



## **SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT MINUTES September 19, 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 5:29 p.m.

### **Roll Call:**

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

### **Also Present:**

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

### **Approval of Agenda:**

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

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

Board President Johnson advised that the WASB Consultant felt our Board Norms were very good, but we can modify them. Board member Feldt suggested that perhaps we should go through each of the Norms and have each individual Board member tell us what that Norm specifically means to them. Mr. Saari reminded everyone that Norms are also known as “trust accelerators”.

- 1. Be prepared; stay informed; listen to others and be open to differing opinions and perspectives – being inquisitive, reflective, and respectful; checking our biases and agendas at the door; we will thoughtfully and objectively discuss the facts of the situation and not personalize issues or policies*

Discussion then ensued as to its meaning. It was pointed out that we need to make sure we read all of the documentation and come to the Board meetings prepared. If you have questions that may require Administration to do some research, it would be a good idea to call or email those ahead of time so Administration is not surprised or put on the spot and, therefore, we all look more informed. However, it was noted that they like to hear other Board members' questions as it might be something they hadn't thought of, adding that we all learn from others' questions and sometimes we need to ask questions for clarification. It was suggested that you may not put Administration on the spot if you preface the question with you may not have the answer but please get back to us – noting that it is important “how” we ask the question. In addition, asking

questions during the meeting may be beneficial to some, particularly the viewing audience, but you should also consider will my question be beneficial to all concerned.

The Board agreed that they should all prepare for the meeting, and if they do have a question that may require some research, they will give Administration advance notice so they can research the answer ahead of time and provide it at the meeting. But the Administration should be prepared to say that we don't have the answer right now so we will get back to you.

Board President Johnson also reminded everyone that there is a fine line between open discussion and open meeting laws.

In addition, it was mentioned that the Board acts as stewards and should honor and follow the Waupaca Way.

The Board revised Norm #1 to read: ***Check our biases and agendas at the door; we will thoughtfully and objectively discuss the facts of the situation and not personalize issues or policies.***

Then the Board used the remainder of what was Norm #1 to create a new Norm #2, referencing that they will follow the Waupaca Way.

New Norm #2: ***Follow the Waupaca Way – be prepared and stay informed; responsible; respectful; and safe.***

*2. Ensure open and clear communications, and maintain transparency – no surprises*

Several Board members commented that it is important that all communications released on behalf of the Board should be typographically and grammatically correct. In addition, it is important that the communication be clear and everyone understands it. Mr. Saari advised that in the future the English Department will review any documentation being released on behalf of the Board.

Regarding the “no surprises” language, a couple of the Board members noted that the surprise issue works both ways – the Board doesn't want to be surprised by the Administration's presentation on a topic that they had no idea about ahead of time. However, other Board members commented that they would rather have Administration do all of the behind-the-scenes work and provide us with all of the information so we can react and be able to make a decision. This allows Administration to do their job and we don't micromanage; the Board always has the power to say no. It was suggested that perhaps a brief notification of the topic ahead of time should be provided.

Some discussion was then had regarding the Building and Grounds Committee presentation relating to the referendum and planning.

The Board revised Norm #2 (now #3) to read: ***Ensure open, clear, and correct communications, and maintain transparency – avoid surprises.***

*3. Remain objective, forward thinking, and open minded – respect the opinions of others*

Many of the Board members believed that this Norm was redundant to #1 and, therefore, is not needed and should be deleted.

4. *Maintaining professional relationships is key – know and respect the roles and responsibilities of the Board (governing), administration (tactical), and staff (operational)*

The Board members advised that this Norm is good as is and is a necessary reminder. It was suggested that we should periodically review these roles as we sometimes want to micromanage.

5. *Start on time, end on time, stay on task*

It was asked what does “end on time” mean? 90 minutes? It was also noted that it should be clear we cannot deviate and talk about something that is not on the agenda.

The Board revised Norm #5 to read: ***Start on time and follow the agenda.***

6. *When a Board decision is made, we accept and abide by the decisions both publicly and privately – we accomplish more united than divided*

It was suggested that we revise the last part of this Norm as the way it reads now invites divisiveness. In addition, when a decision is made it is a Board decision, not an individual Board member's decision.

A couple of Board members also suggested that we should incorporate our vision, mission and values into this Norm, as we need to be mindful of those when making decisions.

The Board revised Norm #6 to read: ***Board decisions are based on our commitment to excellence in education, our mission and our values; when a Board decision is made, we accept and abide by the decision both publicly and privately – we accomplish more as a team.***

7. *Honor and protect the expectation of confidentiality of all topics addressed, and discussions held, in closed sessions*

There were no revisions made to Norm #7.

Then the discussion turned to what happens when a Norm is broken during a meeting. The Board determined that the person needs to be held accountable at that moment, not a week later. It was noted that we all will make mistakes but we need to hold each other accountable; that is why we have the Norms. It was added that disagreement is OK if it is done respectfully – be kind, direct, and respectful. Any good Board has to have Norms and follow them.

Since it was mentioned that we should review the roles and responsibilities, Board President Johnson requested that another Board Retreat be scheduled to review what the roles and responsibilities are of the Board (governing), Administration (tactical), and staff (operational).

### **Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Dale Feldt and seconded by Ron Brooks to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.