

Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Minutes Special Meeting

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

The WEM Board of Education met in a special session on November 12, 2024. Board Chairman Gary Micheal called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Board members: Michael, June Rezac, Jeff Stangler, Brenda Heuss, Troy Tolzman, Jocelyn Brown, Jon Bakken (arrival 6:36 pm), and Jay Schneider (arrival 7:04 pm) Also, in attendance, Superintendent John Regan, Principals Jennifer Wilson and Miles Knutson.

Motion by Stangler, second by Heuss to approve the agenda as written. Motion passes 5-0

Information/Discussion:

ICS presented a timeline of the next steps in the Indoor Air Quality Project. Stated that construction documents should be ready by November 22, 2024. Construction documents will be reviewed to ensure the following: refine the design to ensure budget alignment, review the final design to ensure expectations are met, coordinate all aspects of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing, the final selection of lighting and plumbing fixtures, finish specifications, and develop the final plans and all details needed for bidding and construction. Pre-bid walk-thru would take place by December 3, 2024. Bid opening by December 19, 2024 board meeting. Currently, the project is running over budget (\$312,677.39). ICS feels during the review of the construction documents phase, they will be able to tighten that up through a design review for Phase 1. Phase 1 construction would begin Summer of 2025.

Discussed the following policies:

- 301 Superintendent Job Description
- 301A School District Administration
- 342 Superintendent
- 343 Superintendent Selection
- 344 Superintendent Contract, Duties, and Evaluation
- 345 Policy Implementation

The board recommendation was to rescind Policy 301 and attach it as an appendix to Policy 342. The board will determine, at a later date, if the full board will review and revise Appendix 301 or if it will be sent to the policy committee for review. A vote to complete the recommendation would take place at the next regular meeting.

Organizational Meeting will take place on January 6, 2025, at 6:30 pm, in the board room. Regan inquired who would be attending the MSBA conference held on January 16-17, 2025. Members responded with their intentions to attend or not.

Action:

Motion by Schneider, second by Heuss to approve the resolution canvassing returns of votes for the November 5, 2024 School Board General Election.

Roll Call Vote:

- Bakken, Jon; Yes
- Heuss, Brenda: Yes
- Michael, Gary: Yes
- Rezac, June: Yes
- Schneider, Jay: Yes
- Stangler, Jeff: Yes
- Tolzman, Troy: Yes

Motion passes 7-0.

Motion by Bakken, second by Tolzman to approve the resolution authorizing the issuance of certificates of election and directing the school district clerk to perform other election-related duties including: abstract and return of votes cast, Clerk’s certificate to abstract and return of votes, and certificate of election.

Roll Call Vote:

- Bakken, Jon; Yes
- Heuss, Brenda: Yes
- Michael, Gary: Yes
- Rezac, June: Yes
- Schneider, Jay: Yes
- Stangler, Jeff: Yes
- Tolzman, Troy: Yes

Motion passes 7-0.

Facilities:

WEM Superintendent John Regan presented the following:

School	Enrollment	Capacity	Functional Capacity	Remarks
Waterville Elem. (PK-4)	305	396 (18 classrms x 22)	356 (90%)	1 & 2
Morristown Middle (grades 5-8)	213		300	
Waterville High (grades 9-12)	259		406	Additional 5 classrooms on 2nd floor would increase functional capacity to 500
Summary	777 Enrollment		1,043 Student Capacity	

Remarks:

1. Elementary support spaces not included (gym, music, art)
2. Pre-K rooms are included in capacity and enrollment.

Reviewed the current strategic plan’s focus on students. Reviewed current projected budget, loss of COVID dollars, and more students graduating than in coming kindergarten. Asked board members to consider three questions when stabilizing the budget:

- Good for the kids?
- Provides high-quality learning opportunities?
- Responsible with taxpayer funds?

Loss of students equates to less money. We make cuts or have fewer offerings.

Shifting to offering education at one site would offer the benefit of the ability to invest more in our students' educational opportunities. Would offer the ability to offer more support for both students who are struggling and students who are excelling both academically and behaviorally. It would make available pathway electives for younger students, and increase academic electives and CTE electives. Transitions would be eliminated. Less busing and idle time. Administrative alignment, eliminate transitions and offer more staff support.

Considerations of this solution include: change, detailed plans have not been developed, can’t pinpoint how much savings, a possible lessee of the current building that would provide access to gyms/fields, responsibility to our students to create the best possible learning environment.

Wilson/Knutson gave examples of different offerings for students that were possibilities if the change occurred. Advised the ability of staff to better collaborate, advised more access to support for students, and the ability to properly disperse workload of administrators and staff.

Bakken asked what a timeline would be for this solution? Regan advised possible loss of lessee depending on dates of possible occupancy. Information would be presented to staff, then a letter would be sent to families. Board would then have further meetings to determine recommendations and vote.

Schieder made a motion to adjourn and Stangler seconded the motion. Seven members voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

June A. Rezac, Attest