

**WATERFORD UNION HIGH SCHOOL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
Monday, November 25, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by President Schoenfeld at 6:35 p.m. Board members present at the meeting were: Gary Beck, Kelly Datka, Dennis Purtell, Doug Schwartz, and Mike Schoenfeld.

Official notice of the meeting was made by way of publication in the *Waterford Post* on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024, was posted at the District Office (Door #7) and at Entrance #19, and was published on the District's website. The meeting notice was also posted at the following municipal locations: Town of Norway, Town of Waterford, Village of Raymond, Village of Rochester, and Village of Waterford. Minutes from the regular board meeting of September 16, 2024 are posted on the District's website.

President Schoenfeld led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MOTION TO RECONSIDER**

Board member Beck moved to reconsider the motion made on October 29 to pursue the referendum project. The motion was seconded by Schwartz. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. Motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The following items were presented to the Board for approval under the consent agenda:

- A. Treasurer's Report – November 2024 Check Summary
- B. Minutes - Regular Meeting of October 7, 2024 and from the Special Meeting of October 29, 2024
- C. Minutes – Executive Session of October 29, 2024
- D. Staffing Updates (None)
- E. PAC Carpet Replacement
- F. Vehicle Donation – Lynch Mukwonago

There was a motion by Purtell, seconded by Beck to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Item E. PAC Carpet Replacement, which will be the first item considered under Action. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. The motion carried.

**RESIDENT COMMENTS**

Tom Halter thanked the Board for honoring his request to be included in some of its building referendum discussions and noted that he has had good dialogue with the WUHS Buildings and Grounds Committee, Nexus, as well as Superintendent Francois. Mr. Halter noted that he is not in favor of the proposed \$43 million referendum project before the board and shared his reasons with Committee members earlier. Mr. Halter expressed his interest in hearing which direction the WUHS Board will take to address facility needs.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

Student Council Report

Owen Hoffman, Student Council Sergeant at Arms shared an update and photos of recent student activities. Student Council hosted the first middle school dance of the year on Nov. 7. CHASE members volunteered at a local senior living center, served lunch to veterans following the annual WUHS Veterans Day assembly, and participated in a clean-up day at Wadewitz Park.

FFA held their annual pot-luck dinner, performed roadside clean-up along Highway 20, and assisted with set-up/tear-down and baking of treats for the FFA Alumni Craft Fair. On Nov. 11-13, eighteen FFA members participated in virtual career development competitions; sixteen members traveled to Stevens Point on Nov. 15-16 for the Connect/I Am Leadership Conferences; and on Nov. 19, fourteen members participated in a virtual parliamentary procedure workshop to enhance their skills in preparation for future contests. Two ongoing projects include Taylor Jacobson's agri-science research project involving show feed yield on her two fair pigs, and a management project spearheaded by Noah Hying to clean up invasive buckthorn in the Bixler Environmental Center. FFA State Officer Alyssa Schaur from the East Troy FFA spoke with Ag. classes earlier this date about essential skills, FFA opportunities, and agriculture careers.

Theatre Guild performed “The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane” on November 7. CLAW members held a respite day on Nov. 16 for kids ages 4-12 and attended an SLC student-athlete leadership conference. The Foreign Exchange Club held a potluck to welcome this year’s international students and has selected a school in New Jersey for a domestic exchange later this school year. Spanish Club sold hand-made paper marigolds for Dia de los Muertos to raise money for the club. Six E-Sports team members qualified for state where they finished in second place. Lastly, seven WUHS choir students were selected to be in the all-state choir, which is an honor limited to 250 students from throughout the entire state.

### Smart Pass System Report

Associate Principal Mark Peperkorn gave an overview of SmartPass, the new electronic hall pass system for students. Four different platforms were investigated, and the SmartPass app was test-piloted at the end of the 2023-24 school year. After the trial period, more than 90% of staff were in favor of going to this system as it is user-friendly and allows for closer tracking of students during the school day. Students are permitted up to five passes per week with some limitations, which is substantially more than the 20 passes per semester previously allocated in their student handbooks. The system limits which restroom the students may use in relation to their classroom location, and helps hold them accountable by setting a time limit of how long they may be gone from class. The system allows the administration to limit how many total students may be out of class at a given time and the ability to set parameters to prevent certain individuals or small groups of students to meet up with one another during the school day. Mr. Peperkorn noted that there is much data available with SmartPass, which will be analyzed once there is historical data available for comparison. The cost of the SmartPass app has been offset by the District providing an electronic version of the student handbook to students in lieu of the hard copy of the handbook.

### State Report Card

Superintendent Francois reported that performance level labels of the ACT test have changed from below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced to developing, approaching, meeting, and advanced, respectively. The change in the score range under each of those labels also has changed slightly, establishing a new baseline for each. The 2023-24 State Report Card recently released by the DPI ranks the WUHS District as “exceeding expectations,” which is up from the previous year. The District ranked in the top 15% of all high schools in the state, and ranked third among all union high schools. Dr. Francois remarked on growth achieved in each area. The District ranks high in the percentage of students who take one or more advanced placement courses, as well as with students who earn dual credit for college level courses taken while the student is in high school.

Associate Principal Peperkorn addressed a question relative to chronic absenteeism, noting that if a student has a medical excuse, the absence is not counted against the student. The state however considers all days missed as an absence including those that are medically excused, which contributes to the total number of days missed for purposes of the state report card.

### School Goals 2024-25

Superintendent Francois shared the 2024-25 school goals, which support the District’s commitment to inspiring all students to achieve high expectations and ensuring that each student is prepared for college, career, and life. The four pillars of this mission include providing a positive student culture where all students can learn and grow; maintaining long-term financial stability of the district; attracting, developing, and retaining high-quality staff; and remaining transparent and engaged with stakeholders. Core values include a instilling a growth mindset, maintaining an inclusive culture, creating a safe and caring environment, as well as providing student-centered, high-quality instruction. Dr. Francois also shared highlights of the strategic action plan with SMART goals developed under each of the four pillar areas, along with specific action plans for achieving the various goals. The administrative team, along with key staff members, will monitor and oversee the various goals. Examples include increasing the ACT test scores in all areas by .5%, implementing a process for creating academic career plans, maintaining a AA Bond rating, ensuring the fund balance

remains at least 40% of operating costs, proving monthly updates to elected officials, etc. The overall goal is to make the district the best it can be.

#### Board Policy Review: Protocol for Agenda Item Additions. Bylaw Policy 0166 – Agenda

Board Member Datka requested that the current policy relative to setting board meeting agendas be modified to allow adding agenda items when two or more board members concur and wish to include the topic on the meeting agenda. The current policy language allows individual board members to include agenda items upon receiving concurrence from the Board President. There was a motion by Datka to change the policy language to allow individual board members to include agenda items upon receiving concurrence from the Board President or upon the concurrence of another board member.

After additional board discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

#### School Board Election Notice

The WUHS Board will have two seats open for the April 1, 2025 Spring Election, which are currently held by Kelly Datka and Mike Schoenfeld. Notice of the annual school board election was published as a Type A notice in the Waterford Post on Thursday, November 21, 2024. The candidate deadline for filing all ballot access documents is no later than 5:00 PM on January 7, 2025, at the District Office. If a primary is necessary, the primary election will be held February 18, 2025.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

The following were items were presented for Board action.

#### PAC Carpet Replacement

The District solicited bids for replacing the carpet in the PAC, which is the original carpet installed at the time the auditorium was constructed in the early 2000's. The Buildings and Grounds Committee has reviewed the bids and recommends accepting the lowest bid received from Adair Commercial Flooring.

There was a motion by Schwartz, seconded by Beck to accept the bid in the amount of \$38,148 from Adair Commercial Flooring to replace the carpet in the PAC. Board member Datka expressed concern that the community may criticize replacing the carpet in light of the timing with the Board considering going to referendum to address other needed facility improvement measures. Mrs. Datka asked if preventative maintenance measures could be taken to extend the life of the current carpet. Superintendent Francois noted that the PAC is heavily utilized by the school staff as well as by community groups, and that work is slated to occur during winter break based upon the recommendation by the Building and Grounds Committee. The District has budgeted monies in Fund 80 for the carpet replacement, which is a community fund source that cannot be used for general operating expenses.

Following board discussion, the motion was put to a vote. Four ayes; Datka nay. Motion carried.

#### Initial Resolution Authorizing General Obligation Bonds in an Amount Not to Exceed \$43,000,000

Superintendent Francois explained that by paying down its previous twenty-year bonds in five and a half years, the District is positioned financially to take on a significant building project in 2025 to address facility needs without increasing the mill rate. An example of a referendum financing plan was shared, showing a repayment schedule of 20-year bonds should the District pass a \$43 million referendum in April 2025. Board members were reminded that it is likely the mill rate would increase should the Board delay going to referendum until 2026. Board members were invited to hold discussion regarding the referendum option before them.

