



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

John A. Krings, President  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Larry Davis  
Sandra K. Hett  
Katie Medina  
Mary Rayome

January 11, 2021

**REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

LOCATION: Thomas A. Lenk Educational Services Center, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494  
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Larry Davis, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Katie Medina,  
Mary Rayome

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Daniel Weigand, Brian Oswald, Danielle Scott, Ed Allison

President John Krings called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Special Presentation

President Krings presented the WRPS “Friend of Education” award to Dr. Lisa Olson and Dr. Amy Falk, thanking them for their service and many contributions to the District.

Student Representative Report

Rachel Marten provided updates on the following:

- ◆ The National Honor Society (NHS) is sponsoring a book drive for South Wood County Emerging Pantry Shelf (SWEPS).
- ◆ Class registration for next school year is beginning, and students are receiving information and instructions about how to sign up.
- ◆ The annual LHS Fire on Ice will occur at the end of January and although no in-person dance will be occurring, there are several fun activities planned to engage students attending physically at the school as well as those learning off-campus.
- ◆ The LHS Theatre Department will present a free drama production on January 15-17, 2021 via livestream broadcast.

Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of December 14, 2020; special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of December 14, 2020; and special Board of Education meeting minutes of December 21, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.**

*With regard to the minutes, Sandra Hett requested clarification concerning the Lincoln High School baseball/softball quadplex discussion in terms of whether or not funding from the Legacy Foundation Grant tied to the quadplex project is contingent upon the SWC track project also getting completed at the same time. Superintendent Broeren clarified that it does, and that for some time the District has had plans and has anticipated the required expense to renovate the track since it is necessary for physical education and co-curricular activities to safely continue. Fundraising related to upgrading the football field located inside the track with synthetic turf is independent from the District funds that are earmarked to renovate the track; however, now would be the time to upgrade the football field if the track gets redone. The proposed LHS athletic upgrade projects are interconnected; however, only those that reach fundraising goals will move forward. The Legacy Foundation has indicated their interest in seeing the football field upgrade come to fruition, and an anonymous donor has pledged \$500,000 toward upgrading the field. It would take an additional \$500,000 raised to upgrade the field; however, Mr. Broeren clarified that the Legacy Grant is contingent only upon the District completing the track portion of the project; not the football field upgrade. A total of \$1.2 million in fundraising is needed to complete the baseball/softball quadplex project in conjunction with the \$5.6 million Legacy Grant award for this purpose, and \$500,000 is needing to be raised to complete the football field upgrade being considered.*

Comments from Citizens and Delegations

None.

Committee ReportsA. Educational Services Committee – January 4, 2021. Report given by John Krings.

Mr. Krings reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Educational Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- ES-1 Approval of the proposed calendars for the 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 school years.
- ES-2 Approval that the Board of Education not designate any space limitations for regular education open enrollment students for the 2021-22 school year; and approval to designate space available in special education programming as indicated in the “Projected Space Available” column set out in Attachment B in the Educational Services Committee background.

**Motion by John Krings, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items ES-1-2. Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Krings provided updates and reports on:

- Dr. Scott updated the Committee regarding plans to move early childhood and some 4K classrooms to one location at the Pitsch facility. Multiple walk-throughs of the building have occurred, and early childhood teachers are eager to be located together in one building. One area of the facility that was formerly a classroom was converted into three separate spaces over the years and will need to be changed back into a classroom; most of this work can be completed by District maintenance staff.
- The Committee was updated around concerns related to Central Oaks Academy. Ms. Jennifer Wilhorn, Principal of Central Oaks Academy, indicated there are two different areas that are being addressed: Speaking to the Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) concerns; and moving ahead with the process of becoming a virtual charter school. A contract for the charter school is currently being developed and administration is planning to present it to the Committee at the February meeting. It was also noted that there are already five parents willing to serve on the Governance Board.

Superintendent Broeren added that the full Board of Education would be made aware of any letters or correspondences between the District and DPI. Sandra Hett asked if parents of students at Central Oaks had been notified of the possible change. Superintendent Broeren indicated that they had not yet been notified since nothing is official and is still yet in the planning stage. Ms. Filtz noted that the District has until June 30 to make necessary updates and changes.

**Motion by John Krings, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the January 4, 2021 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. Business Services Committee – January 4, 2021. Report given by John Benbow.

Mr. Benbow reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Business Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- BS-1 Approval of a 66.03.01 cooperative agreement for a student attending the Biron Head Start program from the Nekoosa School District.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda item BS 1. Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Purchases of Chromebooks

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the January 4, 2021 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Personnel Services Committee – January 4, 2021. Report given by Sandra Hett.

