



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

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

October 12, 2020

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

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Mary Rayome

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Student Representative Report

Rachel Marten provided updates on the following:

- ◆ Lincoln will be having a homecoming court this year, but voting will be performed electronically and details around the crowning ceremony are still being finalized
- ◆ Student Council is working with other clubs to potentially purchase two additional water bottle fillers for the school at a cost of \$2,000 each, and they are of the understanding that the District will match this donation by purchasing two more
- ◆ Student Council is also interested in helping to provide funding toward the WRPS "Stay Connected Program," when or if District funding becomes unavailable to families

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of September 14, 2020 and special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of September 14, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from Citizens and Delegations

None.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – October 5, 2020. 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 2019 Act 185 COVID-19 Response report, as presented, to be sent to the Department of Public Instruction by November 1, 2020.

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

Mr. Krings provided updates and reports on:

- Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, explained that the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes grants that flow from the federal government to the states. These grants include Title I, II, III and IV. Dollar amounts are higher for the 2020-21 school year as funds were carried over from the 2019-20 school year as a result of the COVID shut down. Funds that had been allocated for such things as professional development, teacher subs, and parent involvement for 2019-20 were added to the 2020-21 overall allocation.
- Ms. Filtz and Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, requested a review and possible update of Board Policy 672 – Purchasing Procedures/Competitive Pricing. The policy was last updated in 2007, and changes in technology and the cost of “doing business” may make it beneficial to update the policy. Items in the policy to be addressed include multi-year contracts and the dollar amount thresholds in place. Superintendent Broeren indicated that the policy could be completely revamped, or simply reworded to address the increasing dollar amounts to keep up with rising costs. Committee members discussed the topic of local vendor use, how the public is made aware of an opportunity to bid on items, and how pricing is requested. By consensus, Committee members agreed that recommended revisions to the policy should be brought to a future meeting for consideration and possible approval.
- Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, reviewed the summary of professional development opportunities that were available to teachers this summer to prepare for adjusted learning options and to address the social and emotional health of students and staff. In July and August there were 22 classes offered with 549 total participants, 4K-12. These opportunities provided teachers with tools to assist them in teaching off-campus if needed. Comments from participants were positive. Teachers were excited to use what they learned and feel more comfortable transitioning to virtual learning if necessary.
- Ms. Filtz updated the Committee on off-campus, Central Oaks Academy, and Lincoln Virtual School enrollment numbers as of September 30, 2020. The numbers are changing daily. Ms. Hett inquired about whether parents were asked to commit to an enrollment option. It was explained that Central Oaks Academy grades 6-8 students would be allowed to return to the building at the end of each trimester. Grades pre-K through 5 off-campus learners can move back and forth from virtual to in-person as parents feel comfortable. Ms. Filtz indicated attendance is tracked for virtual students by participation and progress made in the program. The first attendance letters were sent out in the last few days to parents/guardians of students not participating in the virtual program, or not making academic progress.

Motion by John Krings, seconded by John Benbow to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the October 5, 2020 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – October 5, 2020. Report given by Katie Medina.

Ms. Medina 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 66.03.01 cooperative agreements for students attending the virtual program from the Stevens Point school district as listed. *Mr. Broeren explained that there will likely be some changes recommended for the virtual program (recognizing that it is not purely a virtual program) to move toward the development of a virtual charter school in the future. This would allow students to open enroll into the program, rather than enter into 66.030.01 cooperative agreements. More details and information will be shared with the Board once a recommendation is finalized.*
- BS-2 Approval of the proposed 2% across the board contract rate increase applied to all rates in the existing pupil transportation contracts with both Safe Way Bus Transit and Lamers Bus Lines.
- BS-3 Approval of the proposed service contract with Complete Control, Inc. for 132 hours of HVAC service work at a total cost of \$15,700.

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Ms. Medina provided updates and reports on:

- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grants awarded to Grove, Howe, and Mead Elementary Schools for the 2020-21 School Year.

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by John Benbow to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the October 5, 2020 Business Services Committee meeting as well as special closed session Committee meeting minutes of September 23, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – October 5, 2020. 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 Laura Oleson (Instructional Aide 4K – Mead), Stacey Shaw (Special Education Aide – THINK), Michelle Zuege (Kitchen Helper – WRAMS), Miranda Borhardt (Special Education Aide/EC – Mead), and Kimberly Elgersma (Special Education Aide – Woodside).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff resignation requests of Teri Gerdes (Instructional Aide 4K – Mead), Kevin Cushman (Special Ed Aide, Limited Term – Howe), and Ryan Freeberg (Custodian – RCHS/Pitsch).

