

W-E-M BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Monday, December 15, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

The WEM Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, December 15, 2025 at the Waterville Building. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman Gary Michael at 6:37 p.m.

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

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Rezac to approve the agenda with the additional item (closed session to discuss negotiations). Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Stangler and seconded by Heuss to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from Nov. 24. Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Schneider to approve the Dec. 5-Dec. 15 Financial Report. The bills and payroll from the report were \$612,377.97, deposits were \$950,931.12, and transfers of \$200,000. A specific item discussed was a payment of \$13,000 to Southwest MN State University for PSEO Tuition. The dollar amounts for this period of time were lower than usual since the board had met recently.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

PRESENTATION

Business Manager Margaret Jewison presented the Truth in Taxation Hearing information - which included the review of the 2025-2026 budget. There was no public comment. See attachment.

There was also a presentation of the 2024-2025 Financial Audit by Ellie Fredrickson - senior associate at Abdo - and there were not any out of the ordinary findings. See attachment.

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

RECOGNITION

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Michael to approve the following monetary donation.

- Prairie Lakes Art Council donated \$3,000 to the WEM High School Art Program.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Bakken to approve the consent agenda which included the following items:

Approve the 2025-2026 seniority lists - see attachments

Approve the following 2025-2026 coaches:

Girls basketball varsity volunteers Bruce Velzke and Addyson Taylor.

Boys basketball volunteer changed to 2nd assistant - Dennis Androli - \$3,420.

Approve the following lane changes:

Kelci Halvorson, MS to MS30 effective January 15, 2026.
Cameron Jensen, BS10 to MS30 effective January 15, 2026.
Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

REPORTS

WEM K-4 and Junior High Principal Myles Knutson submitted the following reports:
Greetings School Board Members,^[1]^[2]^[SEP] Here are a few updates from the Middle School:

- Better Together: This past month reminded me once again why WEM Middle School is such a special place. Our teachers continue to provide fun, collaborative learning opportunities, and our students shine in the way they work with one another. Whether they're baking cookies in FACS, teaming up on classroom projects, or even burying their friends in the snow at recess. Their teamwork and creativity bring so much joy to our building. Every day as I walk the halls, I see smiling faces, hear laughter, and watch students support and connect with one another. Those moments of friendship and collaboration create an atmosphere that makes our school a welcoming place to learn.
- Winter Concerts: Mr. Larson has a tough task managing both Middle School Band and Choir... Along with his duties as the High School Band Director. He has done a wonderful job this year preparing our Middle School Students for their first performance of the year. The Band and Choir students put on quite the performances the first two Mondays of December. I loved watching them on stage in front of a packed auditorium. Way to go Mr. Larson and the Middle School Band and Choir.
- Partners In Education: Our PIE group has stepped up in a big way this year and we are so appreciative of all they do for our students and staff. This year they have offered to partner with us to help fund a 7th and 8th grade ski trip as well as the Skate Time experience we provide our K-6 students. Most recently they are providing a concession stand at our middle school basketball games this winter. All proceeds will go back to PIE so they can keep on helping us out in so many ways!

Thank you,
Myles Knutson

Greetings School Board Members,
Here are a few updates from the Elementary School:

- Holiday Performances: Mr. Benz put on his first concerts since being hired at WEM and we were all blown away! The 3rd and 4th graders performed this past Monday and the enthusiasm and talent on display brought joy to everyone in attendance. It doesn't stop there either. Mr. Benz has brought back a Kindergarten through 2nd grade Holiday program. So many parents have already reached out about how excited they are to see our youngest students provided with an opportunity to perform for them. Thank you Mr. Benz and our students for some great shows in the month of December.
- Diving into Science: Our classroom teachers have been putting an extra emphasis on science instruction to begin the year. Both teachers and students have loved the lessons and experiences this has provided. Our amazing Student Success Coordinator and 3rd grade teacher Mrs. Hebl dove into the MN science standards and our science curriculum and developed an easy scope and sequence for teachers to access lessons and materials easily. Everyone is loving having more science throughout the year than in the past!
- Recess Helpers: Recess is one of the most important parts of our day. Luckily at WEM we have dedicated and talented paraprofessionals who support our students out at recess. Together we came up with the idea to ask some responsible High School students to come out to recess during their lunch to model positive behavior, engage in play with students, and help monitor our recess areas. It has been such a huge help and the students love seeing the "big kids" out there to play with them! Thank you High School students!