Ms. Hett reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Personnel Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- PS-1 Approval of the support staff appointments of Stacey Shaw (Special Ed Aide – THINK) and Amy Modrzewski (Special Ed Aide – Mead).
- PS-2 Approval of the professional staff early retirement of Joseph Riederer (Teacher – WRAMS).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff early retirement of Kay Friday (Service Cook – Woodside).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff resignation of Jennifer Molepske (Health Aide – Mead).
- PS-5 Approval of a 1.8% wage increase to the following employee groups: Psychologists, Athletic Director, Food Production Coordinator, Food Services, School Nurses, Computer Technicians, PAC Director, PAC Assistant Coordinator, Network Manager, Systems Manager, Instructional Software Support, Confidential Secretaries, Van Drivers and Office/Clerical and Aide Support Staff, retroactive to July 1, 2020.
- PS-6 Approval of Board Policy 411.11 – Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination in District Programs, Activities, and Operations, for second reading.
- PS-7 Approval of Board Policy 411.11 Rule (1) – Procedure for District Response to Alleged Sexual Harassment under Title IX, for second reading.
- PS-8 Approval of Board Policy 411.11 Rule (2) – Expectations for Employees to Report Discrimination and Harassment, for second reading.
- PS-9 Approval of Administrative Guideline, for second reading.
- PS-10 Approval of Board Policy 411 – Student Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, for second reading.
- PS-11 Approval of Board Policy 511 – Non-Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity, for second reading.
- PS-12 Approval of Board Policy 511.5 – Employee Anti-Harassment, for second reading.

Sandra Hett requested that Consent Agenda Item PS-5 be held out.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items PS 1-4 and 6-11. Motion carried unanimously.**

With regard to Consent Agenda Item PS-5, Ms. Hett explained that a new staff position added in August, 2020 of “AV Coordinator” was inadvertently left out of the initial request and needs to be included.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of a 1.8% wage increase to the following employee groups: Psychologists, Athletic Director, AV Coordinator, Food Production Coordinator, Food Services, School Nurses, Computer Technicians, PAC Director, PAC Assistant Coordinator, Network Manager, Systems Manager, Instructional Software Support, Confidential Secretaries, Van Drivers and Office/Clerical and Aide Support Staff, retroactive to July 1, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on:

- School class sizes and sections for the 2020-21 school year.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the January 4, 2021 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Ms. Medina requested information about the guidelines that would be implemented and/or the conditions under which secondary level students would go back to 5-day per week in person instruction. Mr. Broeren stated that he has a meeting scheduled with local medical advisors and the Health Department which should help clarify what is feasible and possible under current circumstances and known information about the pandemic. Information from these conversations will be shared with the Board, parents, and general community. The crux of concern comes down to the ability to physically distance in classrooms unless guidelines set around the 6’ distancing requirement were to change. Vaccinations are another area of consideration that would help the situation; however, how quickly staff members

who are willing to be vaccinated can get the vaccine is beyond District control. Mr. Broeren explained that he would not see the District requiring employees to be vaccinated, even though legally all indications are that employers could require it if they chose to do so. Guidelines around contact tracing if enough staff members were vaccinated could potentially change; however, nothing new in this regard has been developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Another aspect that could be taken into consideration by the CDC is the data around minimal spread among youth of younger ages and its impact on contact tracing guidelines or the mitigation efforts and precautionary measures employed by schools, yet schools are not hearing of any such consideration being given currently. Mr. Broeren explained that secondary parents are aware that they can plan on the cohort schedule being in place for certain through the second trimester, but acknowledged that it is a good time for additional communication to happen about potential plans to move toward additional in-person days if questions around contact tracing and vaccinations can get answered; this needs to happen prior to solidifying any plans. The Board will continue to be kept up to speed as new information becomes available, and parents will be communicated with as soon as there is solid information to be shared. Mr. Krings reiterated that moving through the pandemic is not a sprint, but a marathon, and decisions to return students back to in-person instruction will not be made lightly; and keeping the mask wearing in place for as long as it is needed is important not only for students and staff, but to protect the community at large.

On a different topic, Ms. Hett requested a breakdown of contracted transportation costs for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years, questioning whether any accommodation has been made in the contract for Wednesdays when a reduced number of students are being bused. Mr. Broeren stated there has been an adjustment made for Wednesdays as well as a rate increase incorporated for the year. He suggested it might be more helpful to wait until closer to the end of the year to get a better idea of the overall cost difference, and to likely gather data for 2018-19 as well since this would have been the last “normal” year for comparison purposes. Ms. Hett agreed that receiving the information in the spring would be acceptable.

#### Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- Rep. Robin Voss announced the State Assembly standing committees for the 2021-22 legislative session. Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt has been reappointed as chairman of the Assembly Committee on Education with Rep. Joel Kitchens appointed as vice-chairman.
- Assembly Republicans have introduced the first bill of the 2021-22 legislative session, Assembly Bill 1, their COVID relief package. On a fast track for passage, it has a public hearing and vote in the Assembly health committee on January 5, 2021 and is scheduled to be voted on by the full Assembly on Thursday, January 7, 2021. The legislation includes items Governor Evers does not support and may likely be vetoed. Items impacting public K-12 education include civil liability provisions, virtual instruction school board approval requirements, full-time open enrollment application process changes, and interscholastic athletic and extracurricular activities provisions that usurp school board authority.
- The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA) was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides an additional \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund). According to figures released by the U.S. Department of Education, Wisconsin’s allocation of ESSER II funds is estimated to be slightly more than \$686 million, of which \$617.5 million would be allocated to local school districts. School districts can generally expect their allocations under the ESSER II Fund to be about four times greater than their original ESSER Fund amount.
- Governor Evers will deliver the annual State of the State address virtually at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, and his biennial budget message at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.
- On January 7, 2021, the Wisconsin Public Education Network hosted a candidate forum for the 2021 candidates for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The non-partisan state superintendent primary election takes place on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 with the general election happening Tuesday, April 6, 2021. All seven candidates participated in the forum and it can be viewed by going to wisconsineye.org.

#### Bills

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to note December, 2020 receipts in the amount of \$10,747,293.40 and approve December, 2020 disbursements in the amount of \$2,119,538.58. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Unfinished/Old BusinessFuture Levy Override and Bond Issue Referendum Questions

Superintendent Broeren reviewed three potential Resolutions for the Board's consideration which include:

- A Resolution authorizing the school district budget to exceed revenue limit by \$2,000,000 per year for five years beginning with the 2021-22 fiscal year for non-recurring purposes;
- An initial Resolution authorizing General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$34,000,000;
- A Resolution providing for a referendum election on the questions of the approval of a Resolution authorizing the school district budget to exceed revenue limit by \$2,000,000 per year for five years for non-recurring purposes and an initial Resolution authorizing the issuance of General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$34,000,000.

The Board has discussed the topic of going to referendum at length in prior meetings, and official adoption of these Resolutions will place the operational and capital referenda questions on the spring election ballot scheduled to occur on April 6, 2021.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of a Resolution authorizing the school district budget to exceed revenue limit by \$2,000,000 per year for five years beginning with the 2021-22 fiscal year for non-recurring purposes. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of a Resolution authorizing General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$34,000,000. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of a Resolution providing for a referendum election on the questions of the approval of a Resolution authorizing the school district budget to exceed revenue limit by \$2,000,000 per year for five years beginning with the 2021-22 fiscal year for non-recurring purposes and an initial Resolution authorizing General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$34,000,000. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Mr. Broeren introduced Craig Uhlenbrauck, Educational Market Leader & Senior VP, Wausau Operations for Miron Construction. Miron and Plunkett Raysich Architects (PRA) is assisting the District with communication planning around the referendum. Mr. Uhlenbrauck shared a document outlining prohibited and allowable referendum activities in school facilities or on school grounds. The overall objective of the District will be to share information. A communication timeline was shared and reviewed. Information will be delivered through community engagement listening sessions, press releases, radio interviews, print mailers, and digital deliverables. Display boards and fact sheets will be developed with referendum branding and key messaging to help provide information to all stakeholders. The Board had an opportunity ask questions, and thanked Mr. Uhlenbrauck for his time and the information he shared.

New BusinessEmployee Appointments, Resignations and Retirement Requests

None.

Amendment of 2020-21 District Budget

Daniel Weigand, Director of Business Services, reviewed recommended changes to the 2020-21 District budget. Line-item anticipated revenues and appropriations were explained in detail. In Fund 10, the difference in total anticipated revenue amounts to an increase of \$1,574,116.00; and an expenditure increase of \$1,566,008.13. The ending Fund Balance is higher than projected at \$2,426,074.96. The Board asked what the amount of interest savings is with paying off the middle school debt early. Mr. Weigand stated the savings is around \$50,000. The remaining Fund area changes for Funds 38, 39, 46, 49, 50, 73, and 80 were reviewed.

**Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by John Benbow to approve to amend the 2020-21 District budget as presented. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote. With Mr. Weigand retiring soon, the Board took an opportunity to thank him for his attention, detail, and creativity to District finances throughout his tenure at WRPS.**

2021 Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) Resolutions

The Board reviewed proposed WASB resolutions to be taken up by the Delegate Assembly on January 20, 2021. John Benbow serves as the Board's WASB delegate.

**Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of having John Benbow use his own discretion and vote his conscience on behalf of the Board on proposed Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) resolutions when participating as the Board Delegate at the upcoming Delegate Assembly meeting in January, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.**

District Equity Related Services Contract

Danielle Scott, Director of Pupil Services, presented a proposal from US<sup>2</sup>, Inc. to provide equity related support services to the District at a cost of \$15,000. Engaging with US<sup>2</sup> for these services will help the District with its action steps to address disproportionality. Flow-through dollars would be used to pay for the US<sup>2</sup> contract. Goals to be accomplished through these services include:

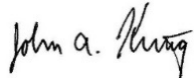
- ◆ Leadership will be supported with facilitation of the Equity Committee
- ◆ Administrators will be trained on the impact of bias within education
- ◆ Staff will be trained through a webinar series discussing four topics: *Humanizing Bias, Recognizing Areas of Oppression and Privilege, Conducting Difficult Conversations, Becoming Anti-Discriminatory*
- ◆ District Equity Services Coordinator will become CARES<sup>TM</sup> Certified through US<sup>2</sup>

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of a proposal to contract with US<sup>2</sup> Inc. at a cost of \$15,000 to create and support District equity related services. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk