ALPC, 402 West Broadway, Suite 860, San Diego, California, 92101, and Dillon McCandless King Coulter & Graham, LLP, 128 West Cunningham Street, Butler, Pennsylvania, 16001 for the commencement of a legal action against the Social Media Companies (Meta, Tik Tok, YouTube, etc.) Said action shall be for the purpose of claiming money damages.

The Attorney-Client Fee Contract shall provide for a Contingent Fee of Twenty-Five Percent (25%) of any recovery. Expenses needed to fund the litigation shall be advanced by Frantz Law Group, APLC, and deducted from any recovery. The District shall not be responsible for any fee or cost reimbursement in the event that there is no recovery in the action.

The School Board President and/or District Superintendent are authorized to sign the Attorney-Client Fee Contract.

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Sally Winder offered comments but was told by President Wardle that she had already exceeded the time permitted for public comment. Ms. Winder's request to speak on this topic was noted by President Wardle.

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Shade, and Wardle  
Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

#### **9.k. Request to Distribute a New Student Survey**

The DIG Committee requests a motion to distribute a [New Student Survey](#) to parents of students who were new to the district during the 2024-2025 school year, to be sent out prior to the end of the school year, utilizing the same survey as last school year.

Motion by Mrs. Boothe was seconded by Mr. Cornman

Voting Yes: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Shade, and Wardle  
Voting No: Myers  
Motion Carried. 7-1

#### **9.l. Recommended Approval to Purchase Middle School Furniture**

Administration has discussed the need to replace middle school furniture and has secured a [quotation](#) from Corbett, Inc. for desks and chairs at a total cost of \$209,697.85.

The administration recommends the Board of School Directors approve the purchase of the middle school furniture as presented which will be paid from the general fund budget.

### **9.I. Recommended Approval to Purchase Middle School Furniture (continued)**

Motion by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mrs. Shade

Mrs. Shade asked if the District secured multiple bids and Dr. Guarente said COSTARS (Cooperative Sourcing to Achieve Reductions in Spend) satisfies that requirement.

Mrs. Boothe offered comments on the furniture and said she did her own research for basic comfortable chairs and said money could be saved and used for field trips that have been missed in recent years.

Mr. Hippensteel made a motion to table this item which was seconded by Mr. Cornman.

Voting Yes to Table: Boothe, Cornman, D. Fisher, K. Fisher, Hippensteel, Myers, Shade, and Wardle  
Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

## **10. New Business - Information Item**

### **10.a. Conflict of Interest**

Mrs. Lentz, Business Manager, provided the Board of School Directors with a memo on March 17, 2025 regarding the new annual conflict of interest process. The [memo](#) included a [Conflict-of-Interest Policies Acknowledgement Form](#) and [Conflict of Interest Self Disclosure Form](#). The Acknowledgement Form and if applicable, the Self Disclosure Form should be returned to Mrs. Lentz no later than April 7, 2025.

### **10.b. Contracted Staff Update**

Dr. Nadine Sanders, Assistant Superintendent, provides the following contracted staff update:

- Maura Blusius to serve as CAIU Speech and Language Pathologist at Oak Flat Elementary School beginning March 24, 2025 replacing Brianna Henderson.
- Justin Rosas to serve as an ESS LTS in the position of 7th Grade ELA Teacher during Emma Shutt's leave of absence.

### **10.c. Donation Recognition**

The Big Spring School District received a donation of money from the estate of Richard Shull, a retired teacher, which was accepted by Superintendent Dr. Nicholas Guarente to benefit the Middle School Library.

The Big Spring School District received two donations of money in memory of Blevens Zinn, a 1973 graduate, which were accepted by Superintendent Dr. Nicholas Guarente to benefit the High School FFA Program.

#### **10.c. Donation Recognition (continued)**

The Big Spring School District received a donation of food items from Weis Markets which was accepted by Superintendent Dr. Nicholas Guarente to benefit the Community Meal Prep Event at the Middle School FCS Classroom.

