

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS  
APRIL 28, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Board of Education, Bemidji Area Schools, Bemidji, Beltrami/Hubbard Counties, Minnesota, was held on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., in the District Office Board Room with Anna Manecke joining from 425 S Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jenny Frenzel, Jack Aakhus, Anna Manecke, Todd Haugen, Ann Long Voelkner, Dave Wall and Superintendent Jeremy Olson

Mckenzie Edevold – Student Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

CALL TO ORDER: (Time: 6:30 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The motion was offered by Ann Long Voelkner, seconded by Jenny Frenzel, and carried by all in attendance to approve the agenda.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jade Dockendorf – BHS Staff Cuts  
Brynn Klaers – Debate Program  
Jennifer Casey – Solway Reduction  
Gina Bernard – Staff Reductions  
Ella Thorson – Debate at BHS  
Shirley Lipsy – Library Media Specialist  
Erin Curran – Library  
Heather Holden – Potential Loss of Support for Bemidji Debate Team

REQUEST TO REMOVE TOPIC(S) FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA

The motion was offered by Todd Haugen, seconded by Jack Aakhus, and carried by all in attendance to approve the following items:

- A. Minutes from the March 17, 2025 and April 22, 2025 Board Meetings
- B. Current Bills Totaling: \$7,313,320.04
- C. Resignation of Administrative Staff Member – Kathy Van Wert
- D. Certified Confirmation of Resignation
- E. Non-Certified Staff Resignations
- F. Certified Staff Appointment
- M. Request for Accept Grant – Beltrami Electric

SPECIAL TOPICS

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Mckenzie Edevold spoke about MCA testing, prom on Saturday and a month left of school.

## LISTENING SESSION REVIEW

Jack Aakhus and Dave Wall had individuals speak to them about the debate team reduction and teacher reductions.

## DONATIONS

The motion was offered by Ann Long Voelkner, seconded by Jenny Frenzel, and carried by all in attendance to accept the following donations, \$3,500 from Jack Aakhus to the BHS Debate Team, \$2,500 from Lueken's Village Foods to Bemidji Career Academies, \$1,200 from Bank Insure Forward to Bemidji Middle School, \$1,000 from Bemidji Eagles to Horace May Elementary, \$800 from Friends of the Bemidji Public Library to Gene Dillon Elementary, \$500 from Bemidji Lions Club Foundation to Bemidji High School Sign Language Club.

## INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

### ACTION ITEMS

#### **Potential Reductions and Additions in Programs and Positions**

Todd Haugen introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

#### **RESOLUTION DISCONTINUING AND REDUCING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND POSITIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the School Board of Independent School District No. 31 adopted a resolution on December 16, 2024, directing the administration to make recommendations for reductions in programs and positions; and

**WHEREAS**, said recommendations have been received and considered by the School Board;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 31, that the following positions be discontinued:

1. 1.00 FTE Mathematics
2. 1.00 FTE English
3. 1.00 FTE Social Studies
4. 1.00 FTE Elementary Education (Horace May)
5. 1.00 FTE Elementary Education (Solway)
6. 2.00 FTE Elementary Education (Gene Dillon)
7. 1.64 FTE Media Specialists
8. 1.00 FTE Special Education

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Jack Aakhus.

An amendment was made to remove the 1.0 FTE at Solway Elementary as well as Katherine Brandt.

There was a motion by Anna Manecke, and seconded by Ann Long Voelkner, to amend to remove the Solway Elementary Education position and Katherine Brandt from the list of Tier 1 and probationary teachers and upon vote being taken, the following voted in favor: Ann Long Voelkner, Todd Haugen, Jenny Frenzel, Anna Manecke, Jack Aakhus, and Todd Haugen and the following voted against: None.

With the remaining reductions minus the Solway position and Katherine Brandt position.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 31, that the following positions be discontinued:

1. 1.00 FTE Mathematics
2. 1.00 FTE English
3. 1.00 FTE Social Studies
4. 1.00 FTE Elementary Education (Horace May)
5. 2.00 FTE Elementary Education (Gene Dillon)
6. 1.64 FTE Media Specialists
7. 1.00 FTE Special Education

Upon vote being taken, the following voted in favor: Ann Long Voelkner, Todd Haugen, Jenny Frenzel, Anna Manecke, Jack Aakhus, and Dave Wall and the following voted against: None.

**WHEREUPON**, said resolution was declared duly passed and adopted.

Jenny Frenzel introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

#### **RESOLUTION INCREASING POSITIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the School Board of Independent School District No. 31 adopted a resolution discontinuing positions, and

**WHEREAS**, recommendations for a staffing addition has been received and considered by the School Board;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 31, that the following position be added:

1. 1.00 FTE Special Education

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Jack Aakhus and upon vote being taken, the following voted in favor: Ann Long Voelkner, Todd Haugen, Jenny Frenzel, Anna Manecke, Jack Aakhus, and Dave Wall and the following voted against: None.

