



*Respectful, Responsible, Safe & Prepared*

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 23, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.**  
**Waupaca High School Community Room and [Live Stream](#)**

**Welcome and Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairperson Dale Feldt at 5:30 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

All members of the Committee were present (Chairperson Dale Feldt, Steve Klismet, and Molly McDonald). Additionally, Board members Betty Manion and Ron Brooks were present.

**Also Present:**

Present in the WHS Community Room: Ron Saari, Sandy Lucas, Mark Flaten, Austin Moore, Laurie Schmidt, Steve Thomaschefskey, Rob Scherrer, Bill Storck, and Jake Lamb and Marty Docter of the Waupaca Pump N' Munch, and a member of the community.

**Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made by Steve Klismet and seconded by Molly McDonald to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**Review of Board Meeting Norms:**

The Board reviewed their collective commitments.

**2024-2025 Budget Outlook:**

District Administrator Ron Saari reminded everyone that we have been good stewards of the taxpayers' money, in that the District's credit score is Excellent; we have a healthy Fund Balance which covers us in between getting paid by the state; the District does not short-term borrow; and it follows a 15 year maintenance plan for all facilities and grounds. In addition, the annual mill rate has steadily declined the last few years to \$4.79 per \$1,000 of valuation.

Mr. Saari outlined where necessary cuts were made last year (totaling \$981,871) in order to balance the budget for 2023-2024. He added that it will be necessary to cut another \$900,000 (approximately) this year in order to balance the budget for 2024-2025. Mr. Saari explained that several items all play a role in why that will be necessary and they are: the state's funding formula (declining enrollment and the revenue limit), maintenance of technology upgrades, Act 55 required payments to two private schools, not levying to the maximum revenue limit for nine years in a row, and possible expansion of our EL Department to add a second English language teacher/coach. In addition, he pointed out that because enrollment increased this year, we lost \$300,000 in the hold harmless exemption.

In an effort to be transparent in determining where the additional cuts could be made, Mr. Saari would like to involve an interested group of stakeholders to share information,

ideas, and data along with the pros and cons of each option. This stakeholder group could then provide valuable feedback to the Board and counsel it in its decision making. He advised that he has also shared this information in our community with Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Saari advised that the Administration does have a list of where possible cuts could be made and he can share that with the stakeholder group. He pointed out, however, that their first priority is to have CESA 5 work with our new Director of Business Services, Austin Moore, to be sure the estimated \$900,000 figure is accurate.

Board President Dale Feldt requested that the stakeholder group consist of individuals suggested by Board members as well as groups from the community, which should include parents, civic organizations, a County Board representative, etc. He pointed out that the list of possible cuts the Administration will provide includes just some of the options, as they will be looking to the stakeholders for their thoughts and input.

Much discussion and brainstorming among the Board members took place regarding possible items and areas where the District could cut costs, such as maintenance of the turf football field, use of the soccer field, and snow removal. Concerns were raised regarding the maintenance costs of the turf football field, but Director of Co-Curricular Activities and Athletics Rob Scherrer advised that it would cost approximately \$500,000 to convert the football field from turf back to grass and it would still require maintenance. It was suggested that perhaps Waupaca Park and Rec pay the District for utilizing the soccer field.

It was also pointed out that even if the cost of the safety construction upgrades comes in less than anticipated, any money left has to go back to the bank. Mr. Saari and Mr. Moore will be meeting with the insurance representatives again this year to discuss reducing insurance costs.

Board President Feldt requested that each Board member submit the names of five people that would be willing to participate in the stakeholder group to Mr. Saari, adding that he wants to see a good cross section of people. In addition, they should include possible nights and times to hold the stakeholder meetings.

#### **Trademark of Waupaca Comets Logo:**

Because Board member Steve Klismet had some concerns regarding the use of the District's logo and people/businesses profiting off of it (shirts, cups, etc.), he requested that this be included on tonight's agenda.

Board member Ron Brooks shared his experience with a trademark he had requested. He added that a trademark would invite competition, and found it to be a waste of time and money. In addition, it costs a lot of money to protect a trademark, and you are never going to collect revenue on a logo trademark. It was pointed out that there are only four schools in the state who have trademarked their logos.

Mr. Brooks, along with Mr. Scherrer and other Administrators, suggested that we have a conversation with reputable businesses regarding the use of the District's logo, give them permission to use it, and in exchange the District collects compensation for it. Mr. Scherrer

added that he is working on centralizing the purchase of Comet gear through the District's website.

Board member Brooks asked Mr. Docter and Mr. Lamb for their thoughts, as local business owners, regarding the feasibility of getting a trademark. Mr. Lamb advised that people are going to steal a logo anyway, as his trademarked logo was stolen. So now he has to follow it which costs attorney's fees, etc. He added that they would be willing to sell Comet gear at their store, but it would not generate a lot of money.

### **Spirit Gas Pump:**

Mr. Saari introduced the new owners of the Mobil Truck Stop, Marty Docter and Jake Lamb. They advised that they purchased the Waupaca Mobil Truck Stop (which consists of the repair shop, car wash, and restaurant), and they will be changing the name to Pump N' Munch Waupaca. They also purchased the east side Mobil gas station on Royalton Street. In previous discussions with Mr. Saari and Mr. Scherrer, they recommended Spirit Pumps as a way for the School District of Waupaca to make some extra revenue.

They advised that this would be a partnership with the District to drive business to them and, in turn, they would give back to the District. They are open to whatever group the District wants to specifically support. A few cents per gallon of gas is donated back to the District, and it is advertised on the pump. In addition, \$5 of every monthly subscription for unlimited car washes as well as a percentage of gift cards sold are also donated to the District. They want to, however, make sure that not one group gets all the money. That is why they run their reports and make the donation on a quarterly basis to make sure all groups are included and can benefit. However, they can do this on a monthly basis if that is what the District desires. There are upfront costs of \$2,000 for labor and graphic material, but they are open to having discussions regarding the payment of those costs. Mr. Saari advised that Mr. Docter and Mr. Lamb will work directly with Mr. Scherrer and Mr. Moore on this project.

Mr. Docter and Mr. Lamb advised that they could also do this at their east side Mobil gas station, but additional conversations will need to be had regarding that, along with possibly carrying Comet gear. They also shared that they are considering putting up a brat barn, which gives an organization a place to have a brat fry to earn money.

### **Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC):**

Mr. Saari advised that, per the staff's request, the District will offer employees another benefit option – an opportunity to enroll in the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program (WDC), which is a companion benefit to the Wisconsin Retirement System. It is another place for employees to invest money for retirement, similar to a 403(b) plan. One of the perks is that an employee can buy employment years of service to increase their number of years of service at the time of retirement. This program is voluntary, and there are no employer costs. It also provides a lot of flexibility and lower administrative fees.

Mr. Saari shared a presentation setting out in detail the program features, employer benefits, participant benefits, administrative fee, investment option expense ratios, and other information related to plan services and investment options.

School Counselor Bill Storck added that staff would be appreciative and would support this benefit option.

Mr. Saari advised that after full Board approval, it will take a couple of months working with Mr. Moore and WDC before it will be in place and available to staff.

A motion was made by Molly McDonald and seconded by Steve Klismet to bring this to the full Board at the next regular Board meeting and make a recommendation to approve the Resolution for Inclusion Under the State of Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Steve Klismet and seconded by Molly McDonald to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.