#### **10.d. Proposed Updated Policies**

The administration has proposed the updated policies listed below:

- [216 Student Records](#)
- [216.1 Supplemental Discipline Records](#)
- [218.2 Terroristic Threats/Acts, Threats and Threat Assessment](#)

After the policies have been reviewed by the Board of School Directors, the administration will present the updated policies for Board approval at the April 22, 2025 Board meeting.

### **11. Board Reports**

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

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

**11.c. Capital Area Intermediate Unit - Seth Cornman - [CAIU](#)** – Nothing Offered

**11.d. Cumberland Perry Area CTC - John Wardle and Mike Hippensteel** – President Wardle shared an update and said bids are back and they are lower than expected which is good news. He said the District will get a little interest money back and said Cumberland Perry will start working on permits and getting everything in line to start their building project.

**11.e. DIG Committee - Julie Boothe, Chair Seth Cornman and Lisa Shade** - Mrs. Boothe reminded everyone of the April 14 meeting in the Middle School Commons at 6:00 pm.

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

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

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

**11.i. South Central Trust - Seth Cornman** - Nothing Offered

**11.j. Tax Collection Committee - David Fisher** – Mr. Fisher said the April 14, 2025 meeting has been cancelled.

**11.k. Wellness Committee - Seth Cornman** – Mr. Cornman said their first meeting went well and they are looking into future projects.

**11.l. Future Board Agenda Items** – Nothing Offered

**11.m. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Nicholas Guarente**

Dr. Guarente shared Monthly Enrollment numbers effective March 31, 2025:

Total Students Active Enrollment	Cyber Charter School Enrollment Regular Ed	Cyber Charter School Enrollment Special Ed	Approved Home Education	CPACTC
2352 (including CAOLA and CVA)	145	94	221	118

Dr. Guarente said we are working on kindergarten registrations and have completed 79.

Dr. Guarente shared academic testing has been communicated by each building and said we will be in the thick of that for the next month or so.

Dr. Guarente said Emily Moyer, Oak Flat Special Education Teacher and Jesse Bortner, Middle School English Teacher have been nominated for Excellence in Education and will receive an award on April 10 at the Carlisle Army Barracks. He congratulated these teachers and said great job.

Dr. Guarente provided an RFP Transportation update, said there were 2 bidders and shared we are in the final stages of working through the process with a possible recommendation for the Board at the next meeting or the following.

Dr. Guarente said the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Jazz Fest in Camp Hill was held recently and congratulated the Middle School and High School Jazz Ensembles on outstanding performances.

President Wardle asked about federal funding and Dr. Guarente said there has been no delay in federal funding at this point.

## 12. Meeting Closing

### 12.a. Business from the Floor/Board Member Comment

Mr. Hippenteel thanked Mr. Over for his time and service on the Board, said he is hearing a lot about desks and chairs, said longevity should be considered and he would expect that if we paid \$200 for a chair it would last us for many years.

Mr. K. Fisher thanked everyone for coming out and commenting on furniture and said good luck to Mr. Over.

Mr. Myers thanked Mr. Over for his time on the Board and said we should thank the recent donors. Dr. Guarente confirmed thank you letters have already been sent.

Mrs. Shade shared her experience attending the Community Meal Preparation Event in the FCS Room which was organized by Big Spring students. She said 30 families enjoyed the event and thanked the students, Mrs. Whigham, Chef Keith, and Weis Markets.

Mrs. Boothe thanked Mrs. Lentz for working to improve our district's conflict of interest compliance, thanked Mr. King for sound legal advice, and thanked Mr. Over.

Mr. Wardle said chairs and desks were a hot topic this evening, said chairs/desks are an investment in our kids and their learning, said Mr. Over was quite a leader and he's sad to see him go. He said in less than 2 months we will have our next graduating class, there is much to look forward to and wished our seniors and all students well.

### 12.b. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Myers was seconded by Mr. Cornman

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

Motion Carried unanimously. 8-0

Meeting adjourned at **9:34 pm, April 7, 2025**

Next scheduled meeting is **April 22, 2025 at 7:30 pm**

