

## W-E-M BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Monday, October 27, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

The WEM Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, October 27, 2025 at the Waterville Building. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Gary Michael at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Gary Michael, June Rezac, Jon Bakken, Jay Schneider, Brenda Heuss, Troy Tolzman, Jeff Stangler, Grace Bartz, and Jocelyn Brown attended the meeting. Also present at the meeting was Superintendent Mark Winter and Business Manager Margaret Jewison.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Heuss to approve the agenda with the elimination of one item. Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Stangler to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from September 22 meeting. Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Schneider to approve the September-October Financial Report. The bills and payroll from the report were \$2,694,810.48, deposits were \$1,229,767.86, and transfers of \$2,810,000.00. Comments included a payment of \$72,500 to Met-Con Construction, Inc. for bathroom grant construction from the State of Minnesota, the changing of descriptions on three payments to football officials, and the acknowledgment of state aide payments.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Rezac to Designate Authorized Users and Signers

The Superintendent and Business Manager, currently Mark Winter and Margaret Jewison, are authorized users for all district accounts at the official district depositories and have discretion to designate one responsible employee as an additional authorized user on each account to assist in the day-to-day district operations, currently Jeanne Morsching, Administrative Assistant, at Frandsen Bank, in Waterville, and Carridy Nelson, Administrative Assistant, at Lake Country Community Bank, in Morristown.

Additionally, authorized signers for check writing purposes will be the Board Chair, Board Treasurer, and Board Clerk for the district checking account, currently Gary Michael, Chair, Jon Bakken, Treasurer, and Jay Schneider, Clerk.

Seven member voted in favor - motion declared passed.

## VISITOR COMMENTS

There were three individuals who took part in the open forum portion of the meeting. They were Tim Flaten, Nancy Velzke, and Melanie Hopman.

All three discussed the Morristown building closure. Hopman presented a petition which had 420 signatures with concerns about the closure and subsequent potential sale of the building.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Tolzman and seconded by Heuss to approve the consent agenda which included the following items:

- Approve the following resignations:  
Robert Culhane, Transportation - Bus Driver, effective October 1, 2025.  
Jared Harris, Waterville Kitchen Asst/Baker, effective October 9, 2025.
- Approve the following new hires:

Jared Harris, Evening Custodian - Schedule A (1)/Step 8, \$16.66/hour.

Christine Austin, Kitchen Assistant/Baker - Schedule A(2), Band A-1-3/Step H, \$15.20/hour.

Anna Hanson, CNA/Health Office Assistant - \$20.36/hour.

Seven members voting in favor - motion declared passed.

## REPORTS

WEM K-4 and Junior High Principal Myles Knutson submitted the following reports.

Greetings School Board Members,

We have had a great start to the year! Here are a few updates from the Middle School:

- PBIS Rockstar Student Assemblies: Rockstar Student of the Month assemblies are back, and our school spirit is stronger than ever! These assemblies are a special way for us to recognize outstanding students who go above and beyond in showing kindness, leadership, and responsibility. After the recognitions, we keep the fun going with a friendly staff vs. student competition. Last year, the teachers claimed the overall crown in the year-long series, but the students kicked off this year with a big win in September during a game of "Cup Toss and Catch." We love celebrating our awesome students and seeing the entire school come together to cheer them on!
- Two Special Education Teachers: Having two full-time special education teachers at the middle school has made a tremendous difference for both staff and students. With more balanced caseloads aligned with the rest of the district, teachers are now able to provide more focused, individualized support. This has allowed us to serve students in more productive, creative, and meaningful ways that truly meet their unique needs. The positive impact on student growth and engagement has been remarkable, and we are seeing firsthand how this additional support helps every learner thrive.
- Warm Fall = Outdoor Learning: The warm fall weather has provided incredible opportunities for outdoor learning and exploration. Students have enjoyed experiences like fishing at the Morristown Dam, bird watching, and participating in a variety of outdoor physical education activities. One highlight has been students racing down the sidewalk to test their speed against the Morristown speedometer sign. Kudos to the teachers for getting kids outside to experience learning in fun and unique ways.

