

# Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting

## The Board of Directors Pipestone Area Schools

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of Pipestone Area Schools was held Monday, January 27, 2025 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1148, MS/HS.

**Members Present:** Vice Chairman Katie Wiese, Tyler Fruechte, Chrissy DeBates, Tami Taubert, Mark Hiniker, and Daphne Likness. . Absent: Brad Carson. Also present: Jacque Kennedy, Klint Willert, Sonja Ortman, Lisa Pease, Jennifer Moravetz, and Deb Peschon.

**Visitors Present:** Jay Buchholz, Nate Zimmerman, Stephanie Backer, Nancy Stiles, Kathy Hachmann, Jill Grimmett, Priscilla Smidt, Heidi Williams, Carrie Backer, Jodi Swenson, Rachel Rudebusch; Kyle Kuphal, and Deb Melby.

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairman Wiese called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Likness, second by DeBates, approved the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Forum**

#### **Presentation**

**Sioux Valley Energy Solar Project Update:** Jay Buchholz gave an update on the solar project.

#### **Consent Agenda**

**Approve Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of December 16, 2024:**

**Approve Minutes of the School Board Organizational Meeting of January 6, 2025:**

**Personnel Report: Action Required:** Work agreements for Jennifer Yost, attendance secretary; Deb Peschon, superintendent admin assistant; Larissa Pemberton, SpEd teacher; Katie Smith and Wayne Page, part-time custodian; letter of resignation from DaNerica Maples and Adayla Crowe, paraprofessionals; Naomi Wallace and Taylor Post, new subs to the district; Justin Schroyer, volunteer FFA fish and wildlife team. Motion by DeBates, second by Fruechte, approved all items in the Consent Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Financials**

**Review of Budget Year-to-Date:** The budget year-to-date shows expenditures as of January 20, 2025 at \$7,999,653.59 or 47%. This was non-action.

**Approve Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2024:** The treasurer's report for month ended December 31, 2024 shows a cash balance of \$10,527,005.42. Motion by Likness, second by Fruechte, approved the treasurer's report for December. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approve 2023A Bonds Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2024:** The MN Trust 2023A Bonds treasurer's report for month ended December 31, 2024 has a cash balance of \$2,788,429.03. Motion by DeBates, second by Fruechte, approved the 2023A bonds treasurer's report. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approve Regular Bills for January:** Regular bills paid through January 21, 2025 totaled \$620,948.79. Motion by Fruechte, second by Hiniker, approved payment of the regular bills. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approve High School Activity Bills for January:** High school activity bills paid through January 21, 2025 totaled \$28,277.83. Motion by Taubert, second by Likness, approved payment of the high school activity bills. Motion carried unanimously.

**Board Forum/Information:** Negotiations Committee has met with ESP and Policy Committee has an upcoming meeting.

**Administrator's Report:** January enrollment is 1094.

#### Superintendent:

1. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Association** - Per the legislative action last year, the district is required to enter into an MOU with the teacher association for payment for training associated with the READ Act. I worked with teacher leaders on an MOU draft, which was created based on the model MOU developed between Education Minnesota and the Minnesota School Board Association. I anticipate we will have a final MOU document to present for board action at the regular February board meeting.
2. **Architect Agreement** - In the board action this month we have the final AIA agreement for the roofing project. The agreement was reviewed by legal counsel. Legal counsel had two items that they wanted to share. First, they suggested we should have a greater liquidated damage amount. As the board may recall, we did discuss the liquidated damages clause with the representatives from Tremco. After the

discussion, the board representatives determined it was appropriate to land where we did on the stated damages clause in the contract. The second consideration was increasing the insurance amount. When I presented this to Tremco, they shared that the insurance amount in the agreement was quite standard for their contracts. I believe we have the coverage to support our needs. Additionally, per the contract and the bid process, it is the owner's responsibility to secure a builders risk policy. We are working with our agent to secure a policy and I anticipate we will have the policy ready for board action in February.

3. **Special Workshop Meeting** - Given our ongoing needs and challenges in the area of special education, I am working on scheduling a special school board workshop meeting where the board can learn more about special education and our district needs. We have teachers that are working tirelessly, but are overwhelmed by caseloads and paperwork. We are taking steps to address this including moving to a full time special education secretary position, adding special education teaching staff, supporting the special education pipeline grant, and providing paperwork days for the teachers. We know the demands are great in the special education area and a workshop will give the board more information as well as insights on our program needs, the state and federal requirements, and what we can continue to do to support our amazing staff.
4. **MSBA Leadership Conference** - The leadership conference was outstanding. Brad and I attended a pre-conference session on negotiations. We learned a great deal about some of the changes coming including the changes to Family Medical Leave Act. The keynote speakers were great. I was particularly fond of Hamish Brewer ([www.hamishbrewer.com](http://www.hamishbrewer.com)). He is a nationally recognized turn-around school principal who drove home the importance of creating relationships and empowering teachers to improve schools. The breakout sessions were very good. Finally, I shared a breakout session on Creating a Culture of Significance. I shared some of the practices we are doing in the Pipestone Area Schools to foster a positive culture in our schools for staff and students alike. I received positive feedback on the presentation.
5. **HVAC Work** - We are finding we have a number of issues with our HVAC system. Len and I met with representatives from Trane to learn about replace non-function VAV (Variable Air Value) units. We have a number of units that need replacement - primarily due to the age of the units. Administration will be reviewing the proposed replacement plan from Trane and look to incorporate that into the budget plan next year.
6. **Furniture Replacement Plan** - Mrs. Ortman and I met with a vendor to discuss a comprehensive replacement plan of furniture in the high school. We know this is a significant concern for staff as we have chairs that are breaking and desks that are not functional for classrooms. Rather than having a "piece meal" approach, we are opting for a comprehensive strategic approach where we can intentionally make purchases that are interchangeable among classrooms and have a similar brand and warranty. The vendor is going to provide an assessment of our current furniture in the middle school and high school. From the assessment, he will present a replacement plan. We will be engaging staff as well as students in the discussion as we start to tackle this project. Again, this is the result of age and the wear and tear that occurs with over 20 years of use.
7. **Taher Foods** - We had a great conversation with Taher this month about enhancing food quality and options at the school. They are very open to our input and will be providing some thoughts and suggestions for meal improvements to our team. Some of the ideas included moving to a whole muscle chicken breast as opposed to a chicken patty on a sandwich, creating a salad bar with some protein options on the menu, and also looking to incorporate the presence of a chef more regularly. We are looking for strategies that will enhance our child nutrition program and also help address our fund balance in the child nutrition area. Watch for additional updates in the future.
8. **Legislature** - This is starting out to be an unprecedented legislative session. As I write this, there is an ongoing dispute about leadership in the House. There continues to be speculation on when the dispute will be settled and what the implications will be. Given these challenges at the start of the session, I am concerned the legislature will not complete their work according to their schedule. We also know the Governor has presented his preliminary budget with a theme of being fiscally responsible. The budget proposal has a number of program changes, cuts, as well as increased fees. At this time, there are not comprehensive details on some of his proposals and we are seeking additional insights from lobbyists and educational advocates to learn more.
9. **Strategic Plan and KnowledgeWorks** - In the board packet you will find a contractual agreement between KnowledgeWorks and the district. The funding for this contract will come from the CEOG grant awarded to the district last spring. We will be partnering with KnowledgeWorks for staff training and

support, some curriculum alignment work, as well as our district strategic plan. I am excited about our partnership and what it will produce as we focus on our Pipestone Area School Profile of a Graduate.

10. **Negotiations** - We are still working through the negotiations process with the Educational Support Professionals. The board negotiations committee and I will present the board's last proposed offer with the entire board at the meeting so everyone is aware of what is currently on the table following the last negotiation session.

Principals: Sonja Ortman

#### 1. Schedule Update

As we begin preparing for the 2025-2026 school year, significant work has already been initiated on the development of next year's schedule. Teachers were surveyed, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the current schedule. The majority of staff expressed that the schedule is much easier to navigate and recommended its continuation for the upcoming year.

In response to this, I am working to expand the course offerings at the high school level. This will require a thoughtful approach to ensure we balance existing resources and meet the needs of our students. By starting this process early, we will be able to ensure that all students are registered for next year's courses in person, well before the summer break.

#### 2. School Goals Update

**Tardies:** In the first quarter, there were a total of 2,066 tardies recorded. This number decreased to 1,593 tardies in the second quarter, which shows a positive trend. We remain committed to addressing this issue and continuing our focus on encouraging students to arrive to class on time.

**Grades:** Our ongoing goal is to reduce the number of failing grades. At the end of the first quarter, 65 students had at least one failing grade. We are currently tracking the second quarter's progress, and will report the specific data once available. In our efforts to improve student outcomes, we continue to emphasize the importance of assignment completion and regularly remind students to submit their work.

#### 3. Furniture Needs

A significant number of classroom chairs have been in use for over two decades, many of which are now broken or in poor condition. To address this, we propose a gradual and purposeful update to our furniture, starting with classrooms and pod areas. The goal is to invest in modern furniture that promotes flexible, collaborative learning environments, which will enhance the overall educational experience for both students and teachers.

#### 4. Recent Assembly

On a positive note, we recently hosted motivational speaker Cory Greenwood, who addressed our middle and high school students with his message: "You Matter." The assembly was highly engaging, relevant, and interactive. Cory's presentation resonated well with both students and staff, creating a meaningful and impactful experience for all participants.

#### 5. New Staff Hire

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Jennifer Yost as our new Attendance Secretary. Jennifer has quickly adapted to her role, demonstrating impressive learning ability and a strong work ethic. We are confident that she will be a valuable asset to our administrative team.

Jennifer Moravetz:

- Students and staff have transitioned back from the holiday break. Everyone is settling into their routines and fostering a positive, energetic learning environment.
- We are currently in our winter testing period for NWEA MAP and DIBELS assessments.
- The second quarter ended on Friday, January 17th. Progress reports and grades are set to be sent home after Wednesday, January 29th.
- Monday, January 20th was a staffwork day for teachers.
- On Monday, January 20th and Tuesday, January 21st, we held our second round of Student Focus meetings, providing a valuable opportunity for our classroom teachers and student services team to discuss each student in the building and ensure their needs are being met.
- We celebrated our amazing paraprofessionals with a Subway lunch and a festive 'Para Parade' in their honor. Our paraprofessionals are an integral piece of our school community, demonstrating unwavering dedication and tireless hard work to support both students and teachers. Their commitment ensures every student receives the care, love, and support they need to be successful.
- Update on school improvement goals:
  - **Academic Goal:** 80% of students in grades K-5 will demonstrate measurable growth in their NWEA reading scores from the fall of 2024 to the spring of 2025.

- We are in the midst of our mid-year testing session and teachers are excited to report significant growth and progress in students' NWEA reading scores. Our mid-year check-in shows that we are on track to meet this goal by the end of the school year.
  - **Non-Academic Goal:** By the end of the 2024 - 2025 school year, 91% of students in grades JK-5 will achieve an attendance rate of 90% or higher.
    - As of January 13, 2025
      - School days: 82 days
      - 502 students JK - 5th grade (Does not include PreK and colony)
      - Overall attendance is 94.9%.
        - ✚ Average student missing 4 days.
      - 87.2% of students in JK - 5th grade are at or above an attendance of 90% or higher. (Have missed less than 8 days of school.)
      - 12.8% of students JK - 5th grade have missed more than 8 days of school.
        - ✚ 6% (30 students) have missed 17+ days of school.
      - 8.8% (44 students) of students JK - 5th grade have perfect attendance
- On Friday, February 24th, we will host our second-quarter Arrow Way Parade, celebrating two students from each classroom, grades JK-5th, who exemplify excellence in being respectful, responsible, and safe and secure.
- On Friday, January 31st, we will host our third TERRIFIC Kid program, celebrating outstanding 2nd grade students.