Following the special board meeting held October 29 at which a motion for a building project was approved, the Building and Grounds Committee met three additional times, along with other board members, Nexus, as well as a small number of interested community members. President Schoenfeld asked the Buildings and Grounds committee how it had arrived at the current proposed \$43 million referendum project and whether a priority list of facility improvement measures was developed. Mr. Schoenfeld noted that a \$45 million referendum option considered one year ago addressed many more facility improvement measures, including some of the athletic areas. The Community Advisor Committee that met numerous

times in the fall of 2023 also had recommended addressing all facility needs with one referendum including the expansion of the Technical and Engineering Education area to provide opportunities for students interested in those career paths. Concern was expressed that there is not enough time to educate the community about a sizable building project in order that a referendum might pass.

Discussion ensued whether to remodel Maple View versus razing the building, and how that decision may affect the likelihood of future building referendums passing. Some board members felt that if Maple View is razed and rebuilt, the new building should structurally support the addition of a second story at a later time.

Consideration for creating a fine arts suite and moving the music classrooms nearer to the PAC may have lower priority over expanding the Tech. Ed. facilities, which would affect a larger number of students.

If the District were to pass a referendum for \$43 million in 2025, it is anticipated that the community may not support another large building project in 3-5 years. Timing of a large building referendum may not be ideal due to decreasing student enrollment. Holding the referendum along with the spring primary in February 2025 would not conflict with the Waterford Graded School District's operational referendum slated for April 2025. The deadline to file notice for holding a referendum election in conjunction with the spring primary in February 2025 is December 10, 2024 whereas the deadline for filing notice to hold a referendum in April, 2025 is mid-January.

Schools are a source of pride for the community and if a school is not maintained, families will not stay nor be drawn to moving into the community. Waterford residents are conservative and some feel they should not have to support the schools with higher taxes because they are on a fixed income and their children are no longer in school. Neighboring districts that have passed school building referendums and can offer more opportunities may draw district students away through open enrollment.

Many community members do not understand school finance. Construction costs are increasing every year; delaying needed facility improvement measures will cost more to complete in the future. Board members were reminded they took an oath to keep facilities in good repair to support the education of students. Some of the existing capital infrastructure concerns are becoming more critical; it is not fiscally responsible to not address facility needs and to keep putting money into emergency repairs. The District may likely need to have an operational referendum in the next 3-5 years if it must continue to maintain facilities using its fund balance.

Board member Beck made a motion to hold a referendum to address all deferred interior and exterior maintenance projects as listed in the previous FIM Summary as Project A. There was no second to the motion.

Board member Datka motioned that the District should proceed with Project A in the amount of \$10.8 million, but also include some of the fire suppression improvements (Line Item EDA-11) as well as adding some space for the Technical Education and Engineering Department. Mrs. Datka recommended that the building referendum not exceed \$14 million. Additional discussion ensued regarding which specific line items (facility improvement measures) the Board would like included in a building referendum. Mrs. Datka rescinded her motion.

There was a motion by Schwartz, seconded by Beck to table the discussion of a building referendum, and to schedule a special meeting for the week of December 2 at which the Board might continue its discussion with Nexus architectural engineers to come to an agreement on a building referendum plan. All ayes; motion carried.

#### Resolution Providing for a Referendum Election on the Question of the Approval of an Initial Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds in an Amount Not to Exceed \$43,000,000

No action taken; this item tabled pending future board discussion.

#### 2025-2026 New Course Proposals

There was a motion by Schwartz, seconded by Purtell to approve the following new courses proposed for the 2025-26 school year course offerings:

- Math Department - *Advanced Placement Computer Science A*
- Music Department - *Beginning Acoustic Guitar*
- Reading Department - *ACT Strategies*

All ayes; motion carried.

#### NEOLA Policy Updates - Vol. 33 No. 2

There was a motion by Schwartz to approve the most recent Neola policy updates presented as Vol. 33 No. 2, with the exception of the following two policies that are tabled pending further board discussion:

- Policy 2340 District Sponsored Trips
- Policy 5460 Graduation Requirements.

The motion was seconded by Datka. All ayes, motion carried.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Francois had nothing further to report.

#### **ADJOURN FROM OPEN MEETING**

There was a motion by Beck, seconded by Schwartz to adjourn the meeting. All ayes; motion carried. This done at 8:50 p.m.

The next regular board meeting will be held Monday, December 16, 2024. The meeting will be held in the LGI beginning at 6:30 p.m. A special board meeting is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on Monday, December 2, 2024 for the Board to continue its discussion of the facility improvement measures and in consideration of a future building project.

Respectfully submitted,

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Douglas P. Schwartz, Board Clerk