Thank you,

Myles Knutson

Greetings School Board Members,

We have had a great start to the year! Here are a few updates from the Elementary School:

- Safe and Secure: This fall, we made important updates to our before and after school procedures, as well as our SACC drop-off and pick-up routines, to ensure our building is as safe and secure as possible. Families have been very supportive of the changes and appreciative of the added focus on student safety. We also began utilizing the cafeteria after school to house our late bus riders rather than having them wait in the entryway. This adjustment has greatly improved supervision, reduced behavioral issues, and created a calmer, more organized environment to end the school day.
- Morning Meetings: Over the past few weeks, I've been visiting grade level morning meetings across the building, and I'm nearly finished making it to every classroom. I've been so impressed and proud of the thoughtful routines teachers have established to start each day. Morning meetings help students connect with one another, share, and build a sense of community while also providing opportunities to smile, laugh, and play in a structured way. I've especially enjoyed joining in to share a little about myself, explain what a principal does, and participate in games and activities with the students. It's been a wonderful way to start the day together and see the strong classroom communities being built.
- Conferences: Last month, we held our fall conferences, and it was wonderful to see so many families come through our doors. The conversations were incredibly productive, with meaningful collaboration between teachers, families, and students to support a successful school year. I always appreciate the

opportunity to see families and educators working together to celebrate student progress, set goals, and strengthen the partnership that helps our students thrive both academically and socially.

Thank you,  
Myles Knutson

WEM Senior High Principal Brandon Tagg submitted the following report.

I can't tell you what a breath of fresh air it was to see Homecoming Week at WEM High School. From the "Meet the Candidates" Monday to Homecoming Volleyball Night to lunch kick-ball tournament to the Friday day of float making/door decorating, it brought me back to my own high school days where all students participated in the dress up days, celebrated each other's events and shown an overall excitement about their school and being a Buccaneer!

It wasn't a couple of days and we were at conference week where we connected with kids about the halfway point of grades and making sure all were on track to pass the classes we had started just four weeks ago.

Great student meetings in the early part of the week with parent conferences towards the end made this a successful week of expectations and progress coming together. With a football/volleyball conflict, conferences were not attended very well, but for those that did show up, we had great discussions and hope that students would work hard to get grades up or stay the same. We will see as the quarter continues.

MEA week was then upon us and a nice short week was enjoyed by all. Upperclassmen were discussing schools they were going to visit over the break and underclassmen discussed how they were going to sleep in for the first time in months. As breaks usually do, it came at the perfect time for all and enjoyed by most. With Halloween/Quarter 1 ending in a few days, we are excited to see what next quarter brings and hoping we have all learned something this first time around. Personally, I have learned a ton and hope that our year will continue on this positive journey.

We recently reported to MDE about our A & I grant. We had three goals to accomplish in a three year span. Our first goal was to improve ACT test scores from a 19.8 in 2023 to a 22.0 by June 30, 2026. We did not meet our goal or even our baseline by students scoring a composite score of 17 in 2023 and that lowering to a composite score of 16.7 last year. We are going to monitor what we do for ACT prep, work with this year's juniors to come up with a plan to make sure that scores improve in some fashion and build into our school day, a way to assist these students in preparing for and accomplishing a goal of doing well for college prep.

Our second goal was to raise the students' feelings of being safe at school, from the 81% baseline to a 100%

in the three-year span. From the School Perspectives survey given last year, it looked like 85% of the students did feel safe at school. Even though we are moving in the right direction, we are not gaining as many percentage points as we need to meet the goal. It is something I would like to find out from our student body, but feel school board approval would need to be agreed upon for a survey to be sent out to students.

Finally, our third goal was to hire and maintain a staff with some diversity going from 3% to 5% by the next school year. It was told to me that we have had a couple of part-time employees with a diverse background a few years ago, but they have since left the district with no new employees making up this category for us. We will continue to monitor applications and promote a culture of diversity allowing all types of staff to be hired across the district.

Brandon Tagg  
WEM High School Principal

WEM Activities and Community Education Director Jeff Boran submitted the following report  
Athletics

WEM/JWP Cross Country – The Section Meet was held this past Thursday October 23th in Norwood Young America at Baylor Park. The State Meet this Saturday November 1st at the U of M! Congratulations to the Grizzly Boys CC team and coaches for winning the Conference meet held October 14 at Hayfield. Wyatt Jans was the Conference Champion for 2025. The girls team placed 3rd.

The WEM Varsity Volleyball team finished up the regular season with an 19-8 record earning the #4 seed in Section 2AA The team finished with a 9-1 Gopher Conference Record in a 3-way tie for the Gopher Conference Championship (with Triton and Kenyon-Wanamingo). Monday 10/20 the Bucs upended Maple River 3-0 and advanced to the Section 2AA Quarterfinal game at home vs. St. Clair played on Thursday October 23. Good luck and congratulations players and coaches!

The WEM Varsity Football team ended their regular season with a perfect 8-0 record capturing the Mid South “Silver” Subdistrict Championship and earned a #1 seed in Section 2AA! The Bucs received a bye in the quarterfinals and played the Semifinal game Saturday Oct. 25 vs. St. Clair-Loyola. If the Bucs win they will play in the Section 2AA Championship at 7pm on Friday Oct. 31 in Janesville. The Bucs were rated 8th in Class AA at the end of the regular season. Good luck & congratulation players and coaches!

