



Respectful, Responsible, Safe & Prepared

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES February 13, 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:

Dale Feldt welcomed everyone and asked Sue Abrahamson (former City of Waupaca Children's Librarian) to lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Dale Feldt at 5:32 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present in the WHS Community Room: Dale Feldt, Steve Klismet, Betty Manion, Ron Brooks, Bob Adams, and Nic Genske; Molly McDonald was present via phone.

Also Present:

Present in the WHS Community Room: Ron Saari, Sandy Lucas, Mark Flaten, Steve Thomaschefskey, Laurie Schmidt, Austin Moore, Michael Werbowski, Jenifer Erb, John Meyer, John Erspamer, Jody Pankratz, Carrie Naparalla, Rob Scherrer, Kyle Scherwinski, Alec Olson, Missy Durrant, Jay Seefeldt, Chain Exploration Center Governance Council members Sandy Robinson and Ben Warren, CESA 5 Agency Administrator Jeremy Biehl, David Minch of KerberRose SC, and members of the community.

Approval of Agenda:

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

At this time, per Policy 3120, Board President Dale Feldt turned the meeting over to Board Vice President Steve Klismet because of a possible conflict of interest he may have related to the upcoming personnel matters to be discussed.

Public Comment:

Mr. Ben Warren and Ms. Sandy Robinson, both of whom are members of the Chain Exploration Center Governance Council (CECGC), addressed the Board expressing their disappointment with the lack of communication regarding the recent hiring process and the disruption it caused at the CEC, and thanked the Board members for responding to their letters. They are confident that the Board, Administration, staff, and community will continue to support the CECGC to honor their commitment to fulfill the mission of the CEC.

Review of Board Meeting Norms:

The Board reviewed their collective commitments.

Board President Dale Feldt excused himself from the meeting because of a possible conflict of interest he may have related to the upcoming personnel matters to be discussed.

Personnel:

Hires – 2023-2024 School Year:

Charlie Melk – WMS Ed. Asst.-Spec. Ed.

Tracy Schubert – WHS Ed. Asst.-Spec. Ed.

Bethany Schulist – CEC Food Service Class 3A

Sarah Compton – Food Service Class II Secretary

Jamie Schell – Payroll Specialist

A motion was made by Betty Manion and seconded by Nic Genske to approve the above-listed new hires as presented. The motion carried on a 6-0-1 roll call vote, with Dale Feldt abstaining.

Transfers/Changes – 2023-2024 School Year:

Austin Moore – WMS Associate Principal to Director of Business Services

Devon Feldt – CEC 7/8th Grade Advisor to WMS Associate Principal

Mr. Saari shared the history and reasoning for the January hiring appointments of Mr. Austin Moore as Director of Business Services and Mr. Devon Feldt as WMS Associate Principal. He also reviewed applicable Board policies which he advised provides the District Administrator with the authority to hire and backfill administrative positions as necessary. He pointed out that having the right people in the appropriate leadership positions is important for the District, and promoting the right employees is an investment in our people. However, he noted that, moving forward, increased communication and slowing down the process is important to proactively manage reactions from various groups.

Although the Board members advised that Mr. Moore and Mr. Feldt are both extremely qualified for their new positions, many of them expressed their concern that the process happened too quickly and felt that it would have been best practice to open the position(s) up to all qualified individuals. They added that better communication could have prevented the public (and others) from being so taken aback by the changes, and that the lack of communication has caused some mistrust with the Administration. A couple of Board members suggested that perhaps the WMS could share Mr. Feldt with the CEC for the remainder of the school year. Mr. Saari advised that further discussion with Administration regarding that would need to be had. He also advised that an appropriate substitute teacher experienced in project-based learning has been placed. Board member Nic Genske suggested that perhaps the Board should review its policies so that a consistent process is followed each and every time in the future.

A motion was made by Ron Brooks and seconded by Nic Genske to approve the above-listed transfers/changes of employees, pursuant to the contracts provided by legal counsel on February 5, 2024, as presented. The motion carried on a 6-0-1 roll call vote, with Dale Feldt abstaining.

Board President Dale Feldt returned to the room and led the meeting from this point forward.

Board Reports:

Student Representative Report:

Alec Olson advised that a couple of the Student Council's goals are to facilitate positive relationships within WHS and encourage participation in WHS activities. He shared that the performances of the all school play, *These Shining Lives*, were held last weekend and it was a big success. In addition,

some of the other events happening include project backpack, next week is FFA week, and Academic Honors night is February 26th.

WASB Level II Award to Dale Feldt:

Mr. Saari presented Board President Dale Feldt with the WASB Level II Award for his participation in WASB professional development opportunities.