**WHEREUPON**, said resolution was declared duly passed and adopted.

#### **Resolution Relating to the Terminations and Nonrenewal of Contracts and Unrequested Leaves**

Jenny Frenzel introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

#### **RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE TERMINATION AND NONRENEWAL OF THE TEACHING CONTRACTS OF GARRETT DUFAULT, ALEX KONG'A, JOHN KOVACH, MADISON LAMPTON, JACKSON LINDSEY, RIMA SMITH-KEPRIOS, DEREK WANGBERG, CHRISTIE WINCHELL, AND KASE YERBICH**

**WHEREAS**, Garrett Dufault, Alex Kong'a, John Kovach, Madison Lampton, Jackson Lindsey, Rima Smith-Keprios, Derek Wangberg, Christie Winchell, Kase Yerbich are Tier 1 or probationary teachers in Independent School District #31,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 31 that pursuant to M.S. 122A.40, Subdivision 5, the teaching contracts of **Garrett Dufault, Alex Kong'a, John Kovach, Madison Lampton, Jackson Lindsey, Rima Smith-Keprios,**

**Derek Wangberg, Christie Winchell, Kase Yerbich** are hereby terminated at the close of the 2024-2025 school year on June 5, 2025.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that written notice be sent to said teachers regarding termination and nonrenewal of their contracts as provided by law, and that said notice be substantially in the following form:

**NOTICE OF TERMINATION AND NONRENEWAL**

Dear:

You are hereby notified that at the regular meeting of the School Board of Independent School District No. 31, held April 28, 2025, a resolution was adopted by majority roll call vote to terminate your contract at the end of the current school year on June 5, 2025, and not to renew your contract for the 2025-2026 school year. Said action of the Board was taken pursuant to M.S. 122A.40, Subdivision 5.

You may officially request that the School Board give its reasons for the nonrenewal of your teaching contract.

Sincerely,

SCHOOL BOARD OF  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 31

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Clerk of the School Board

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Todd Haugen and upon vote being taken, the following voted in favor: Ann Long Voelkner, Todd Haugen, Jenny Frenzel, Anna Manecke, Jack Aakhus, and Dave Wall and the following voted against: None.

**WHEREUPON**, said resolution was declared passed and adopted.

Jack Aakhus introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

**RESOLUTION PROPOSING TO PLACE SHIRLEY LIPSCY AND ANDRA VAUGHN  
ON UNREQUESTED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 31 as follows:

1. It is proposed that Shirley Lipsky and Andra Vaughn be placed on unrequested leave of absence without pay and fringe benefits effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year on June 5, 2025, pursuant to M.S. 122A.40 as listed:

Shirley Lipsky 1.0 FTE

Andra Vaughn 1.0 FTE

2. Written notice shall be sent to said teacher regarding the proposed placement on unrequested leave of absence without pay or fringe benefits as provided by law and that the notice be in substantially the following form:

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED PLACEMENT ON UNREQUESTED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Dear:

You are hereby notified that at the regular meeting of the School Board of Independent School District No. 31, held April 28, 2025, consideration was given to your placement on

unrequested leave of absence without salary and fringe benefits as a teacher in the employ of Independent School District No. 31, and a resolution was adopted by a majority vote of the Board, proposing your placement on unrequested leave of absence effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year on June 5, 2025, for "XX" FTE pursuant to M.S. 122A.40, Subdivision 11, upon the grounds described in said statute and which are specifically as follows:

### **DISCONTINUANCE OF POSITION, LACK OF PUPILS, AND FINANCIAL LIMITATION**

Under the provisions of the law, you are entitled to a hearing before the School Board provided you make a request in writing within fourteen days after receipt of this notice. If no hearing is requested within such period, it shall be deemed acquiescence by you to the School Board's proposed action.

Sincerely,

SCHOOL BOARD OF  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 31

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Clerk of the School Board

3. That each and all of the foregoing grounds of said notice are within the grounds for unrequested leave placement as set forth in M.S. 122A.40, Subdivision 11, and are hereby adopted as though separately set forth and resolved herein.

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Ann Long Voelkner and upon vote being taken, the following voted in favor: Ann Long Voelkner, Todd Haugen, Jenny Frenzel, Anna Manecke, Jack Aakhus, and Dave Wall and the following voted against: None.

**WHEREUPON**, said resolution was declared passed and adopted.

### **Approval of Special Education Extended School Year Programs and Summer Hours**

The motion was offered by Ann Long Voelkner, seconded by Todd Haugen, and carried by all in attendance to approve the 2025 Special Education Extended School Year Programs and summer hours.

### **2024-2025 English/Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Review K-12**

The motion was offered by Ann Long Voelkner, seconded by Jenny Frenzel, and carried by all in attendance to approve the proposed English / Language Arts Curriculum.

### **Health Insurance Proposals for FY 2026-FY 2027**

The motion was offered by Anna Manecke, seconded by Jenny Frenzel and carried by all in attendance to approve the Sanford Health Plan as the district's health insurance carrier for FY2026-2027 and combine the premium groups.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Regular School Board Meeting, May 19, 2025, 6:30 PM, District Office Board Room

### OTHER

Winter State Participants were listed.

**Superintendent's Report**

The Superintendent did not have a report today.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was offered by Jenny Frenzel, seconded by Jack Aakhus, and carried by all in attendance to adjourn the meeting. Time: 8:23 p.m.

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Jenny Frenzel, Clerk

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Date Approved

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Dave Wall, Chair

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Date Approved