



*Respectful, Responsible, Safe & Prepared*

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES December 10, 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](#).

The WHS Madrigal Singers performed holiday music just prior to the meeting.

### **President's Comments and Pledge of Allegiance:**

Ron Brooks welcomed everyone and shared two short quotes regarding children that he read in a magazine. He 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 5:37 p.m.

### **Roll Call:**

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

Excused: Molly McDonald.

### **Also Present:**

Present in the WHS Community Room: Craig Gerlach, Sandy Lucas, Mark Flaten, Laurie Schmidt, Rob Scherrer, Jenifer Erb, Kyle Scherwinski, John Meyer, Lisa Graf, John Erspamer, Jody Pankratz, Carrie Naparalla, Alec Olson, Melissa Durrant, WHS cross country team member Owen Lencki and his parents, and Sandy Robinson. Mike Richie of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) and Austin Moore attended via Google Meet.

### **Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made by Betty Manion and seconded by Bob Adams to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

### **Magic Minute:**

Each of the Board members as well as the Student Representative shared a positive comment or event.

### **Public Comment:**

None.

### **Review of Board Meeting Norms:**

The Board reviewed their collective commitments.

**WHS Cross Country Team:**

Director of Co-Curricular Activities and Athletics Rob Scherrer spoke on behalf of Cross Country Team Coach Jess Bank who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The team had two outstanding athletes this year, with Sienna Timm and Owen Lencki both qualifying for the state cross country meet and Owen finished runner up. Mr. Scherrer advised of their outstanding achievements which included new records and many honors and awards. Owen also earned the All American Honors medal and Runner of the Year award. Mr. Scherrer commented that he along with Coach Bank are very proud of the entire cross country team.

**Presentation of District Leadership Profile Report:**

Mr. Mike Richie of HYA presented the District's Leadership Profile Report which represents the findings of the input he received from his meetings with different focus groups held in November. He highlighted the strengths and challenges of the District as well as the desired characteristics of the new superintendent as identified by each of the five groups (the School Board, community/parents, staff, support staff, and students). He noted that there were many common themes throughout. Mr. Richie advised that this is now a public document and will be posted on the District and HYA websites for the purpose of informing a possible candidate about the School District.

Mr. Richie started to advise of the issues facing the District that the new superintendent would need to understand and address when he lost his internet connection and left the meeting. Mr. Gerlach commented that this is a good profile and the District is in a good position. Mr. Richie will be presenting candidates to the Board at the January 2, 2025, special Board meeting.

Board President Brooks pointed out that it is encouraging to see that a majority of the survey respondents rated the District a 3 or above in being a quality school district, reflecting a positive level of satisfaction with the District.

**Board Reports:**Student Representative Report:

Alec Olson shared the Student Council's goals and current fundraisers. The Madrigal dinner was held this past weekend which was its 30th year. Students attended the holocaust presentation yesterday as well as the Holocaust Exhibit at the Waupaca Public Library. The WHS band participated in the holiday parade and winter sports are in full swing.

Approval of Minutes:

November 12, 2024 Regular Board Meeting

November 14, 2024 Special Board Meeting

December 5, 2024 Personnel Committee Meeting

A motion was made by Lori Verhalen and seconded by Betty Manion to approve the Minutes of the three 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:

January 2, 2025 - Special Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

January 6, 2025 - Special Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

January 7, 2025 - Special Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

January 14, 2025 - Regular Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

January 21-24, 2025 - WASB State Education Convention

January 27, 2025 - Special Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Gerlach commented that the purpose of the special Board meetings is to conduct interviews for the superintendent position.

#### Completion of Board Member Availability Calendar:

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

#### WASB Resolutions:

Board President Ron Brooks advised that he supports all of the proposed resolutions, particularly Resolutions 25-04 and 25-08, and asked WASB Delegate Betty Manion to support those as well at the WASB Delegate Assembly at the State Education Convention. Mrs. Manion noted that some of the resolutions were proposed last year and were resubmitted.

#### **School Visits or Other Board Reports:**

Board member Dale Feldt shared that he attended the WHS trivia night which was a fantastic event. He went to project night at CEC and the Young Authors presentation at WMS. He also went to the WLC and participated in the pre-K tour, met with WLC Principal John Erspamer and Associate Principal Jody Pankratz who were providing tours to potential teachers from UWSP, and he tutored math students. He advised that WHS and the Waupaca Rotary have teamed up to bring in a group from Romania in August with the focus being on education.

Board member Bob Adams shared that the Madrigal Singers performed at his church, and he commended their teacher, Anna Lussier, and her team for all of their great work.

Board member Betty Manion shared that she attended the Authors and Writers presentation at WMS, the cupcake wars, and the Holocaust Exhibit at the Waupaca Public Library with the 8th graders. She also attended the Madrigal dinner and the holiday parade and commented that the community appreciated that the WHS band performed. She also went to the WLC and spoke with Mr. Erspamer and Ms. Pankratz as well as several teachers.

Mr. Brooks shared that he also attended the holiday parade and heard the same positive comments regarding the WHS band, and he also attended the Holocaust Exhibit with CEC students.