Upcoming Meetings and Other Activities:

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

February 22, 2024 – Joint SB-GC Charter School Contract Committee Meeting – 1:00 p.m.

February 22, 2024 – CEC Winter Project Night – 5:30 p.m.

February 26, 2024 – Finance Committee Meeting – 5:30 p.m.

February 26, 2024 – WHS 2024 Academic Honors Night – 7:00 p.m.

March 12, 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 March.

School Visits or Other Board Report:

Board members Bob Adams, Dale Feldt, and Betty Manion shared that they attended the all school play, *These Shining Lives*, and commended the Drama Department for the excellent performance.

Board member Manion also shared that she went to the WLC for storytelling, observed a project on logging, learned about the new reading program, and visited several classrooms. She also attended the CEC Gala and expressed her gratitude to all the businesses that donated items for the auction.

Board member Nic Genske shared that he attended the walkthrough of the new entry at the WLC, and advised that he requested Miron Construction to move the fencing as soon as it is safe to do so to allow for more parking.

Board member Molly McDonald attended the WHS Dance Team state championship in La Crosse and thanked Director of Co-Curricular Activities and Athletics Rob Scherrer for the many activities he coordinated leading up to the event, as well as the staff and community for their support.

CEC Liaison Report:

CEC Liaison Betty Manion advised that she attended the CEC Governance Council (GC) meeting this month which included discussions regarding the transition of Mr. Feldt to the WMS and helping the students adjust to the new situation. They also discussed enrollment, implementing the mental health grant, AGR scores, and a good water report. They are also continuing to work on the new contract. In addition, the CEC has recently started a new group, “Coffee Talks”, which will meet once a month. She advised that the CEC received a profit of \$4,000 from the Gala.

Joint School Board-Governance Council Charter School Contract Committee:

Committee Chairperson Dale Feldt advised that the Committee did not meet earlier today as originally scheduled because both groups are still in the process of reviewing the contract. The next meeting is scheduled for February 22, 2024, and he remains hopeful that the contract can be completed in March.

Finance Committee Meeting:

Chairperson Dale Feldt advised that the Finance Committee met on January 23, 2024, and discussed several items, to include the 2024-2025 budget outlook, trademarking the Waupaca Comets logo, establishing Spirit Pumps and other donations via a partnership with Pump N’ Munch Waupaca, and

the opportunity for employees to enroll in the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program, which will become part of the onboarding process.

A motion was made by Dale Feldt, per Committee recommendation, to approve the Resolution for Inclusion Under the State of Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Consent Agenda:

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Feldt expressed their gratitude to the two retirees, Susan Harrington and Carol Beyer-Makuski, for their many years of service to the District. A motion was made by Steve Klismet and seconded by Betty Manion to approve the items of the consent agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

January 11, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
January 23, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting
January 25, 2024 Joint SB-GC Charter School Contract Committee Meeting
January 30, 2024 Special Board Meeting

Financial Reports:

Accounts Payable Approval: \$2,969,982.95, and Building Fund Payable: \$299,595.37

Cash Receipts: \$5,283,393.64

Treasurer's Report (December) – Total Cash per Reconciliation: \$7,994,576.12

Budget to Actual Comparison by Fund Groups for December:

Fund 10 Ending Balance: \$5,701,751 [2022-2023: \$5,651,009]
Fund 21 Ending Balance: \$400,252 [2022-2023: \$436,360]
Fund 27 Ending Balance: -\$1,167,638 [2022-2023: -\$1,283,036]
Fund 38 Ending Balance: \$-1 [2022-2023: \$0]
Fund 41 Ending Balance: \$0 [2022-2023: \$0]
Fund 49 Ending Balance: \$1,508,550 [2022-2023: \$982,446]
Fund 50 Ending Balance: \$520,691 [2022-2023: \$341,968]

Budget to Actual Comparison by Fund Groups for January:

Fund 10 Ending Balance: \$8,640,427 [2022-2023: \$8,337,872]
Fund 21 Ending Balance: \$391,403 [2022-2023: \$424,777]
Fund 27 Ending Balance: -\$1,478,219 [2022-2023: -\$1,482,919]
Fund 38 Ending Balance: \$-1 [2022-2023: \$0]
Fund 41 Ending Balance: \$0 [2022-2023: \$0]
Fund 49 Ending Balance: \$1,208,954 [2022-2023: \$985,750]
Fund 50 Ending Balance: \$501,772 [2022-2023: \$387,694]

Retirements – End of the 2023-2024 School Year:

Susan Harrington – WLC 3rd Grade Teacher

Retirements:

Carol Beyer-Makuski – Director of Business Services Assistant/Accountant

Resignations:

Lisa Bradbury Mikolajczak – Payroll Specialist

Kate Rolfs – WHS Custodian

Job Share Agreements – 2024-2025 School Year:

Andrea Fossum-Grall and Kristie Tripp – WLC 1st Grade Teachers

Nancy Pulvermacher and Kareene Hansen – WMS 7th Grade Teachers

Extra Curricular Coaches and Advisors – 2023-2024 School Year

Resignations:

Nate Harms – 5th/6th Grade Basketball

WHS Volunteer Coaching Positions:

Stephen Johnson – Boys Golf

WHS Volunteer Advisor Positions:

Isabella Udoni – Dance

Breanna Yeska – Dance

Reagan Leach – Dance

Jakob Foss - Chess

WMS Advisor Positions:

Kirbi Holat – 5th/6th Grade Basketball

Salary Step Changes:

Courtney Gross – 4B12 to 4B18

Jessica Hauser – 2B24 to 2M

Kirbi Holat – 8B0 to 8B6

Kate Jacobson – 18B24 to 18B30

Nicole Johndro – 9B6 to 9B18

Dana Koeppler – 12B12 to 12B18

Amber Koski – 6M to 6M6

Brian Kurszewski – 14M18 to 14M24

Mathew Lawniczak – 10M12 to 10M30

Bobbie Jo Montgomery – 14M6 to 14M12

Amanda Nelson – 11B18 to 11B24

Amy Niemuth – 1B0 to 1B6

Tori Revoir – 9B12 to 9B18

Shana Rogne – 21M to 21M6

Catherine Seifert – 13M24 to 13M30

Payton Thurber – 4B30 to 4M

Jamie Trzebiatowski – 11M24 to 11M30

Hayley Trzinski – 5B0 to 5B6

Renewal of CESA 5 Services Contract for 2024-2025

Early Graduation Requests (Updated)

The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Communications:

Board President Feldt recognized the many observances occurring this month – last week was School Counselor Recognition Week; this week is School Bus Driver Appreciation Week; next week is National FFA Week; and the month of February is Career and Technical Education Month.

Donations:

Mr. Saari advised of the following unsolicited donations that the District recently received: WHS girls' basketball team posters from Johnson's Auto Body; a monetary donation from Fox Family Foundation to the District's Food Fund 50 account; a monetary donation from Robert Peterson for WHS SADD post prom expenses; a monetary donation from M2S Group to the Robotics Club; and a donation of hand knitted hats to the CEC by Adeline Gardner.

A motion was made by Ron Brooks and seconded by Betty Manion to accept, with gratitude, the donations made to the School District from Johnson's Auto Body, Fox Family Foundation, Robert Peterson, M2S Group, and Adeline Gardner as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

2023 Holiday Giving Program Report:

Director of Student Services Laurie Schmidt shared the annual report by the District's School Social Workers, indicating that we have an extremely generous community. The report encompassed the period from mid-October through the holiday break, and recognized the many staff and community members for their generosity and support provided to families in need during the past holiday season.

District Administrator's Report:

Mr. Saari shared that the Waupaca Relocation Campaign website is now complete and has been added to the District's webpage.

Mr. Saari advised that pursuant to Act 20 and beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, all school districts must utilize the statewide literacy screener. This will result in a duplication of efforts, and does not provide the time or ability to shift those resources to other initiatives in the District. This was discussed with the State Representatives at their meeting in New London as well.

Mr. Saari shared the latest reiteration of the Reunification Process, which continues to be updated with each run through. On February 19th the individual schools will practice the walk-through.

He also shared an update and photos of the progress of the Tiny House construction project. This work can be completed inside so there are no weather-related issues to have to work around.

Mr. Saari advised that he, along with Director of Student Services Laurie Schmidt and Board members Dale Feldt, Betty Manion, and Ron Brooks, attended the meeting with State Representatives Kevin Peterson and Joel Kitchens and State Senator Joan Ballweg. They discussed the possible decoupling of the choice and charter school funding from public schools, but Mr. Saari is concerned that this may result in reduced state aid to the District. They also discussed increasing special education costs.

He advised that to date he has only received the names of five people for the stakeholder group from Mr. Feldt and Mr. Brooks.

Finally, he shared the updated Grant Writer report.

Monitoring:

Annual Financial Report:

David Minch from the independent audit firm of KerberRose SC provided a high level review of the annual audit. He also provided the management communication letter which recaps the audit and internal control findings. The District received a clear or unmodified opinion, which is the highest level they can provide, adding that they had no concerns regarding the required supplemental or other supplemental information provided.