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items PS 1-2. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on:

- Brian Oswall, Director of Human Resources, shared that Unum Insurance, the District's long-term care insurance provider, is increasing the premium cost on January 1, 2021. The long-term care benefit is of no cost to the District. Currently there are 40 employees paying for long-term care insurance. The Human Resources Department is working with Unum to provide information to these employees.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the October 5, 2020 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- Governor Evers announced that more than \$5 million in federal CARES Act funding will be awarded for the expansion of high-speed, broadband internet. Funding will be awarded by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to applicants from the 2020 broadband expansion grants that did not receive funding and are able to connect customers by December 30, 2020, and satisfy the requirements of the federal CARES Act.
- On Tuesday, September 22, 2020, the Joint Legislative Council hosted an online discussion on the experiences of individuals and families navigating pathways to diagnosis, treatment, and support of autism as told by an occupational therapist with specialized training in working with children with autism, navigators who work in various parts of the state, and the co-director of a clinic providing innovative approaches to autism services in Milwaukee.
- The U. S. House of Representatives passed a \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief bill Thursday, October 1, 2020 after negotiations between Speaker Pelosi and the White House stalled again after briefly picking up Wednesday. Prospects for a deal between both parties appear to be fading, and the bill is unlikely to move through the Republican led Senate.
- The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) has been working with other K-12 advocates to request the state legislature to reconvene this fall to take up targeted and temporary statutory flexibilities for school districts to address issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is unlikely that the legislature will come back into session before January, it is important for them to be aware of the issues facing education.
- The Office of School Safety has released a new version of *The Safe Schools Legal Resource Manual*, which addresses issues such as parent notification, staff presence during interviews with agency personnel, student rights, searches, and much more.
- Many school districts across the state are facing teacher and staff supply challenges that have been made

worse by the pandemic. WASB and K-12 advocacy groups have urged legislative leaders to take up and pass a set of statutory changes to address, among other things, teacher licensing flexibility, and potential revenue losses due to fluctuations in September pupil counts. The DPI has initiated rulemaking changes to Chapter PI 34, the administrative rules chapter relating to teacher licensing.

- The DPI is holding a virtual public forum for the Special Education Council on October 14, 2020 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. The forum will provide individuals with an opportunity to weigh in on special education policy. There is also a way to submit comments online between October 12-16, 2020 through the DPI website.
- Governor Evers has issued a new Department of Health Services (DHS) Emergency Order #3 limiting public gatherings to no more than 25 percent of a room or building's total occupancy. The directive is effective from October 8, 2020 through November 6, 2020 and applies to any gathering at locations that are open to the public such as stores, restaurants, and other businesses that allow public entry, as well as spaces with ticketed events. Schools are exempt from the Order.
- The annual WASB Fall Regional meeting took place virtually on October 7, 2020, and Mr. Bier congratulated fellow Board Member John Benbow for achieving Level IV recognition for his service as a long-standing Board member. Mr. Bier shared details around the agenda topics that were covered during the meeting.
- A local Legislative Breakfast is scheduled to occur at Bulls Eye Golf Club on Friday, October 23, 2020 at 7:00 a.m.
- Mr. Bier encouraged everyone to get out and vote either in person or by absentee ballot in the upcoming election to be held on November 3, 2020.

Bills

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Katie Medina to note September, 2020 receipts in the amount of \$5,585,681.43 and approve September, 2020 disbursements in the amount of \$3,990,490.14. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Unfinished/Old Business

Future Levy Override and Bond Issue Referendum Questions

Supt. Broeren reviewed building drawings and cost estimates affiliated with the potential \$34 million bond issue referendum question that is being considered for placement on the 2021 spring election ballot. The capital projects would include an estimated \$12.74 million in school security updates throughout all District buildings to redesign school main entrances for better monitoring and control of visitor access. All visitors would be routed through each school's main office before gaining access to other areas of the school. Specifically at Mead Elementary, the cafeteria would also undergo an expansion due to a need for additional space given the number of students being served there. Board members expressed support for strengthening secure entryways in buildings across the district.

Additional capital projects would include two renovations at Lincoln High School. The first is estimated to cost \$9.93 million and would update the science classroom and lab space that was built in 1979. Upgrades would include an expansion of spaces for flexible small and large group instruction; provide for additional lab storage; create opportunities to conduct more advanced labs; boost electrical systems to better accommodate the use of technology and current equipment in science instruction; and allow for offerings tied to in-demand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. As a former science teacher himself, Mr. Broeren can attest to the need for upgrading the science labs to coincide with modern day curriculum and teaching methods and techniques.