Thank you,
Myles Knutson

WEM High School Principal Brandon Tagg submitted the following report:

9-12 December Board Minutes

It has only been a couple of short weeks since we last checked in with each other. We are about halfway through the quarter with teachers/students working hard to make sure we bring all grades up before the semester ends on January 16th. It has been a great first half of the year with a lot of success stories to share.

Band and choir concerts have highlighted our first couple of weeks. The band performed for 45 minutes, as we heard from the 6th grade band, the 7th/8th grade band, and of course, the high school band. The Choirs lifted us up as well the following week as they sang their hearts out and gave a wonderful performance. A lot of fun holiday songs shared by all with a wonderful turnout by our parents and community. It really got some of us into the spirit of the holidays.

Basketball and wrestling season has started for the winter session. We have had a few games/matches so far and are hoping for a successful season. We will see what our teams bring us, but in great WEM fashion, we are being supported again by our student body and staff.

We had a venture into JA Finance tour where we could check out the possibility of a career course for next year and a field trip that could be designed to go with it. Our Data Summit was also held this past week as we collaborated with schools from Northfield, Faribault and TCU to discuss issues within our school walls and compared/contrasted ideas and designs for things we want in the future. A lot of ideas were presented and now we will sit back and discuss what concepts can work for WEM in the weeks/months/year to come.

5 DRESS UP DAYS (sung to the piece of 5 golden rings) - to end our month and have some holiday spirit, we allowed students to dress up the last week and also end with a BUCS BINGO day to celebrate all that WEM High School is. With donated prizes and some laughter to boot, we look to have a great final day of December celebrating our great PBIS work with some good ole' B-I-N-G-O!

Brandon Tagg

WEM High School Principal

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

Athletics :

The winter sports activities have gotten off to a good start. Over the break the both boys and girls basketball teams will be playing in Mapleton Dec. 23 and will host TCU Dec. 30 and again host Cleveland on Jan. 3. The wrestlers will host Blue Earth Area, LCWM Area and GMLOS on Tuesday Dec. 23, will attend the Norwood Young America Tournament Jan. 3. Wrestlers will also compete in a "Girls Only" tournament on Friday Jan. 2 at St. Paul Harding. WEM/JWP girls have 6 "Girls Only" wrestling events for the 2025-2026 season.

One Act Play will be performing "Nellie" by Robby Steltz. Directed by Andrew Velishek. They will participate in the Gopher Conference Contest at Blooming Prairie High School on January 17th and in the Subsection 5 contest here in Waterville on January 24th. The Section 2A One-Act will be held at Waseca High School on January 31st for those qualifying from Subsection.

The speech team is also beginning preparing for the 2026 season.

Community Education:

SACC is closed over break.

Preschool & ECFE Classes continue to run smoothly.

Spring & Summer 2026 Activity scheduling and preparations will begin soon.

2026-2027 Preschool offerings based on available space will begin in January, with the hope that 2026-2027 preschool registrations will begin in February 2026

Driver Education preparations will begin with the new year!

The school buildings and gyms continue to be very active over the winter months.

WEM Board Member Reports

There were no Board Members reports.

WEM Board Committee Reports

There were no Board Committee reports.

WEM Superintendent Mark Winter presented the following:

- Superintendent Winter spoke about the following items: holiday concert season wining down and acknowledge the concerts were great and well attended; continuing to move forward with the one-site; January student course handbook will be presented; high school registration will be in late February or early March; Jan. 8 will be the organizational meeting; MSBA Conference is the week following the meeting; and discussions are starting on item which are no longer needed but have value.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

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

423 Employee-Student Relationships

525 Violence Prevention (Applicable to Students and Staff)

526 Hazing Prohibition

610 Field Trips

See attachments on these four policies.

Superintendent Mark Winter gave an update on the Morristown Building Site.

He said School District 288 is still interested in the building, but they are on hold. The 11-member superintendent team will meet in January and will get back to WEM. Winter said it doesn't look like there will be a purchase anytime soon, so the building may be empty during the upcoming school year. Leasing the building was briefly discussed, but no real concrete discussion.

ACTION

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Rezac to accept the 2024-2025 Financial Audit.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Stangler and seconded by Heuss to Certify the Taxes Payable 2026 Levy in the amount of \$4,904,598.43, which is a 6.9 percent increase.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Schneider to approve the application for a boys and girls track cooperative sponsorship between WEM and JWP for the 2025-2027 season.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Heuss to approve the following policies:

346 Administrator Code of Ethics redline

519 Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies redline

533 Wellness redline

901 Community Education redline

See attachments on these four policies.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Bakken to go into closed session.
Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to re-open the meeting from the closed session at 8:44 p.m.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.
Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Gary Michael, Attest

Jay Schneider, Attest