Mr. Minch then reviewed certain areas of the audit report. He commented that the General Fund, which gauges the financial health of the District, is in a strong financial position. He also noted that the District does not short-term borrow, and has a nominal amount of long-term debt taken out.

Mr. Minch advised that there were three areas noted on the internal control over financial reporting and compliance, which is consistent with the past few years. They are: financial statement findings, which most school districts have; as well as the preparation of schedules of federal expenditures and state financial assistance and material account adjustments, which they will work with Director of Business Services Austin Moore to improve.

The Board congratulated Mr. Carl Hayek on his retirement and expressed their gratitude to him for his assistance in completing this audit as well as for his many years of service to the District.

College and Career Readiness – Waupaca ACP/CTE:

Director of Technology Steve Thomaschefskey presented the annual update relating to Academic Career Planning (ACP) and Career and Technical Education (CTE). ACP refers to the process of setting goals and creating a roadmap for a student's education and professional development in a specific field of study. The goal is to help students make informed decisions about their education and career paths. This begins in elementary school and continues through high school. He highlighted the Board approved Education for Employment (E4E). This is run by the School Counselors with 100% conferencing with every 9-12th grade student. In addition, all juniors are encouraged to complete a job shadow. Mr. Thomaschefskey shared a comparison of the profiles of the 2022 graduate plans versus 2023 graduate plans, noting that the four year college trend is turning around to the trades areas. He also shared the ACP highlights for each of the schools.

Mr. Thomaschefskey advised that the CTE department is continuing to work on pathways, curriculum development, and updating equipment. He shared information regarding the pathway meetings for each of the areas. He also shared the CTE highlights for the 2023-2024 school year, which included events attended, certifications earned by seniors to date, new equipment purchased, and the construction of the Tiny House project.

Administration:

Construction Update:

Mr. Saari advised that he attended the January and February construction meetings, and he provided an update on the status of the construction project at the WLC. He also advised that final cleaning is planned for the end of the month.

2nd Friday in January Enrollment Count:

Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten provided the 2nd Friday in January enrollment report which is required by the DPI, indicating a slight increase from September to January (2029 to 2041 students in seats; 1079 to 1083 total FTE). Mr. Saari added that the City of Waupaca is moving forward with additional housing across from the Foundry, so hopefully the trend continues upward.

Current and Projected Student Enrollment and Staffing Update:

Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten provided information relating to current and projected student enrollment and how those numbers will affect staffing. He advised that there has been a steady decrease of students across the state; however, the District is trending in the right direction this year. Mr. Flaten shared a breakdown of the number of students in each grade level at each school (with the highlighted numbers being projected numbers), indicating that the District will need to reduce the number of core teachers at the WLC (in the 4th grade) by one. This will be accomplished through attrition due to retirements. He noted that after the middle and high school students finish selecting their courses for the 2024-2025 school year, there may be additional staffing adjustments required.

Mr. Flaten also advised that because our population continues to be more diverse and transient, causing many students to change their enrollment in the past seven months, staffing levels will become more fluid. He shared data indicating that there was a shifting of 326 students in the past seven month time period. So the reality is that the same number of students we have at the end of the school year is not going to be the same number at the start of school in September. Reasons for the students leaving include personal choice, family dynamics, etc.

Director of Student Services Laurie Schmidt advised that she has been in conversations with representatives of the Waupaca Foundry. Foundry production is cyclical and currently they are experiencing a slowdown, but they are not looking to decrease the temporary workforce.

A motion was made by Ron Brooks and seconded by Bob Adams to approve the Administration’s recommendation to reduce the number of core regular education staff at the WLC by 1.0 FTE for the 2024-2025 school year as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

AGR Reports:

Mr. Flaten advised that these reports are similar to what has been presented in the past for the WLC and CEC. This is a mid-term report looking at how our students are progressing. They use the i-Ready scores and utilize Title funding to get students at or above grade level by the end of the year.

Approval of School Handbooks for 2024-2025 School Year:

Mr. Saari advised that only minor revisions and no substantive changes were made to each of the school handbooks this year.

A motion was made by Nic Genske and seconded by Steve Klismet to approve the 2024-2025 School Handbooks for Waupaca High School, Waupaca Middle School, Waupaca Learning Center, Chain Exploration Center, and Waupaca 4K as presented. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Adjournment into Closed Session:

A motion was made by Betty Manion and seconded by Steve Klismet 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, and Wis. Stats. § 19.85(1)(f), Considering financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons, which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations. Specifically, to discuss personnel issues. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote at 7:20 p.m.

The Board did not reconvene in open session.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Betty Manion and seconded by Bob Adams to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

_____ Date _____
Dale Feldt, President
Board of Education

_____ Date _____
Molly McDonald, Clerk
Board of Education