



SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 12, 2024 Regular Meeting

Pursuant to the regulations, the regular Board meeting was held on the above date in the Waupaca High School Community Room and live streamed via YouTube. The meeting was also broadcast on TV Channel 991.

The purpose of the Board Meeting Minutes is to capture the essence of discussions through the actions voted on. These minutes should not be interpreted to represent a transcription of the meeting. To watch a recording of this meeting, please click [here](#).

President's Comments and Pledge of Allegiance:

Ron Brooks welcomed everyone and shared a letter from an engineer he is working with entitled, "Why We're Here", which included a note from a young boy regarding airplanes. The takeaway being how "one little thing makes a big difference" and how that impacts teachers as well. He then asked Alec Olson to lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Ron Brooks at 5:34 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present in the WHS Community Room: Ron Brooks, Steve Klismet, Molly McDonald, Dale Feldt, Bob Adams, and Lori Verhalen.

Excused: Betty Manion.

Also Present:

Present in the WHS Community Room: Craig Gerlach, Sandy Lucas, Mark Flaten, Austin Moore, Laurie Schmidt, Michael Werbowski, Jenifer Erb, John Meyer, John Erspamer, Carrie Naparalla, Dar Pflugardt, Jay Seefeldt, Alec Olson, GT Teachers Jess Bank, Rene Jungers, and Melissa Durrant, GT Students Liberty Pankow, Lainey Berrens, Sawyer Buenning, and Lili Liegl and their family members, as well as other members of the community.

Approval of Agenda:

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

Magic Minute:

Board President Brooks asked each of the Board members to share a positive comment or event, with the purpose being that it forces everyone to find the good. He advised Student Representative Alec Olson that he will be included in this at the next meeting.

Public Comment:

None.

Review of Board Meeting Norms:

The Board reviewed their collective commitments.

So the GT students would not have to stay until later in the meeting, Board President Ron Brooks moved Item XI to this point in the agenda.

Monitoring:

GT Program Update:

Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten provided an update on the GT program. There were three GT teachers in attendance. Their goal is to provide students with additional support to be appropriately challenged and supported. He shared data indicating the breakdown of the GT program over the past several years. Mr. Flaten noted that it is better to hear from the GT students themselves so a few of them shared their experiences.

Sawyer Buenning, a junior, advised that he has been in the GT program since 2nd grade to expand his knowledge, be more challenged and engaged. One of his best experiences was a passion project in 8th grade. Lainey Berrens, a freshman, has been in the GT Arts program since 6th grade. It is an enrichment area with a focus on art. She did not like the fact that she was not able to receive credit for the online arts class in 8th grade and believes it should be allowed. Liberty Pankow, a freshman, entered the academics GT program in 1st grade which provided the right amount of challenges. However, in 5th grade she did not meet the qualifications to remain in GT but worked hard to get back into the program in 8th grade. She enjoys the challenging work and is grateful for the opportunity to be in GT. Lili Liegl, a senior, advised that she has been in the GT program since at least 2nd grade. However, it does pose some difficulties related to social aspects as there can be a stigma of being in GT. GT students push themselves harder, however the program does provide extra support systems to help them.

Mr. Flaten added that finding the right balance can sometimes be difficult but the program and staff strive to support the students.

Board Reports:

Student Representative Report:

Alec Olson shared the Student Council's goals this year which include Project Backpack and Coats for Kids. He also advised that he along with other students have been chosen to provide feedback relating to the superintendent search. The Camelot Musical just finished, the fall sports season was successful, winter sports started yesterday, and the athletic apparel store is open. The Madrigal season is also starting.

Approval of Minutes:

October 8, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
October 22, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting
October 29, 2024 Budget Hearing
November 4, 2024 Personnel Committee Meeting

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Bob Adams to approve the Minutes of the four meetings listed above as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Upcoming Meetings and Other Activities:

The Board was reminded of the following upcoming meetings and other activities:

December 10, 2024 - Regular Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

Completion of Board Member Availability Calendar:

The Board members were asked to complete their availability calendars through December.

Notice of Spring Election:

Board President Brooks advised that there are two seats up for election next April, his and Dale Feldt's, and that Mr. Feldt is considering not running. If he decides not to run, he has until December 27, 2024, to file a Notice of Non-Candidacy.

Appoint Deputy Clerk for Elections:

Board President Brooks appointed Sandy Lucas as the Deputy Clerk for Elections.

School Visits or Other Board Reports:

Because Board member Betty Manion was unable to attend tonight's meeting, Board President Brooks shared a report of her visit to WMS. She observed several 8th grade science and social studies classes, a 7th grade class with new EL students, and spoke with two new 5th grade teachers as well as a custodian. She also spoke with Principal John Meyer and Associate Principal Lisa Graf who shared several new initiatives being implemented this year. She also attended Forensics Night.

Mr. Brooks shared that he visited WHS and walked around the building with High School Principal Michael Werbowsky. He visited the tech ed and autobody areas, as well as a supplemental math class. He commented that he noticed some empty classrooms so he wants the community to work to fill those classrooms.

Board member Bob Adams visited WMS on Veterans Day and met with Principal Meyer. He liked the clarity that they are wanting to bring as well as team building and Mr. Meyer's visibility to the students. There were many veterans in the classrooms telling their stories. The building improvements are great and he learned of planned updates as well. Of particular interest to him was hydroponics.

Several Board members commented that they attended the Camelot Musical which was very well done.

CEC Liaison Report:

Board President Brooks shared CEC Liaison Betty Manion's report of the November 1, 2024, Governance Council meeting. Some of the updates discussed included an advisor update as well as a Sources of Strength update. She also advised that CEC Administrator Carrie Naparalla shared the results of the fall aimswebPlus screening for K-3rd grade.

Other items included: there is a new elective entitled The Newsroom; a CEC billboard was donated; the monitoring schedule for advisors was approved; the fundraiser was set; the CEC budget will be approved after the financial reports are available; discussion continues regarding the playground which has been scaled down; and the Coffee Talks continue. It was pointed out that Project Night is this Thursday and the holiday luncheon is December 13th.

Finance Committee Meeting:

Committee Chairperson Dale Feldt advised that the Committee met on October 22, 2024, and discussed debt defeasance. This will be used to help pay off \$1.5 million in debt without having to go to referendum which saves on interest. The Committee agreed to do this and it was agreed to and voted on by the full Board at the October 29th Budget Hearing. Mr. Brooks added that a lower mill rate is not sustainable; it is better for businesses to have a level mill rate.

Personnel Committee Meeting:

On behalf of Committee Chairperson Betty Manion, Committee member Lori Verhalen advised that the Committee met on November 4, 2024, to discuss the hourly pay rate for Food Service employees as well as a change in the Activities Secretary's employee status.

Hourly Pay Rate for Food Service Employees:

Ms. Verhalen advised that the Food Service Department has difficulty hiring staff because of the low hourly pay rate. Administration requested a \$1.50 per hour wage increase but the Committee requested that Administration provide additional comparative data with other school districts. So the matter was tabled for further discussion at tonight's meeting, and the Board did receive that data from Interim District Administrator Craig Gerlach.

Mr. Gerlach advised that in looking at the data, even if the rates are increased by \$1.50, the District is still low compared with the average low and average high. Therefore, recruiting may continue to be difficult and it is unfair to the employees as well.

The Board agreed to send this back to the Personnel Committee for further review and possible final approval.

Recommendation to Change the Classification of the Activities Secretary to Year-Round Employee Status (260 days/year):

Ms. Verhalen advised that because the duties of the Activities Secretary have increased, it was recommended that the classification be changed from a school-year to a year-round employee.

A motion was made by Molly McDonald and seconded by Steve Klismet to change the classification of the Activities Secretary from school-year to year-round employee status (260 days/year). The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Consent Agenda:

A motion was made by Lori Verhalen and seconded by Bob Adams to approve the items of the consent agenda as presented.

Financial Reports:

Accounts Payable for October 2024

Cash Receipts

Year-to-Date Financial Update - Budget to Actual Comparison by Fund Groups as of 10/31/2024:

Fund 10 Ending Balance: \$5,834,163 [2023-2024: \$6,336,095]

Fund 21 Ending Balance: \$295,617 [2023-2024: \$382,335]

Fund 27 Ending Balance: -\$277,321 [2023-2024: -\$783,252]

Fund 49 Ending Balance: -\$13,097 [2023-2024: \$2,362,408]

Fund 50 Ending Balance: \$423,705 [2023-2024: \$489,634]

Retirements:

Lori Zelinske - WLC 3rd Grade Teacher

Amy Lemkuil - WLC 4th Grade Teacher

Jay Seefeldt - WMS Social Studies/Science Teacher

William Kroseberg - WHS Technology Education Teacher

Kathy Batten - WHS Spanish Teacher

Kandi Bouwma - WHS Alternative Education/At-Risk Teacher

Linda Riehl - WLC Ed. Asst.

Resignations:

Cathryn Warner - WHS Ed. Asst.-Spec. Ed.

Hires – 2024-2025 School Year:

AJ Nimmer - IT Intern

Sabrina Hansen - Part-Time WLC Food Service Class 3A

Elwood Riley - WLC Ed. Asst.

Extra Curricular Coaches and Advisors – 2024-2025 School Year:

WHS Coaching Positions:

Cameron Kingsmore - JV Girls Basketball

WMS Advisor Positions:

Tara Roberts-Turner - Destination Imagination

The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Communications:

Board President Brooks shared that it is American Education Week next week.

Donations:

Mr. Brooks advised that school supplies were donated to the District by MiTech and the Feely Family donated maracas to the CEC. A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Molly McDonald to accept, with gratitude, the donations as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Administration:

Mr. Gerlach advised that an online survey regarding the superintendent search is on the District's website and a link to the survey will be sent out to the Board, staff, students, and parents.

Enrollment Update:

In response to questions previously raised by the Board, Mr. Flaten provided an update on the current and projected enrollment trends. Enrollment continues to decline across the state. He shared a breakdown of the enrollment and core education (not elective) staffing data by grade level at each building which is continually monitored and tracked. He also shared data relating to the number of students who have transferred in and out for the period June 7-October 25, 2024, and of those, how many who have enrolled in and out since September 3rd, as well as the number of those that were EL students. We have a much more mobile population than ever before which could be attributed to several factors including open enrollment, job transfers, economics, housing, etc. This is not unique to the School District of Waupaca, it is happening everywhere.

Director of Student Services Laurie Schmidt advised that the highest level of EL students is at the elementary level, and without the additional EL staffing that was hired this year, the Department would be struggling. There is one posted EL educational assistant position not yet filled.

Ms. Schmidt advised that if there is a disciplinary issue with an EL student on the bus, Go-Riteway writes up a report which goes to the building principal to handle. She noted that Go-Riteway does have a driver who speaks Haitian Creole.

WMS Principal John Meyer commented that in his interactions with EL students, usually using Google Translate, he is seeing a positive impact both ways.

Adjournment Into Closed Session:

A motion was made by Lori Verhalen and seconded by Molly McDonald to adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 19.85(1)(e), deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. Specifically to review the offers to purchase the 515 School Street property. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote at 6:33 p.m.

Reconvene in Open Session to Consider Action on Matters from Closed Session:

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Steve Klismet to reconvene in open session to consider action on matters from closed session. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote at 6:55 p.m.

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Steve Klismet to accept the offer to purchase the property at 515 School Street, Waupaca, WI, from Waupaca Community Arts Board, Inc., in the amount of \$410,000.00 as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Bob Adams to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Ron Brooks, President
Board of Education

Date _____

Betty Manion, Clerk
Board of Education

Date _____