

# **OCTORARA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **Minutes of Board Meeting Held on February 20, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Octorara Area School Board was held in the Octorara Area Jr./Sr. High School Multi-Purpose Room on February 20, 2024.

Prior to the meeting five candidates for the vacancy in Region 2 were interviewed by Vice-President, Mr. Hurley. Candidates included Lisa Bowman, Neil Feltham, Daniel Jurich, Jack Mariano, and Alexander Ranck.

A moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance preceded the meeting.

The Vice-President, Mr. Hurley, called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m. Other members present were Mr. Falgiatore, Mr. Koennecker, Mr. Lusby, Mr. Norris, Ms. Metzler, Ms. Williamson, and Mr. Zimmerman. Also present were Mrs. Hardy, Secretary; Dr. Leever, Superintendent; members of the administrative team; Rhonda Lord, Saxton & Stump; and 22 citizens.

The minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting, the Facility Committee Meeting and the Work Session of January 8, 2024; the Finance Committee Meeting and the Regular Meeting of January 16, 2024; and the Education Committee Meeting of January 22, 2024 were approved on motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present.

Under visitors' comments for agenda items only, Ms. Mary Ellen Carris, Sadsbury Township, expressed her support of Neil Feltham to fill the vacant Region 2 seat. Ms. Carris closed her comment with prayer.

Under presentations, Dr. Leever discussed the work that has been done on the District's Comprehensive Plan.

Under information items, Kelly Doughtie will transfer from a Special Education Teacher at the Primary Learning Center to a Special Education Teacher at the Jr./Sr. High School effective February 5, 2024.

The Treasurer's Report, which can be found at the end of these minutes, was approved on motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Ms. Williamson and approval of all members present. (Appendix A-2/20/24)

A list of bills for the General Fund totaling \$2,713,163.68; Cafeteria Fund totaling \$45,374.93, Capital Projects totaling \$18,348.71, and Capital Reserve totaling \$17,455.84 of which are attached to these minutes as Appendix B-2/20/24 were approved and ordered paid on motion of Mr. Lusby, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present except Mr. Falgiatore who objected to the legal bill consistent with prior objections.

The following items were approved on motion of Ms. Williamson, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present:

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Services Proposal with Premium Power for maintenance on the District generators at a semi-annual cost of \$3,834. (Appendix C-2/20/24)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Client Assignment Confirmation with Soliant Health, LLC for Speech Language Pathologist services at a rate of \$92 per hour effective February 5, 2024 through June 5, 2024. (Appendix D-2/20/24)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the 2023-2024 Agriculture and Youth grant in the amount of \$7,500 to purchase three Miller Multimatic 235 Multiprocess Welders for the Mechanical Systems Technology Program.

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the 2024-2025 Legal Services Representation Agreement between Sweet, Stevens, Katz & Williams LLP and the Octorara Area School District for Special Education Services. (Appendix E-2/20/24)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following bus drivers for Althouse Transportation for the 2023-2024 school year:

Laura Hancock, Bus #17

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following policies, second reading:

101 *Mission Statement/Vision Statement/Shared Values*

200 *Enrollment of Students*

254 *Educational Opportunity for Military Children*

819 *Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response*

(Appendix F-2/20/24)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Lisa Rohrer as a long-term substitute Second Grade Teacher at the Octorara Primary Learning Center effective February 5, 2024 pending the return of Megan Clarke from Child Rearing Leave. Ms. Rohrer will return to her previous position as an Instructional Assistant at the Primary Learning Center. (Originally approved to be a long-term substitute through the end of the 2023-2024 school year.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Mr. Brian Hood as a Math Teacher at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective TBD. (Hired June 20, 2022)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Mr. Anthony Ross as an Assistant Football Coach at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective January 18, 2024. Mr. Ross will continue as a volunteer football coach. (Hired for the 2022-2023 school year.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Mr. Andy Johnson as a Jr. High Track Coach at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective January 23, 2024. (Hired for the 2019-2020 school year.)

On motion of Mr. Norris, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved Ms. Mary Beth St. John as a long-term substitute Sixth Grade Teacher at the Octorara Intermediate School effective February 22, 2024 through the end of the 2023-2024 school year pending completion of employee related documents required by law and the District. Ms. St. John's salary will be \$60,953, pro-rated which is Step 17 to MAX of the Master's scale. (Replacing Caitlin Cracchiolo who will be on child rearing leave.)

The following items were approved on motion of Mr. Lusby, second by Ms. Williamson and approval of all members present:

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved Ms. Stephanie Klingler as a Food Service Employee effective January 11, 2024 pending completion of employee related documents required by law and the District. Ms. Klingler's rate will be \$16.00 per hour for five hours per day. (Replacing Amy Bess who resigned.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved Ms. Elisa Van Zyl as a Human Resources Intern effective February 6, 2024 through June 28, 2024 pending completion of employee related documents required by law and the District. Ms. Van Zyl's rate will be \$15.00 per hour for 29.5 hours per week.

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following Athletic Game Worker for the 2023-2024 school year:

Scott Whiteside

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following supplemental contracts for the 2023-2024 school year:

Christina Ruth	Head Jr. High Track Coach	4 pts @ \$620	\$2,480
Kenneth Baker	Middle School Asst Softball Coach	3 pts @ \$620	\$1,860
David Womer	Middle School Asst Baseball Coach	3 pts @ \$620	\$1,860

On motion of Mr. Koennecker, second by Ms. Williamson and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following changes in salary due to graduate credits earned:

Allison Venini	From M+30 (\$77,569) to M+45 (\$80,499)	Step 8 to MAX
Samantha Norris	From B+15 (\$59,139) to M (\$61,203)	Step 16 to MAX
Helena Talley	From M+15 (\$68,900) to M+30 (\$70,960)	Step 13 to MAX
Stephanie Nuse	From B+15 (\$60,066) to M (\$62,012)	Step 15 to MAX

On motion of Ms. Metzler, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the 2024-2025 school calendar. (Appendix G-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Koennecker, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the estimate with Thomas Custom Builders Inc. for hallway repairs at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School at an estimated cost of \$22,250. (Appendix H-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Mr. Falgiatore and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Authorization of Services with M&B Environmental, Inc. for Lead and Copper Service Line Inventory requirements at an estimated cost of \$2,500. (Appendix I-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Proposal with Chester County Fencing for 1,200 feet of 6' chain link fence for the Elementary School playground at a cost of \$22,481.74. The Board requested proper set back standards for the fence installation. (Appendix J-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Costars Proposal with Frey Lutz for repairs to the HVAC system at the Intermediate School at a cost of \$24,975. (Appendix K-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Lusby, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Memorandum of Understanding with Pennsylvania College of Art & Design for Dual Enrollment effective January 2024. (Appendix L-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Norris, second by Ms. Williamson and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Settlement Agreement and Release for student "A". (Appendix M-2/20/24)

On motion of Ms. Williamson, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the donation of a full-size heating cabinet for the Sr. High School concession stand from the Octorara Youth Wrestling Club. The cabinet and warranty are valued at \$1,400.99 and will be of use to all sports teams for food safety compliance.

On motion of Mr. Koennecker, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors acknowledged the incomplete paperwork of Ms. Theresa Arrington as a Utility Custodian for the District. (Hired January 16, 2024)

On motion of Ms. Williamson, second by Ms. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted, with regret, the resignation for purpose of retirement of Ms. Debbie Jones as an Instructional Assistant at the Octorara Primary Learning Center effective June 5, 2024. (Hired March 11, 2002)

On motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Christe Steinbrecher as an Instructional Assistant at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective February 28, 2024. (Hired August 15, 2022)

On motion of Mr. Koennecker, second by Mr. Falgiatore and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the list of positions to staff the Summer Literacy, Math and Science and the Extended School Year Programs. These programs will run from Monday through Thursday beginning June 17 through July 18, 2024. (Appendix N-2/20/24)

On motion of Mr. Zimmerman, second by Ms. Metzler and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the salary adjustment for Mr. Kevin Kerr from \$50,929 to \$55,929 effective February 20, 2024. Mr. Kerr is a District Maintenance Worker.

