

## **Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Minutes Special Meeting**

Thursday, August 14, 2025

The WEM Board of Education met in a work session on August 14, 2025. Board Chairman Gary Micheal called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Board members: Michael, June Rezac, Jon Bakken, and Troy Tolzman. Student board members Jocelyn Brown and Grace Bartz attended the meeting. Members Jay Schneider, Brenda Heuss, and Jeff Stangler were absent. Also, in attendance was Superintendent Mark Winter.

Motion by Bakken, second by Tolzman, to approve the agenda. Four members voted in favor; the motion passed.

### III.A. First Reading of Policies:

Members had the first reading of the following policies: \_

209 Code of Ethics

421 Gifts to Employees and School Board Members

533 Wellness

903 Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites

### III.B. Discuss Lot for Sale

The lot is at the corner of 5th Street S. and Common Street E, across from the High School Parking lot. Superintendent Winter advised that a verbal estimate was given for approximately \$10,000 for the removal of the old fuel barrels on the property. Any soil contamination would consist of the removal of soil at \$200 per sq. yard. A soil contamination did occur in 2011, and was released as clear in 2013 per Minnesota Pollution Control Site ID Leak 16611. Concerns that there still is a soil contamination issue inside the shed on the property, which has a dirt floor. Bakken asked dimensions of the lot and how many parking spaces it would allow. Winter advised did not have number of parking spaces; the lot is in the middle of the block. Michael directed Winter, would like the process for soil contamination removal, and Tolzmann advised would like to know if neighbors on each side of the lot would be interested in selling as well. All parties advised would like the full dimensions of the lot and the estimated parking spaces.

### III.C. Communication

Winter inquired about the District's need for a policy on who (other than the District) can have items posted on our website, Facebook/social media, posters displayed, and backpack stuffing.

Rezac advised that community partners have been allowed to post posters and bring in items for students, library was an example. Our calendar currently doesn't have community events. Rezac advised that TCU and JWP both have separate community calendars that have all events using district facilities; there is also a link to request facility use. Winter advised in his experience, there have been negative connections with some requests and recommended that the district not allow any posting of community events. He also stated there have been requests for sharing to the district's social media and that is what prompted him to ask the board's thoughts. Further discussion determined the web/social media managers/administration will continue to vet requests on a case-by-case basis using the past practice.

### III.D. Field Naming

A suggestion has been made to name the football field. There is not currently a policy in place for this process. Items such as naming, the duration that the name would be viable for sponsors or individuals. An example given was "The Willy" as a named field. A second example, the library in the Morristown building. Boran/Winter would like the board to determine the process or criteria for

applying to name a field, gym, room, etc. Board members determined that Athletic Council members (Schnieder and Tolzmann) would work with Athletic Director Boran and Superintendent Winter to develop the criteria and present it at the regular meeting on August 25 for approval.

### III.E. 6th Graders Participating in Junior High Programs

Athletic Director Boran advised the members regarding changes to the Minnesota High School League Bylaws (MSHSL).

1. MSHSL's Representative Assembly passed several bylaw amendments to officially include all ninth-grade programs under League governance.
2. Reviewed MSHSL's that there are updates to bylaw 111, which impacts eligibility for transfer students.
3. According to the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) rules for the 2025–2026 school year, students in grades 7–12 can play at a higher level, including varsity, if selected. Junior high athletes require additional approval, and there are specific rules and criteria governing their participation at the high school level.
  - a. Approval: A student in 7th or 8th grade requires permission from the athlete, the coach, the parents, and the school's activities director before being moved to a higher-level squad.
  - b. Demonstrated skill: Athletes must demonstrate the necessary skill to compete effectively at the high school level. They should not be moved up simply to fill a roster spot.
  - c. Physical readiness: The student must be physically capable of handling the change in competition level.
  - d. Beneficial to all: The promotion must be beneficial for both the student-athlete and the overall school program.
  - e. Commitment: If a 7th or 8th grader is moved to the high school level, they cannot move back down to the middle school level within the same season.
  - f. Timing: The promotion of a 7th or 8th grader must be done before the fourth Monday of the regular season, aligning with MSHSL eligibility rules for section play.
  - g. Participation fees: Parents must be willing to pay the higher participation fee associated with high school athletics.

Due to these updates, and after clarification of MSHSL's rules on sanctioned and nonsanctioned activities, Athletic Director Boran asked for board recommendation/direction/policy on the ability of students in grade 6 to participate in Jr High activities. Boran gave an example of a lack of players at the Jr. High level. Michael advised that Athletic Director Boran has a challenging position and the board supports him and his decisions; however, if asking for a policy for 6th-grade students playing up in the Jr. High level, Michael's recommendation would be not to allow the practice. Bakken and Tolzmann also stated that they would support Boran's decision on the determination of 6th graders playing up. Rezac supports Boran's challenging position in this case; however, due to the mental and physical development of the students at that level would also recommend not allowing 6th-grade students to participate at the Jr. High level. Members recommended having the Athletic Council (Schnieder/Tolzmann as board representatives) work in tandem with Boran on this topic and report back to the board on decisions regarding playing up at the 6th grade level, policy recommendations, if any, and challenges resulting from any recommendations. The board would revisit if necessitated by the Athletic Council recommendation.

### IV. Update Regarding the Future of the Morristown Building

Winter has had two meetings regarding the Morristown building with District 288. The meetings included the following discussion: retaining ownership of the fields, retaining building use of

commons and gymnasium, beginning the process of furniture and tech move to the Waterville building, non-compete clause if they vacate, and/or ability to repurchase, food service and tech person collaboration possibilities. Requires a final meeting by the board to officially close the school and a final vote by District 288 to finalize the purchase agreement. A date for the final meeting for WEM will be determined at the regular board meeting on August 25.

Motion by Bakken, second by Tolzmann, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 pm. Motion carried 4-0.

June A. Rezac, Attest

Gary Michael, Attest