

Rotary Club of Portage Bulletin

Porta-Rota-Call

Date: July 14, 2021

by: Christy Klien

President Emily Turner called the hybrid meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. The meeting was held at the Cellar at 328 W. Milham Ave as well as online. We recited the Four Way Test and the Pledge of Allegiance. Past President Matt Semelbauer gave the invocation.

PROGRAM: Mark Bielang, Superintendent Portage Public Schools

Ben Barber introduced fellow Portage Rotarian and Portage Public Schools Superintendent Mark Bielang. Mark presented on the Portage Public Schools Elementary Facility Planning process. Mark shared some of the many reasons PPS needs to update their elementary schools, including the age and condition of the buildings, safety and security, and 1:1 computing. Mark then shared the history and the process for developing the updated Master Plan, including a feasibility study and community input. The schools have guiding principles that they are following. The Elementary Feasibility Study provided five scenarios with many options under the scenarios. The preferred plan had five new elementary schools to replace: Amberly, Angling Road, Central, Haverhill, and Woodland. Moorsbridge Elementary would be remodeled. The scenario had a new 600 student Central Elementary built on vacant land on S. Westnedge, with the existing school being a "swing" school during the construction. When all construction was complete, Central Elementary would have been repurposed. An online survey was conducted in March 2020. The survey feedback was that 45.8% of respondents felt the plan was unacceptable, 39.8% responded that the plan was acceptable, and 14.4% were unsure. When asked if they would approve a 25-year bond, 45.9% of respondents replied "Yes," 37.5% responded "No," and 16.6% were unsure. The primary concerns of the "No" replies were cost, Central Elementary location, and overcrowding.

In February 2021, the Portage Public Schools Board reviewed three paths. Path 1 consisted of the preferred plan, Path 2 was a revised plan that did not relocate Central Elementary and had PCEC as the "swing" school, and Path 3 remodeled six elementary schools and no new buildings. The school board reviewed the benefits of building new versus remodeling and the results of the 2020 survey. Path 2, the revised plan, was brought forward. The construction sequence would be Central, Haverhill, Amberly, New PCEC, Moorsbridge, Woodland, Angling Road, and demo the existing PCEC. The bond amount would be approximately \$175 million, a 0 mill tax increase for the community.

A survey was conducted in 2021, and 1,085 residents participated. 57.6% of the respondents felt the elementary school buildings need improvement. 57.5% responded that the plan was acceptable, and 62.6% would vote to approve the 25-year bond. The bond proposal will be on the August 3, 2021, ballot.

Visit www.portageps.org to learn more about the bond proposal.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Golf outing on August 9th at Gull Lake View Golf Course – you can participate in one of three ways (or all three!):
 - Donate (\$\$\$/items): T-shirts, umbrellas, golf ball sleeves, gift certificates (spa, restaurant, car washes, etc), magnets, essentially anything of value greater than \$5, or cash/check and we can purchase on your behalf; you can drop off items/prizes to my office (6784 S Westnedge Dr, Suite D, Portage, MI 49002) or to Bonnie's office (2312 Winters Drive, Portage, MI 49002)
 - Play the Event: get a group together or come and we'll find a team for you!
 - Volunteer: we always need help in planning and set up
- Global Grant donations due by the end of the month – we are in need of \$5000 to complete this grant – if you need more info, please contact Paul Carlson

We celebrated Randy Orwig, Andrew Iasci, Ben Barber, Kim Carr, Christy Klien, Bonnie Granado, and Chris Buckley's birthdays. Marlene and Wendell are both celebrating 8 years with the Club.

Next week's program is TBD.

Meeting adjourned



[Facebook link](#)

The Portage Rotary Club provides financial support for youth education, families in need and other local charitable causes. We are part of Rotary International. A service organization of business and professional leaders that provide humanitarian services and help build goodwill and peace in the world