The second upgrade is estimated to cost \$6.73 million and would involve relocating the library from the second floor at Lincoln to the first floor to create a collaborative learning space, or "Student Resource Center," for students and staff. Libraries are no longer utilized simply as quiet spaces for independent study. They tend to be more flexible learning spaces utilized for purposes such as conducting research; hosting students' group-project meetings; providing areas to hold academic assistance in math, reading, and writing; allow for technology access; and could also host staff professional development sessions. This relocation would then allow for the space on the second floor to be repurposed into expanded science classrooms and labs. The plan would be to design the new student resource center in such a way that would allow for it to be used as a gathering space for both school and community use.

A final capital project would cost approximately \$4.6 million and would add a gymnasium to THINK Academy located in Rudolph. Currently at THINK, the cafeteria and gym occupy one shared space which requires daily setup and tear down of tables and chairs, with a quick deep clean performed in order to prepare the space for physical

education classes held in the afternoon. The space is small and limited given the area typically needed for teaching modern day physical education curriculum.

Mr. Broeren explained that in addition to the bond issue question, an operational referendum question is also being considered in the amount of \$2 million per year for the next five years. Similar to what has been supported by the community in the past, these funds would be utilized for curriculum and technology updates.

In summary, the spring 2021 referendum questions being considered would provide funding to support:

OPERATIONAL (Levy Override):

- ✓ Five-year operational referendum to fund technology and curriculum updates\$2 million annually for 5 years

BOND ISSUE FOR FACILITY UPGRADES/ENHANCEMENTS (with an anticipated 20-year payment schedule):

- ✓ Update school security at all schools \$12.74 million
- ✓ Renovate science classrooms and create a Student Resource Center at Lincoln High School \$16.66 million
- ✓ Add a gymnasium to THINK Academy..... \$4.6 million
- TOTAL \$34.0 million

With the District’s existing debt for past facility projects anticipated to be paid off in the coming years, the projected mill rate will likely have little or no increase during the 2021-2026 fiscal years should the referendum questions pass. Mr. Broeren stressed this is a projection based upon data tied to anticipated property values and pupil counts, and there is always a chance that the actual tax rate could change depending upon local circumstances and funding support from the state and federal level. When questioned about whether the pandemic will have an impact on the tax levy, Mr. Broeren stated there are many unknown factors associated with the pandemic including whether a loss in District revenue will be experienced if enrollment steadily declines should parents choose to home school or withdraw their child(ren) to pursue other off-site instructional alternatives.

Mr. Broeren then reviewed a draft version of a community survey that has been developed around the potential referendum questions. The District is working with School Perceptions LLC to finalize survey information that will go out to members of the community in early November. The survey collection would close on November 30, 2020. Results of the survey will be compiled and presented to the Board at a meeting in December 2020, and a final decision about whether to approve a referendum Resolution will need to occur by the end of January 2021. The Board had an opportunity to ask questions about the survey and timelines.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of the recommended community survey to be conducted by School Perceptions. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations and Retirement Requests

None.

2021 Friend of Education Award

Supt. Broeren spoke with President Krings and Vice President Rayome concerning a recommendation for Dr. Amy Falk and Dr. Lisa Olson to be presented with the 2021 Friend of Education award for their diligence and service to the District during the development of its reopening plans. These medical professionals continue to be an invaluable asset to WRPS schools as they navigate the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. The consensus is that they be recommended to receive the award.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to enthusiastically approve of presenting the 2021 Friend of Education award to Dr. Lisa Olson and Dr. Amy Falk. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Funds for Defeasance of Certain Notes Dated December 20, 2017

Daniel Weigand, Director of Business Services, explained that the administration is recommending that the one outstanding Note for the middle school project which has two payments remaining on it be paid off in its entirety using current budgeted dollars from the General Fund in order to free up funds for future use. The Board questioned what the total is for the outstanding debt owed, and Mr. Weigand informed them that the total amount from the two final payments equals \$3,784,494.11.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve a Resolution authorizing the Transfer of Funds for the defeasance of certain of the Taxable General Obligation Notes dated December 20, 2017. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Resolution Authorizing the Issuance and Establishing Parameters for Sale of General Obligation Refunding Bonds

Mr. Weigand reviewed a recommended Resolution for the Board to approve which would authorize the issuance and establish parameters for the sale of not to exceed \$16,800,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2020. This is the debt that was taken out to fund District energy projects. One Note specifically pertains to the high school project, while the other is for the remaining school buildings. The recommendation is to combine the two Notes and refinance them at a lower rate to save approximately \$600,000 in costs. This savings goes directly back to taxpayers since it is removed from the tax levy.

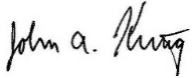
Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve a Resolution authorizing the Issuance and Establishing Parameters for the Sale of Not to Exceed \$16,800,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2020. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

The Board expressed deep gratitude to Mr. Weigand for his continued excellence and responsibility in handling the fiscal affairs of the District.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk