

W-E-M BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

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

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

Board Members Michael, Jon Bakken, Jeff Stangler, June Rezac, Jay Schneider, Brenda Heuss, Troy Tolzman, and Jocelyn Brown attended the meeting. Also present at the meeting was Superintendent John Regan.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to approve the agenda. Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Bakken to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from Dec. 16 and the Reorganizational Meeting from Jan. 6. Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Schneider to approve the December-January Financial Report. The bills and payroll from the report were \$1,493,127.34, deposits were \$1,368,714.33, and transfers of \$2,534,902.00. Bakken commented that the bills were higher this month due to the early Dec. 16 meeting last month. Everything else was pretty straight-forward. Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

PRESENTATIONS

There was a budget presentation by Superintendent John Regan. The school district is facing a fiscal year 2025 deficit of nearly \$800,000 and a fiscal year 2026 deficit of \$320,000 on going, with other expenses of legislative decisions, loss of enrollment, and employee settlements. The district current has 29 days of funding in their reserves. See attachments.

Motion by Bakken sand seconded by Schneider to stay with the \$320,000 ongoing deficit and evaluate the budget next year for possible budget cuts. The motion passes 5-2, with Stangler and Rezac voting against.

The Board also directed Superintendent Regan to make \$120,000 cuts which do not include cutting teachers of programs.

VISITOR COMMENTS

Nick Morris and Paige Morris each had questions for the Board.

N. Morris asked about the elevator situation, questioned the \$320,000 deficit numbers, and stated it had been three months now since the one site discussion started.,

P. Morris asked about rural education grants, solar panels, leasing the Morristown building and keeping the students in the school, attaching the agenda to the computer so not to waste money on paper copies, and stated no one knew about the study being completed on the school district.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Approve Anna Meschke as Food Service Director at a rate of \$29.49/hour based on \$46,000 per year salary for 195 days./
- Approve Amber Volkman as a long-term substitute preschool teacher.
- Approve the following leave of absence:
Family Medical Leave of Absence (FMLA) for Cory Immerman, High School Math Teacher, beginning on or around February 6, 2025 to February 12, 2025, or five school days.
Family Medical Leave of Absence (FMLA) for Kelly Stanton-Nutt, Elementary and High School Art Teacher, beginning on January 23, 2025 and continuing until March 6, 2025 or earlier with doctor approved return to work.
- Approve the resignation of Katie Swenson, Food Service Employee in Morristown, effective January 20, 2025.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

RECOGNITION

Motion by Michael and seconded by Heuss to table the monetary donations.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

REPORTS

WEM Principal Dr. Jennifer Wilson submitted the following report:

Waterville Campus Information

Quarter 2/Semester 1 wrapped up on Friday, January 19 with a half day with students. Staff engaged in an afternoon of Catalyst training.

MLK Day was a no student contact day, however staff did have the day for working in their rooms getting prepared for Quarter 3/Semester 2.

We started the second half of the year off with a two-hour weather delay (freezing temperatures) on Tuesday, January 21. In our professional learning communities teachers are working collaboratively on instructional practices and classroom management techniques. The Catalyst training is providing an opportunity for further dialogue in PLC meetings as well as practice in the classroom. For the second half of the year staff are placing emphasis on test preparation strategies as we head towards MCA and ACT testing dates later this spring.

WEM is the host to several student teachers in their final block of student teaching and observational blocks. At the high school we are host to 2 student teachers who are wrapping up their college program at Minnesota State University-Mankato. Jennifer Widman is a student teacher under math teacher Cory Immerman and Thomas Fu is completing his student teaching experience under band teacher Jared Larson.

K-4

Kindergarten Round-Up will be held on February 24, 2025. Information has been sent home with our PreK 4 families and communication has been made to area daycare providers. Information will be posted on social media in the next week. The theme for Round-up is Sliding into Kindergarten (Penguins).

Planning is underway for I Love to Read Month (February) including a district literacy event with MN Author, Megan Maynor. The event will also be on February 24 with information to follow on our social media and distributed to families in the next week.

Members of the Waterville Lions Club presented dictionaries to every third grader. This is a continued tradition of the local club and our students were extremely happy to be recipients of their gift.

9-12

Congratulations to Cory Immerman for being selected as the South Central Service Cooperative Spotlight Teacher of the Quarter. Mr. Immerman was nominated for his relationship building with students, ease of teaching math, enrolling in additional high level masters level math courses so that he would be qualified to offer college in the schools math courses at WEM (College Algebra and Statistics) and taking on Work Based Learning for our student offerings. Mr. Immerman is in his second year at WEM and also serves as assistant football coach.

Congratulations to five high school art students who will have their art pieces displayed at the Gopher Conference Fine Arts Festival on February 1, 2025:

- Painting: Randi Selbrade, senior
- Ink: Halle Fessel, senior
- Ink: Grace Norton, junior
- Pencil: Kandran Geyer, senior
- Pencil: Madison Foster, senior

Earlier in the month Mr. Cooley took his natural wildlife class ice fishing. Students spent the day on Lake Francis. The group had some help from several families that allowed the use of their ice houses and pop-up fishing tents. Students were successful catching fish. Mr. Cooley fried up the fish the next day for the class. It is a traditional outing (ice pending) where fun is had by all.

Mr. Scharf's PE classes experienced Hoot Lanes and a unit of bowling in January to wrap up the semester. Thank you to Hoot Lanes, Waterville for working with our PE groups.

All graduation materials (diplomas, cords, etc.) have been ordered for the class of 2025!

WEM Principal Myles Knutson submitted the following report:

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

- **Conservation Crew:** This year Mr. Androli started a 7th/8th grade extracurricular group that meets regularly during lunch throughout the year to work on conservation projects and outdoor learning experiences. This week, the crew went ice and spear fishing on Lake Tetonka. A huge thank you goes out to the Southern Lakes Angling and Spearing group and the countless parent volunteers who provided ice houses, bait, poles, and even a fish fry for our students out on the ice. Our community always shows up for one another and it was so cool to watch our students enjoy an afternoon on the ice with members of our community.
- **5th Grade D.A.R.E.:** We are extremely thankful for Rice County Sheriff Deputy Lisa Arens for leading our 5th graders through some [D.A.R.E.](#) lessons the next several weeks! The middle school years are such a crucial time in the lives of our students. Deputy Arens has been doing a wonderful job providing the students with lesson and experiences that pushes them to be the best version of themselves that they can be.
- **Counselor Visits:** Our amazing counselor Michelle Roethler routinely visits 5th and 6th grade classrooms to provide lessons on a wide range of topics. In the beginning of the year she will focus on organizational skills, then move into bullying, and continue on with other focuses as the year moves on. In the month of January, they have been talking about diversity. Classes discussed how a quilt is made up of many colorful and diverse pieces of material. Quilts not only create a warm and cozy blanket but a beautiful piece of art! Classrooms created unique and diverse paper quilts to display for the month!

Thank you, Myles Knutson

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

Activities:

The 2024-2025 WEM ExCEL Award winners are juniors, Clare Landrum and Auston Holicky. This MSHSL Awards recognizes Juniors for Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership.

The 2024-2025 WEM Triple A Award (Arts, Athletics, Academics) winner are seniors, Tatum Richards and Brody Holicky. This MSHSL special multi-level recognition award recognizes high school seniors active in league sponsored fine arts and athletic activities and show success in the classroom.

WEM One-Act Play Team: Sub-Section 5 meet was this past Saturday 1/25/2025 at Maple River High School. This year's play was entitled "We are the Sea", by Laura Lundgren Smith. The Director is Andrew Velishek. The Gopher Conference event was this past Saturday 1/18/25 at Triton HS in Dodge Center. This event is not scored and teams are not ranked. Teams receive input from judges. A very good lead up to the Subsection meet!

The Gopher Conference Honors Music (Band & Choir) Concert and Visual Arts Display will be hosted by Blooming Prairie HS on Saturday February 1, 2025. The Concert will begin at 1:30 PM. Conference student artwork will be on display beginning around 12:30 pm. Anyone is invited and welcome to attend. There will be an admission charge of \$8 adults and \$5 for students (K-12). Students from all conference schools have been selected and have begun practicing. All Conference schools will have a combined practice on Friday January 31 during the day along with Saturday.

Section Tourney time just around the corner!

- Wrestling gets started February 13 with Team Wrestling. Section Ind. is the Feb. 22 (WEM/JWP Coop)
- Girls Gymnastics will begin February 13. (Waseca Coop)
- Girls Hockey Team will begin February 3. (Waseca Coop)
- Boys Hockey team will begin February 18. (Waseca Coop)
- Girls Basketball will begin February 24.
- Large Group Choir March 3 (WEM hosting) & Band March 26 (at Glencoe-Silver Lake).
- Boys Basketball will begin March 4.

Spring Activities Registration will be opening soon with practices beginning in March.

Clay Targets, Baseball, Softball, Boys & Girls Track.

Community Education:

- ECFE night classes will be getting started again in April.
- School Age Childcare continues to operate safely. Summer 2025 Registration has begun. School year 2025-2026 registrations in March.
- Little Bucs Preschool registrations for the 2025-2026 school year will begin in early February.
- Driver Education Classrooms for 2024 dates will be in March/April around Spring Break as well as in June and October. Specific dates TBD. Most Behind the wheel occurs in June, July & August.
- The WEM School is open to those wanting to walk during winter months in the evenings.

WEM Board Member Reports

Rezac, Bakken, and Michael commented on the MSBA Conference.

WEM Board Committee Reports

There were no Board Committee reports.

WEM Superintendent John Regan presented the following:

- Superintendent Regan commented on the the Legislature (compensation aid and increase to the formula), the elevator is currently being worked on, updated the work in the auditorium, and stated the wrestling room is completed.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

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

- 415 Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults
 - 527 Student Use and Parking Motor Vehicles; Patrols, Inspections, and Searches.
 - 527 FORM Student Parking Permit Request
 - 528 Student Parental, Family, and Marital Status Nondiscrimination
 - 614 School District Testing Plan and Procedure
- See attachments on these five policies.

The board received an update on the single site possibility. An analysis study has started and the results of this study will be presented in April. There has also been an interest with a survey which would cost \$4,000 and would be tabulated by ISG. No action was taken on that survey.

The board will record all meetings, regular or special through at least the month of June, 2025. regular meetings are currently live streamed.

ACTION

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Bakken to approve the following policies:

- 510 School Activities
- 517 Student Recruiting
- 607 Organization of Grade Levels

608 Instructional Services - Special Education

See attachments on these four policies.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Stangler to approve the 2024-2025 agreement concerning instructional staff sharing between ISD #829 Waseca and #2143 WEM Public School (revised behavior Consultant decreased by half).

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Tolzman to rescind Policy 491 Mandatory Covid-19 Vaccination or Testing and Face Coverings (2022).

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

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Stangler to award the sale of General Obligation Facilities Maintenance Bonds; Series 2025A, in the original aggregate principal amount of \$12,165,000; fixing their form and specifications; directing their execution and delivery; and providing for their payment.

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

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Stangler to approve the resolution for acceptance of the gift of a wrestling mat from the Waterville Area Wrestling Association.

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

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Gary Michael, Attest Jay Schneider, Attest