

W-E-M BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING
Monday, December 21, 2020, 6 p.m.

The WEM Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, December 21, 2020 at the Waterville Building in the Board Room. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman Pam Baker at 6 p.m.

Board Members Baker, Jay Schneider, Jeff Stangler, Travis Bowman, Gary Michael, Jon Velishek, and Dan Houlihan participated in the meeting.. Also present were Superintendent Joel Whitehurst, Principals Dr. Jennifer Wilson and Bobbie Jo Bastian, Business Manager Margaret Jewison, and Activities Director Jeff Boran participated in the meeting via teleconference,

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to approve the agenda. Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion declared passed.

Motion by Stangler and seconded by Michael to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from Nov. 23. Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion declared passed.

Motion by Michael and seconded by Schneider to approve the December Finance report. The bills and payroll from the report were \$1,707,344.68, deposits were \$911,660.35, and transfers were \$1,977,000. Comments included a payment of \$6,283.50 to CDW Government, Inc. for chrome books (CARES Act funds to help supplement this purchase), a payment of \$18,959.06 to South Central Service Cooperative for special education contract, and a payment of \$2,488.69 to Margaret Jewison for technology equipment. Grant dollars received by the district for COVID-19 relief in the amounts of \$15,200, \$3,000, and \$84,462.05 were acknowledged. A federal grant in the amount of \$228,766.34 was also acknowledged.

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

PRESENTATION

Erin Enstad, CPA Manager for Abdo Eick & Meyers, LLC presented the 2019-20 financial audit. See attachment. Motion by Michael and seconded by Bowman to approve the financial audit. Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion declared passed.

The annual Truth-in-Taxation meeting was held, with a review of the 2021 budget and allow for public comment. There was no public

comment on the presentation. See attachment.

Motion by Michael and seconded by Schneider to approve the Pay 2021 Levy in the amount of \$3,455,447.91. The Pay 2020 Levy amount was \$33,363,922.00. The new levy will be an increase of 2.72 percent.

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

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

RECOGNITION

Motion by Stangler and seconded by Michael to approve the high school donation of \$31.77 from Coca Cola Give. Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion declared passed.

Thank yous were presented to Dan Houlihan for his years of service on the school board.

REPORTS

WEM Principal Bobbie Jo Bastian and WEM Principal Dr. Jennifer Wilson (PreK-12th Grade) presented the following report:

PreK-12th Grade

* We have fully transitioned to distance learning. We are working to bring students back as soon as possible following the latest guidance from Governor Walz and the Minnesota Board of Education. Thus far distance learning is going smoothly with little connection or device issues. Overall attendance for virtual meetings has been high. Staff are reporting the appreciation for office hours at the end of the day. When students access them they are able to receive additional support and walk through assignments that are giving them problems. I continue to be so very proud of our students, staff, and families. The dedication to make the best of what we are dealing with is applaud worthy. WEM continues to show resiliency and takes on the community approach to doing whatever it takes .

* For students that have truancy concerns we are continuing to work with our local county agencies to file paperwork, but more importantly seek ways to re-engage students and provide opportunities of additional support. This includes mental health and welfare checks. We are dedicated to ensuring students are safe and have what they need while at home.

Administration is looking into providing professional development around student engagement. I have been in communication with the Top 20 option. We would like to provide a district wide

session as soon as we can return to in-person learning. Student engagement as we transition learning models is critical in assuring for academic success. Administration wants to ensure staff have tools and resources available to them as we continue to navigate teaching and learning during these times.

Semester 1 is coming to a close. There are 15 days left in the first half of the year. Grade reports and updates for students who were failing multiple classes were e-mailed and mailed home last week for high school students. Weekly grade checks will continue in January as well at the high school and junior high.

The middle level spelling bee and geography bee scheduled for the first week of January have been postponed at this time. We hope to reschedule late winter/early spring. As movement of numbers and guidance continue to change and expand we will monitor and hopefully set a date to provide these opportunities for our middle level students.

Students and staff will begin winter break after tomorrow. I'd like to wish everyone a relaxing and peaceful break.

WEM Activities Director Jeff Boran's presented the following report:
ATHLETICS

* The winter sports activities practices will begin Monday, Jan. 4, 2021. Many safety protocols referring to arriving, leaving, pod sizes, masking, etc. are in place for student and staff safety. Varsity teams may play as many as 18 games (basketball), 16 events (wrestling - duals or triangulars, no tournaments), providing we play only two per week. The Gopher Conference has determined we will sell passes for admission for C-squad, Junior Varsity, and Varsity levels. Junior High passes will be issued. Current guidelines allow for two spectators per participant, however based on seating capacity some locations may need to reduce that.

* Congratulations to WEM juniors Troy McBroom and Alex Heuss for being selected the 2020-21 ExCEL Awards winners for WEM. The ExCEL Award is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for Minnesota High School Juniors who are active in school activities, who show leadership qualities, and who work voluntarily in their community. Their applications have been sent to the MSHSL offices for consideration. Congratulations to Troy and Alex.

* Fall 2020 Sports Recognition:

Volleyball All Conference First Team - Toryn Richards (Player of the Year), Ellie Ready, and Kylie Pittmann, Second Team - Autumn Taylor, Honorable Mention - Alex Heuss. WEM Sportsmanship Award - Allison Rients.

Volleyball Academic All Conference - Paige Atherton, Lindsay

Condon, Lily Grohman, Alex Heuss, Kiri Kerekes, Emma Kuball, Rylee Pelant, Grace Petersen, Kylie Pittmann, Ellie Ready, Toryn Richards, Allison Rients, Mikaya Schuster, and Autumn Taylor.

Volleyball Academic All State - Autumn Taylor, Ellie Ready, Allison Rients, Toryn Richards, Lindsay Condon, and Kylie Pittmann.

Volleyball All-State - Toryn Richards, Kylie Pittmann, and Ellie Ready - All First Team.

Football All District - Kurtis Crosby, Griffin Atherton, and Domanik Paulson.

Football Academic All-District - Griffin Atherton, Ethan Greenwald, Dylan Holicky, Tytan Larson, Ethan Muellerleile, and Aiden Snesrud.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

* School Age Care through the latest pause is 27 students with 15 being children of essential worker families.

WEM Superintendent Joel Whitehurst presented the following:

* Whitehurst thanked Dan Houlihan for his years of service on the school board.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

* The board established Thursday, January 14, 2021 to conduct the annual reorganizational meeting. Newly elected board member June Rezac will also be sworn into office at the start of this meeting.

* Motion by Bowman and seconded by Schneider to approve the learning models to coincide with recent Minnesota Department of Education guidance changes. PreK-6th grade students will return to in-school learning January 11 and 7th-12th grade students will return to in-school learning January 25 if the administration gets the approval of the regional support group and county leaders.

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

ACTION

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to approve the extension of Superintendent Joel Whitehurst's contract until June 30, 2022.

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

PERSONNEL

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Baker to approve the seniority lists. See attachments.

Seven members voted in favor by roll call vote - motion

declared passed.

Motion by Bowman and seconded by Baker to approve the following letters of retirement:

1. Sandy Mielke, 2nd grade teacher, effective end of the 2020-21 school year. Mielke started with the school district in 1981.
2. Janet Jones, High School Mathematics Teacher, effective end of 2020-21 school year. Jones started with the school district in 1983.

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

Motion by Bowman and seconded by Michael to approve the continued employment of Patricia Salmon, long term art substitute at a rate of \$151.20/day.

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

Motion by Michael and seconded by Stangler to approve the following 2019-21 contracts. The contracts were for laundry workers and bus drivers. No change in contract language. Salary and benefit increase of 2.56 percent in 2019-20 and 4.19 percent in 2020-21.

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

Motion by Houlihan and seconded by Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

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

ATTEST:

Pam Baker, Board Chair

Jay Schneider, Board Clerk