Winter Seasons – Registration is open for Winter Activities. HS Girls Basketball begins Nov. 10 along with JH Boys & Girls basketball. Boys Basketball and Wrestling begin Nov. 17. Coop Sports with Waseca will also begin soon Girls Hockey (Oct. 27), Boys Hockey & Girls Gymnastics (Nov. 10) Action begins for Girls Basketball on Friday Nov. 21 at the Sleepy Eye St. Mary’s Tip Off tournament. Boys Basketball games get started Dec. 2 at LeSueur-Henderson and Wrestling’s first Action is December 4 at Westfield.

Friday Oct. 31, Eight (8) WEM students and I attended the Annual Gopher Conference Team up event at Hayfield HS. Students in grades 7-10 will gather for an interesting day learning about teamwork, leadership, and making positive healthy choices, and taking it to the next level. This is the 10th year that Rick Rassier former Elementary PE teacher at Foley Public Schools has put on the event for the Gopher Conference. This year’s attendees were 7th graders Emery Morris & Lane Lamont, 8th graders Kalyn Novak & Isaac Cage Blaisdell, 9th graders Inesza Pope & Ryder Hughes. 10th graders Brooklyn Novak & Dylan Edelman.

#### Community Services

The Fall Play “Sherlock Holmes” will be performed November 14 & 15 in the HS Auditorium at 7 p.m. each night.

School Age Care is up and running before and after school with 36 enrolled WEM students.

Currently 54 enrolled in the Little Bucs Preschool program, with 3 classroom options.

54 elementary students grades 2 - 4 participated in Flag FB with another @ 25 playing 5th & 6th Grade FB.

62 students played 3rd- 6th Volleyball this Fall.

This Fall 45 seniors attended the AARP Driver Improvement class (aka- 55-Alive) held on Oct. 1st (WEM) and 2nd (Morristown Am. Legion ).

Childs Play Theatre performed “Mr. Toads Mad Adventures” on Friday Sept. 26 under the direction on Andy Velishek with nearly 30 students participating in the 2 week opportunity starting September 23.

The next WEM Driver Education Classroom begins Monday November 3. Currently 21 students are registered. With this class 54 students will have completed the WEM Driver Education classroom in 2025 along with 51 completing Behind the Wheel training.

#### WEM Board Member Reports

It was mentioned that the Waterville Arts Committee met.

#### WEM Board Committee Reports

There were no Board Committee reports.

WEM Superintendent Mark Winter presented the following:

- Superintendent Winter commented on the MSBA Conference which is coming in January, updates are starting on the emergency handbook for the two buildings, 1st Quarter ends Friday which means school is 1/4 completed, conversations have started dealing with wrap-around acre, and Winter commented on how grateful the school is with the Frandsen Bank & Trust Scholarships offered to WEM seniors.

#### INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

The board had the first readings of the following policies (See attachments):

515 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records Redline

520 Student Survey Redline

520 FORM - Student Surveys

521 Student Disability Nondiscrimination Redline

521 - The Pledge of Allegiance

The board will hold an organizational meeting on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

The board briefly discussed the achievement and integration progress update which was in Principal Tagg's report. Principal Tagg will provide an update at an upcoming meeting.

#### ACTION

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Stangler to approve the 2025=2026 Contracted Agreement with Minnesota Valley Education District - Teacher of Deaf/Hard of Hearing in the amount of \$1,132.60. See attachment.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Michael to approve the following policies (see attachments):

211 Criminal of Civil Action Against School District, School Board Member, Employee, or student

401 Equal Employment Opportunity

417 Chemical Use and Abuse

420 Students and Employees with Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases and Certain Other Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Tolzman to approve the Resolution of School Board Supporting Form A Application to Minnesota State High School League Foundation. See attachment.

Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Heuss to approve the Memo of Understanding Between Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Public Schools and Myles Knutson. See attachment.

Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion declared passed.

Motion by Michael and seconded by Bakken to Approve the Resolution on the Proposed Closing of the Morristown Junior High Building at 23 Anne St. E., Morristown, MN. See attachment.

Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - Stangler voted against - motion declared passed.

Motion by Michael and seconded by Stangler to approve the Phase 2 Construction Bids. See attachment. The project is coming well under budget following the bid openings October 9.

Superintendent Winter said the bids came in more than \$1 million under budget.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Stangler and second by Bakken to approve the motion to Rescind Policy 536 Early School Admission from 1995. See attachment. Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.  
Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Gary Michael, Attest

Jay Schneider, Attest