On motion of Mr. Dikun, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved Mr. Joshua Nuse as a General Maintenance Worker/HVAC effective March 4, 2024 pending completion of employee related documents required by law and the District. Mr. Nuse's salary will be \$56,000, pro-rated. (Replacing William Wertz who retired.)

On motion of Ms. Williamson, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following salary adjustments as a result of previous substitute positions held in the District effective January 19, 2024:

Caitlin Cracchiolo from \$58,889 at B+15 Step 17 to \$60,994 at B+15 Step 14

Samantha Norris from \$59,139 at B+15 Step 16 to \$60,066 at B+15 Step 15

Tammy Simon from \$62,012 at M Step 15 to \$63,002 at M Step 14

Lisa Hillman from \$58,889 at B+15 Step 17 to \$60,066 at B+15 Step 15

Mary Williams from \$56,639 at B Step 16 to \$57,427 at B Step 15

Ashley Ayers from \$78,886 at M+45 Step 9 to \$80,499 at M+45 Step 8

Jill Matys from \$58,889 at B+15 Step 17 to \$60,066 at B+15 Step 15

Mr. Hurley reviewed the process for filling the vacant seat in Region 2 pursuant to Board policy and in accordance with school code and the Sunshine Act. Mr. Hurley asked for nominations. Mr. Falgiatore nominated Neil Feltham. Ms. Metzler nominated Alexander Ranck. Mr. Zimmerman nominated Lisa Bowman. Ms. Williamson nominated Daniel Jurich. There were no other nominations. A role call vote was taken where each Board member voted for the nominee of their choice. Mr. Falgiatore – Neil Feltham, Mr. Hurley – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Koennecker – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Lusby – Daniel Jurich, Ms. Metzler – Alexander Ranck, Mr. Norris – Lisa Bowman, Ms. Williamson – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Zimmerman – Lisa Bowman. Lisa Bowman received four votes,

Neil Feltham received one vote, Daniel Jurich received two votes, and Alexander Ranck received one vote.

Since no one received five votes, the nominees with the two highest votes were Lisa Bowman and Daniel Jurich. A roll call vote was taken where each Board member voted for the remaining two nominees of their choice. Mr. Zimmerman – Lisa Bowman, Ms. Williamson – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Norris – Lisa Bowman, Ms. Metzler – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Lusby – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Koennecker – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Hurley – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Falgiatore – Daniel Jurich.

Lisa Bowman received four votes and Daniel Jurich received four votes.

An executive session was called at 8:42 p.m. to discuss the strategy in moving forward with the tie.

The meeting reconvened at 8:55 p.m.

Mr. Hurley said the executive session was to discuss the strategy of moving forward. There was no deliberation on candidates. In consultation with the solicitor, there will be another roll call vote where Board members could express why they are voting for the candidate of their choice.

Mr. Hurley – Lisa Bowman because of her experience and calming influence. We are in a good position as a District because of her leading – financially, educationally, and in regards to facilities.

Mr. Koennecker – Lisa Bowman because of her experience and ability to mentor new members.

Mr. Lusby – Daniel Jurich because of his comment that everyone needs to be heard. He has four kids in the District so he is invested in the District. He liked the things he said about supporting staff, making tough decisions, communication, how he measures and defines success, and listening to different voices. Mr. Lusby said the public voted for a new direction and believes Mr. Jurich will do that in a positive way.

Ms. Metzler – Daniel Jurich. She thanked Ms. Bowman and values her input and experience. Ms. Metzler can see the Board moving in a new direction with unity. The public has spoken with the need for new growth and development. She is encouraged by what Mr. Jurich brings as a parent, his facility experience, and knowing he shares the same community interest and heart as Mr. Ganow. She appreciated hearing him say kids are the focus along with the balance of providing quality education and supporting the taxpayers and how he measures success.

Mr. Norris – Lisa Bowman because of the reasons stated prior and the things she said regarding the role the Board has with the Superintendent. He reminded everyone that we have a new Superintendent, HR Director, Business Manager, and Facilities Director. He wants to see consistency at the Board level. Ms. Bowman was fond of saying, “What are we solving for?” Mr. Norris said we are solving for the future relationship of the Board, its administration, and how we govern. He expressed his concern with Mr. Jurich’s relationship with a primary District vendor.

Ms. Williamson – Daniel Jurich because she agrees with what Mr. Lusby and Ms. Metzler have said. She is in the camp that change is good. She said the other Board members have a lot of experience on the Board and shouldn’t sell themselves short as leaders.

Mr. Zimmerman – Lisa Bowman because it comes down to leadership. He said it is important to have leadership and knowledge of Board interactions. We lost a lot of leadership with Mr. Ganow and we need to replace the guidance and experience that he had. Mr. Zimmerman said right now the Board needs experience and, in a year and a half, the public can take it from there. When he thought of who would replace Mr. Ganow, he immediately thought of Ms. Bowman and prayed she would put her name in. He said we need to move forward with the leadership she brings.

Mr. Falgiatore – Daniel Jurich because he thinks it would be wrong to assume going with him would be a step back. He said people want change and he believes Mr. Jurich can bring the vision and change the Board needs.

Lisa Bowman received four votes and Daniel Jurich received four votes.

Mr. Hurley said there will be one more roll call vote and if there is still a tie, the Board will take a short break that is not an executive session.

A roll call vote was taken where each Board member voted for the remaining two nominees of their choice. Ms. Williamson – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Norris – Lisa Bowman, Ms. Metzler – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Lusby – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Koennecker – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Hurley – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Falgiatore – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Zimmerman – Lisa Bowman.

Lisa Bowman received four votes and Daniel Jurich received four votes.

Mr. Hurley announced a five-ten minute break at 9:08 p.m.

Mr. Hurley called the meeting back to order at 9:20 p.m.

Mr. Hurley said the District will discuss the deadlock with the solicitor and put out a statement regarding what the next process will be. He said this room has lost control of the ninth member and the decision may have to go to a judge in West Chester and that individual will choose who the ninth Board member is. Mr. Hurley said there will be one more roll call vote. Mr. Koennecker – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Lusby – Daniel Jurich, Ms. Metzler – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Norris – Lisa Bowman, Ms. Williamson – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Zimmerman – Lisa Bowman, Mr. Falgiatore – Daniel Jurich, Mr. Hurley – Lisa Bowman.

Lisa Bowman received four votes and Daniel Jurich received four votes.

On motion of Mr. Norris, second by Mr. Lusby and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors tabled the nomination process to fill the Board vacancy.

Under the Finance Committee Report, Mr. Norris said the committee was given a year-to-year comparison of financial reports. Raymond James was present and discussed the financial state of the District including grant availability, debt service, and the change in projects that can be done using ESSER funds. The District was victim of check fraud of \$11,000 which will be reimbursed by insurance. The committee reviewed the savings by using more PowerSchool platforms.

Under the CCIU Board Representative Report, Mr. Norris reported on the meeting held on January 17, 2024.

There were no items of old business, new business, or other items and announcements.

Under visitors' comments in general, Susan Boninu, Parkesburg, expressed her hope for change. She requested an update on dual credits. She said she owns a salon and employs Cosmetology students from TCHS. She expressed her concern that those students are not graduating with enough Cosmetology hours to be certified.

Under administrator comments/announcements, Dr. Propper said he plans to present dual credit information to the Board. He announced the boys' basketball district playoff game will be held on Friday at 7:00 p.m. He encouraged everyone to attend the musical performance of "Annie" to be held on February 29, March 1, and March 2. The Mr. Octorara pageant/talent show to benefit Four Diamonds childhood cancer research will be held on March 8 at 7:00 p.m. He shared that some members of the staff provided and served dinner at the Parkesburg Point as well as provided tutoring for anyone who wanted it. He thanked Ms. Trainor for coordinating the volunteers as a way to give back to the community. Dr. Propper congratulated Cassidy Jeffries and Taylor Orner for making school history in girls' wrestling as they qualified for the regional tournament. Dr. Propper shared his opportunity to shadow senior, Ashley Zavala, at Cosmetology at TCHS. He is aware students don't usually reach their credit hours and will work on finding a way for them to complete their hours in the program.

Dr. Leever thanked the five candidates for their willingness to serve on the Board. He recognized Debbie Jones for her years of service to the District and wished her well in retirement. He presented

a “Look What’s Happening at the Home of the Braves!” slide show where he recognized Bridget Whitfield and Ryan Linnenbaugh for earning seats at the PMEA District 12 Band. After a second round of auditions, Bridget earned a chair at the Region VI Band to be hosted at Downingtown West on February 22-24, 2024. Mr. Hilbolt shared the next slide recognized student work in the Pathway 21 Program and the following slide showed the experience of a student in the work study program in the Life Skills and Autistic Support classrooms. Dr. Leever’s last slide recognized Cassidy Jeffries and Taylor Orner for making school history in girls’ wrestling for qualifying for the regional tournament by capturing third in their weight class.

Under Board comments, Mr. Zimmerman thanked the five candidates for putting their names out there and hopes they will run against him in the future. He said it is great to see more people interested in the Board and what’s happening in the District.

Mr. Falgiatore thanked the candidates. He expressed his concern with the process and said his concern would have led him to abstain and people reached out to him wanting change. He said it was the most important vote he will ever have as a Board member so abstaining wasn’t going to be the right move. He thanked the community for being involved in the process.

Ms. Metzler thanked the candidates for their time and effort. She said she is proud of her neighbors for being invested and hope it continues. She thanked the community for attending and being involved in the process.

Mr. Hurley thanked the candidates for putting themselves out there and for their interest in serving on the Board.

Mr. Hurley announced the following upcoming meetings:

Executive Session for Personnel - Tuesday, February 20, 2024 – Prior to the Regular Meeting in room 102 at the Jr. High School. There was also an Executive Session during the meeting in room 102 to discuss the process for filing the vacant Board seat.

Education Committee Meeting – Monday, February 26, 2024 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Policy/Facility Committee Meeting – Monday, March 11, 2024 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Next regularly scheduled Work Session – Monday, March 11, 2024 – 7:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Finance Committee Meeting – Monday, March 18, 2024 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Next regularly scheduled Board Meeting – Monday, March 18, 2024 – 7:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

There being no further items of business the meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m. on motion of Mr. Lusby, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present.

This Board meeting can be viewed in its entirety at [www.youtube.com/user/OctoraraAreaSD](https://www.youtube.com/user/OctoraraAreaSD).

TREASURER'S REPORT  
OCTORARA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS  
GENERAL FUND  
2023-2024

<u>Cash Balance as of December 31, 2023</u>	\$	3,213,114.96
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Receipts Deposited:

Revenue - (Tax Receipts, State Transfers)	\$	1,232,920.93		
Other Receipts - (Rentals, Misc.)		1,030.00		
Checking Account Interest		4,755.45		
Transfer in from Investments		2,525,335.74		3,764,042.12
Total Available	\$			6,977,157.08

Disbursements:

Net Payroll	\$	1,096,847.60		
Accounts Payable		2,570,092.93		
Transfer to Investments		1,000,100.00		4,667,040.53

<u>General Fund Cash as of January 31, 2024</u>	\$	2,310,116.55
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Investments Outstanding

Beginning Balance PSDLAF Investment Account	\$	8,725,307.13
Beginning Balance Fulton Money Market		29,086,335.74
Earnings on PSDLAF Investment Account		39,136.87
Earnings on Fulton Money Market		82624.58
Net Transfers		(\$1,525,235.74)

<u>Total General Fund Cash and Investments as of January 31, 2024</u>	\$	38,718,285.13
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For the February 19, 2024 Regular Board Meeting  
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Respectfully submitted,

Jill L. Hardy, Secretary  
Octorara Board of School Directors