



**SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT MINUTES
November 29, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.**

Pursuant to the regulations, the Board of Education met in a retreat format on the above date in the Waupaca High School Community Room.

The purpose of the Board Retreat Minutes are to capture the essence of discussions. These minutes should not be interpreted to represent a transcription of the meeting.

Call to Order:

Board President Stephen Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present in the WHS Community Room: Stephen Johnson, Dale Feldt, Steve Klismet, Molly McDonald, Betty Manion, and Ron Brooks.

Excused: Patrick Phair.

Also Present:

Present in the WHS Community Room: Ron Saari, Sandy Lucas, and Mark Flaten.

Approval of Agenda:

Board President Johnson advised that he is deleting Agenda Item IV as the Board reviewed their Norms at the meeting held just prior to this Retreat. A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Betty Manion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Discussion of Chain Exploration Center Charter School Contract:

Board President Johnson advised that we will be discussing the current Chain Exploration Center (CEC) charter school contract, but that no action will be taken on it by the School District of Waupaca (SDW) Board of Education alone but in collaboration with the Chain Exploration Center Governance Council (CECGC).

District Administrator Ron Saari advised that the goal tonight is for the Board to become more familiar with the CEC contract, along with knowing the Core Team's concerns regarding some of the language in the current contract. He referred to the redlined version of the contract which indicates where language was stricken and other language added when the contract was drafted in 2018. He also noted that the highlighted language indicates the Core Team's concerns, in particular the highlighted stricken language which the Core Team believes is necessary and should be placed in the contract.

An example of where clarification is needed is in the hiring of CEC staff. Mr. Saari advised that the SDW Administration should play a role and be involved in all hiring and staffing decisions as well as the evaluation of staff, as the SDW is the employer and they are all employees of the District; the CECGC cannot hire or fire anyone without the SDW Board acting on the request.

Director of Teaching and Learning Mark Flaten set out and explained what the authorizer role is and how a charter school is different from a traditional school. The CEC's focus is on STEM, the arts, and project-based learning. However, he added that no matter which school in the District a student attends, they all must meet required learning expectations. He added that with many of the CEC teachers (advisors) teaching multiple grade levels, they have more of a workload than their counterparts at the other District's schools and he is concerned that they will burnout, particularly at the middle school level.

Mr. Flaten also advised that the charter school contract terminates at the end of the 2022-2023 school year and that this is the last year of the 5-year funding grant for the CEC.

Board members Ron Brooks, Molly McDonald, and Steve Klismet strongly suggested that measurables be included in the new contract to be sure that we are getting the most out of the dollars we are spending to continue to have the charter school. They requested that Mr. Saari provide the Board with the costs per pupil at the CEC as compared to the other schools in the District.

Board members Dale Feldt and Betty Manion reminded everyone that having a charter school is the reason some families moved to the Waupaca area and others like the smaller school environment.

Mr. Saari then highlighted some of the other areas of concern that the Core Team has with the current contract, such as the powers of the CECGC, the CEC calendar, the annual audit, and meeting educational expectations.

Mr. Saari advised that he and Mr. Flaten will collaborate with CECGC President Megan Sanders and CEC Principal Carrie Naparalla in drafting a new contract, which will then be reviewed by the District's attorneys, with the SDW Board having the final approval. Board President Johnson suggested that representatives of the SDW Board (he and Board CEC Liaison Betty Manion) also be involved in the discussions, who can then bring those discussions and recommendations to the full Board to review and finalize.

Mr. Flaten reiterated that the Core Team is looking for some direction from the Board at this time as to how to proceed – do we continue with the charter school with a one-year, three-year, or five-year contract; or should we explore options to offer the same project-based learning school but not as a charter school and, therefore, without a governance council or contract.

Mr. Flaten advised that the CECGC will be providing a draft of their version of the new contract to the Board soon for their review. Mr. Flaten suggested that objectives and outcomes required by the Board should be included in the contract, and several Board members agreed that measurables are absolutely going to be required in the contract.

Board President Johnson suggested (and several of the Board members agreed) that we should possibly look at a three-year contract with measurables, adding that ending the charter school would be premature at this time. He advised that the Board should move forward with improving the charter school contract for the benefit of all. Mr. Flaten added that he wouldn't suggest having a contract that automatically renews if the CEC meets its goals because additions/changes to the measurables may need to be made at the end of the contract term.

Mr. Flaten suggested possible measurables to be included in the contract could be enrollment, academic scores/standardized assessments, extra-curriculars, student retention, and cost per student (at a threshold the Board is willing to accept).

Board President Stephen Johnson and Board member Betty Manion confirmed that they will make themselves available for joint meetings with members of the CECGC and the SDW Board of Education.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Steve Klismet to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.