Lisa Pease, Curriculum:

Mentoring Program

- Replaced Instructional Coaching
- Great feedback from teachers

District & Statewide Assessments

- Elementary: DIBELS/NWEA has been completed
- MS/HS NWEA testing window closes on February 12, 2025
- ACCESS testing window opened today

READ Act Requirements

- Phase 1: MS/HS SPED and ML Teachers will begin this summer/fall

ELA Curriculum

- Narrowed down to 3 companies - Zoom meetings set up
- Budget for FY 26

**Unfinished Business**

**Board Action**

**Resolution Accepting Donations:**

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes 123B.02, Subd. 6 provides: “The board may receive, for the benefit of the district, bequests, donations, or gifts for any proper purpose and apply the same to the purpose designated. In that behalf, the board may act as trustee of any trust created for the benefit of the district, or for the benefit of pupils thereof, including trusts created to provide pupils of the district with advanced education after completion of high school, in the advancement of education.”, and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes 465.03 provides: “Any city, county, school district or town may accept a grant or devise of real or personal property and maintain such property for the benefit of its citizens in accordance with the terms prescribed by the donor. Nothing herein shall authorize such acceptance or use for religious or sectarian purposes. Every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members, expressing such terms in full.” and

WHEREAS, every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members, expressing such terms in full;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the School Board of Pipestone Area Schools, ISD 2689, gratefully accepts the following donations as identified below:

|                    |            |  |
|--------------------|------------|--|
| Anonymous          | \$1,000.00 | Donation to Overdue Lunch Accounts   |
| Arrow Booster Club | \$1,258.04 | Donation to Gym – Tumble track/pit pillow<br>Donation to youth BB programming software |

|                              |                     |   |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Christ the King Lutheran     | \$200.00            | Wellness Room Donation                    |
| Give Like Joe Mem Foundation | \$5,773.00          | Donation towards gymnastic floor          |
| Give Like Joe Mem Foundation | \$5,771.00          | Donation for uneven bars and E-rails      |
| Riley Budden                 | \$1,000.00<br>value | Donation of motors for small motors class |

The motion for adoption of the foregoing resolution made by Member Hiniker, and duly seconded by Member Fruechte, and upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Wiese, Fruechte, Hiniker, Likness, Taubert, and DeBates.

and the following voted against the same: None.

The foregoing resolution was approved this 27th day of January, 2025. Passed 6-0.

**Approve Obsolete Items as Surplus:** Motion by Likness, second by Fruechte, to approve obsolete items of dry storage bins, reusable lunch containers, stainless steel table, thirty warmer bags, and seven warmers used from Brown and Hill as surplus. Motion carried unanimously,

**Approve Contract with Tremco:** Motion by Hiniker, second by DeBates, approved the contract with Tremco for the roof project. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approve Contract with Knowledge Works:** Motion by Likness, DeBates, second by approved the contract with Knowledge Works. Motion carried unanimously.

**Closed Session as Permitted by Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.03 to Discuss PAESP Labor**

**Negotiations:** Motion by Fruechte, second by DeBates, to go into closed session at 7:29 p.m. Those present in closed session were Fruechte, DeBates, Likness, Hiniker, Taubert, Wiese, and Willert.

**Adjourn:** Motion by DeBates, second by Fruechte, to adjourn the meeting (8:07 p.m.). Motion carried unanimously.

/s/ Brad Carson  
Brad Carson, Chairman

/s/ Chrissy DeBates  
Chrissy DeBates, Clerk

Approved and dated by the board February 24, 2025.

Submitted, Deb Peschon, Recording Secretary/School Board Clerk