Board member Lori Verhalen shared that she attended the holocaust presentation at WHS yesterday.

Board member Steve Klismet shared that he went to the dance team's event in Freedom and commented that many Waupaca community members were there to support the team.

As a side note, Mr. Klismet noted that the elderly have trouble climbing the stairs on the bleachers so inquired if a railing could be installed.

#### **CEC Liaison Report:**

CEC Liaison Betty Manion advised that she attended the Governance Council meeting last Friday. They were provided updates from the Student Council, and about project night and the farm to table dinner as well as students' community visits. There was also a Sources of Strength peer leaders presentation. They discussed the school report card, the annual Authorizer Report, and the 2024-2025 budget, and looked at programs for teaching Spanish. They were also advised of the Rotary grants received and that the CEC billboard is up on Highway 10.

#### **Personnel Committee Meeting:**

Mr. Gerlach advised that the Committee met on December 5, 2024, to review wage comparables for Food Service employees. Even with the proposed \$1.50 per hour wage increase, the employees will still be slightly lower than the average. He requested that the increase be made retroactive to November 4, 2024.

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Lori Verhalen, per Committee recommendation, to increase the hourly wage rate for Food Service employees by \$1.50 per hour to the 1A, 1B, 2, and consolidated level 3 classifications as presented, with it being paid retroactive to the Personnel Committee meeting held on November 4, 2024. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**Consent Agenda:**

Mr. Feldt inquired as to the reason for the RVA contract renewal and if there was an increase in costs. Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten advised that it was needed because it is a charter school through the Medford Area Public School District and their need to review their contract, similarly to what we did with the CEC. Costs are figured on an annual basis and are not part of this renewal contract.

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

Financial Reports:

Accounts Payable for November 2024

Cash Receipts

Year-to-Date Financial Update - Budget to Actual Comparison by Fund Groups as of 11/30/2024:

Fund 10 Ending Balance: \$3,505,244 [2023-2024: \$4,421,957]

Fund 21 Ending Balance: \$294,345 [2023-2024: \$405,425]

Fund 27 Ending Balance: -\$837,261 [2023-2024: -\$983,278]

Fund 49 Ending Balance: -\$13,346 [2023-2024: \$1,853,453]

Fund 50 Ending Balance: \$373,581 [2023-2024: \$516,989]

Retirements:

Kareene Hansen - WMS 7th Grade ELA Teacher

John Erspamer - WLC Principal and EC-8th Grade Summer School Coordinator

Michael Werbowsky - WHS Principal and Grades 9-12 Summer School Coordinator

Darlene Pflugardt - Food Service Supervisor

Terri Ricker - WLC Ed. Asst.

Hires – 2024-2025 School Year:

Logan Musser - WLC Food Service Class 3

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

WHS Volunteer Coaching Positions:

Hesslin Trzebiatowski - Boys Hockey

Mitchell Trzebiatowski - Boys Hockey

Alexander Gusmer - Boys Hockey

Maxwell Gusmer - Boys Hockey

WLC Advisor Positions:

Nancy Grams - Elementary All School Choir

Emma Ives - Elementary All School Choir

Kendra Knutson - WLC Yearbook

Matt Lawniczak - Elementary Art Club

Amy Lemkuil - Elementary/MS Dramatics (17th Year)

Becky Leigl - Elementary/MS Dramatics (7th year)

Rural Virtual Academy (RVA) 5 Year Commitment Renewal

The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

## **Communications:**

### Donations:

Board President Ron Brooks advised of donations received from Adeline Gardner and Amanda Forseth to CEC; from various community organizations for the Madrigal Singers and their dinner; from Wheel House, Inc., and Waupaca Foundry to the Christmas for Families at WLC; from the Waupaca Lions Club to the District; and from the Community First Employee Day of Giving to the District's Good Samaritan Fund.

A motion was made by Lori Verhalen and seconded by Betty Manion to accept, with gratitude, the many donations as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

## **Monitoring:**

### School Improvement Plan/Review of State Report Cards:

Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten reminded everyone that the state report cards are based on last school year's performance and include four priority areas: student achievement and student growth (which both use a weighted three-year average with the most recent year weighted the most), as well as target group outcomes and on-track to graduation. He set out the overall scores for the District and each of the four schools. He also provided the trend data for the past four years as well as a comparison of the District to other local and regional districts. The achievement and on-track to graduation scores are above the state averages. However, we need to provide more support to the students in our target groups.

Mr. Flaten noted that there is no one perfect tool that measures and levels the educational playing field. Using the state report card data along with looking at other measures provides a better picture of our effectiveness and the necessary next steps for continuous improvement. There are things to be celebrated but work needs to be done.

Mr. Flaten advised that by making learning visible we focus on our guaranteed and viable curriculum, common learning target aligned assessments, effective teaching in every classroom, and continuous improvement. Classroom "look fors" include preparation and evidence of expectations, learning targets and student success criteria, as well as samples of student work indicating that they have met the criteria. Student "look fors" include the ability to answer three questions (what are you learning, why are you learning it, and where are you at in your learning), as well as engagement and pride in their work. Mr. Flaten also advised of adjustments that are being made this year.

WHS Associate Principals Jenifer Erb and Kyle Scherwinski advised of the improvement plan for WHS based on the results of the School Perception Survey and current academic data. The survey identified proud moments and indicated that staff input is valued. The academic data indicated that the graduation rate went up and academic growth remained the same. They noted that they have been really focusing on attendance. Ms. Erb pointed out that they need to find ways to connect the importance of tests to the students and motivate them to do their very best whether or not they intend to go on to a four-year school. She also outlined action steps that have been or will be taken to improve building culture and academic results. We need to make purposeful fun for staff and students, noting that teachers' morale is higher when student morale is higher. They know there is work to be done, but they have a lot to build from and a lot to build for.

Mr. Gerlach added that tests are important but are just one set of scores. We have a lot of really good staff and students.

WMS Principal John Meyer advised that he is very aware of the trend data and scores and the staff is working hard to improve them. When you look at the data, there was a decrease in some areas because of how the question changed, so it was how that target was scored. Mr. Meyer noted that he is proud of the very positive results of the School Perception Survey. He also provided comparison data for the past four years for the Forward exam as well as the fall iReady ELA and math exams.

Mr. Meyer shared their plan for growth to include implementation of instructional strategies to address student learning gaps and improve overall academic achievement in reading and math. They are laser focused on using the top three areas (learning target, feedback, and student engagement) to maximize their efforts to see substantial growth of the students. There is a common vision and they believe that all students can learn.

CEC Administrator Carrie Naparalla advised that they are proud of the report card results but there is always room for growth. The target group chronic absenteeism and on track to graduation 8th grade math scores increased, however the growth score for math is an area for improvement. She outlined the CEC's improvement plan which included goals for student success, academic excellence, and social-emotional health relationships and connections, along with the plan and measures to achieve each of those goals. Ms. Naparalla also provided data from the spring Forward exam for grades 3-8.

WLC Principal John Erspamer advised that they are pleased that the school exceeded expectations but there are many areas to work on. He outlined the WLC's improvement plan which included goals for student success, academic excellence, and training and support for staff, along with the plan and measures to achieve each of those goals. He also provided data of the student achievement results in math and English/Language Arts for grades K-4. Mr. Erspamer noted that unless the students have adult connections and feel safe, data does not matter. He also noted that the EL students have more support now but a lot of challenges remain. Mr. Erspamer recognized his staff for the great job they are doing because, as elementary teachers, they have to provide every content area and still let kids be kids.

#### 5-Year Baird Budget Model:

Interim District Administrator Craig Gerlach and Mr. Flaten presented the District's 5-year budget forecast which was a collaborative effort between Baird Finance Services, Greg Gaarder of CESA 5, and the Core Team.

Mr. Flaten advised that there were certain assumptions made in projecting this budget based on professional judgments. He presented two options with the only difference being the amount of state aid the District receives per student in the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 school years, which results in a bit of a delay in the shortfall in the Fund 10 balance when using the second option. Mr. Flaten pointed out that costs will continue to increase each school year and the District will be operating in the red. He noted that in the first option they cautiously projected a decrease in state aid to \$100 per student because of the uncertainties relating to the gubernatorial election.

They stressed that it is important that we continue to be thinking ahead and continue to monitor our budget, and advised that there will be more in-depth budget conversations this spring.

#### **Administration:**

##### Annual Charter School Authorizer Report:

Mr. Flaten provided the required annual Charter School Authorizer Report which was also presented to the Governance Council last Friday. It consists of the academic and financial performance of the CEC. The measurables come straight out of the contract using local, state, and national assessment data. For Measurable #1, the percentage of CEC students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations is higher than their non-CEC District counterparts, with the exception of 3rd grade math and they are working hard to close that gap. For Measurable #2, CEC students grew at a greater percentage than their non-CEC District peers in ELA and math in all grades except 7th. He pointed out, however, that the expectation of a 3 at CEC is slightly different than it is at WLC because of project-based learning. They need to use a triangulation of data to measure if the students are performing at or above their peers.

Mr. Flaten also provided the financial performance information, noting that the CEC has its own 501(c) designation. He set out the Authorizer's operating costs, which had increased due to additional time spent reviewing and revising the renewal contract, as well as a listing of the services and costs provided by the Authorizer to the CEC. He noted that he is working on creating similar information for each of the other schools for comparison purposes.

A motion was made by Betty Manion and seconded by Steve Klismet to accept the Charter School Authorizer Report as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**Adjournment Into Closed Session:**

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Bob Adams to adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 19.85(1)(c), Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. Specifically, to discuss succession planning as a result of building principal retirements and to discuss an extra-curricular assignment.. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote at 7:52 p.m.

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

The Board did not reconvene in open session.

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Steve Klismet to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

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Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Ron Brooks, President  
Board of Education

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Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Betty Manion, Clerk  
Board of Education