

MANITOWOC PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2023

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Board President Stacey Soeldner at 6:00 p.m. Members present were: Mr. Collin Braunel, Mr. Matthew Phipps, Ms. Stacey Soeldner, Mr. Matthew Spaulding, Mr. Kerry Trask, Mr. Tony Vlastelica, and Ms. Kathy Willis. Also present were Superintendent James Feil, Directors, and Executive Assistant Laurie Braun.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Network connection and access to BoardBook were confirmed.

Public Input began at 6:01 p.m. The Board received six (6) requests from the public to speak. The Board heard input from a current MPSD student thanking the Board for their work to change the curriculum and also expressed privacy concerns with the student issued chromebooks in the district. Another member, who is a special education paraprofessional in the district, shared her concern for previous talk of limiting the amount of funding and services to our special education students. One member shared concern for students who come to school dressed in animal costumes and asking to be addressed as such; this is a violation of student handbook policy. A community member spoke, sharing concern with the high number of resignations in recent months and the ability to attract and retain quality staff with the current work environment in our district. Another member spoke on behalf of the vote yes for the referendum support group and shared the work they are doing to get the word out into the community. The final public input was from a parent who expressed concern with the talk of cuts to special education, the need for special education students to be included with all students in the classroom how this provides normalcy and the same opportunities for students with special needs. Public input concluded at 6:24 p.m.

On motion from Collin Braunel seconded by Matthew Phipps, the Board unanimously approved (7-0) the Consent Agenda as presented, consisting of the minutes from the 2-28-23 Special Board Meeting.

Director of Business Services, Angela Erdmann presented the payment of vouchers for the month ending February 28, 2023. A motion was made by Collin Braunel, seconded by Tony Vlastelica, and unanimously carried (7-0) to approve the Bill List dated 2-1-23 through 2-28-23. The Bill List presented reflects district operating expenses and district payroll for a total operating expense of \$6,782,760.03. Ms. Erdmann explained to the Board and Public the monthly financial report will be provided at the April Board meeting.

Administration presented a list of donations to the MPSD for Youth Apprenticeship Night. A motion was made by Kerry Trask, seconded by Kathy Willis and unanimously carried (7-0) to accept the donation list, specifically the donation in the amount of \$2,500 from Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry as presented.

The Personnel Report was presented to the Board by Interim Director of Human Resources Mike Nault. The Personnel Report consisted of seven (4) retirements, eight (8) resignations, the hiring of two (2) support staff, and several extra curricular stipends. On motion from Kathy Willis, seconded by Matthew Spaulding, the Board approved (6-1) the Personnel Report as presented, with Board member Phipps abstaining.

Superintendent Feil provided a 2023 Referendum Update sharing we continue to provide referendum presentations to our staff, PTO's, service agencies and the public. Mr. Feil also acknowledged that we have a revenue problem, not an expenditure problem. 80% of the schools in our state need to go

to referendum to supplement their districts budget. Superintendent Feil also thanked Lisa Johnston for advocating for the referendum and sharing the information. Two Board members and Superintendent Feil will also be attending the WASB Day at the Capitol to advocate for revisions to the funding formula for our districts sharing our current funding formula puts us in the bottom 4% within the state, noting the last two years we have not received an increase in funding from the state. Director of Business Services, Angela Erdmann shared information regarding per pupil funding and the property tax level. Ms. Erdmann reiterated that if the referendum does indeed pass, we will still be below of what the level was in 2015.

Superintendent Feil provided a Strategic Plan Update stating this is still a work in progress and the plan will officially become effective next year. Mr. Feil shared a brief overview of the five pillars in our Strategic Plan and how we are putting the metrics in place. Mr. Feil provided clarification to some misinformation that was shared at the last Board meeting by sharing two articles, one from The Daily Cardinal and the other from The New York Times referencing the low reading scores in the state of Wisconsin. Our Strategic Plan will help build a strong foundation for success while addressing the catch up growth as well. Superintendent Feil reiterated that students need consistency, as well as the right tools and curriculum to be successful. The Dashboard numbers will be added as they become available and the baseline will be established by the end of this school year. The Board also discussed staff turnover and how will we address this moving forward. Interim Director of Human Resources, Mike Nault stated the District is utilizing School Perceptions as a neutral party to conduct our exit surveys. Mr. Nault has had some conversations with School Perceptions to provide us with a summary report for this past school year to make a comparison to years past. The District is also looking into conducting Stay Interviews to find out what the district is doing well. This will help us create a better action plan to increase our staff retention in the years to come.

Lincoln High School Principal, Lee Thennes provided an overview of some of the amazing community partnerships our students have available to them. Mr. Thennes stated although we may have some learning gaps, we do not have opportunity gaps. Mr. Thennes went on to say that no schools in our area have as many opportunities as we do. We are leading the state in our YA Program School to Work opportunities and have grown to 130 business partnerships where our students are learning, growing and contributing within our community. Mr. Thennes also shared mock interviews will be conducted at Lincoln High School tomorrow, we have a strong academic career planning program, students have the opportunity to participate in the Career Expo at UWGB and LTC. Students also have AP class and credit opportunities and the Reality Store in partnership with the Chamber. Principal Thennes also stated that we are leading the state in our work based program with a 35% student participation. Our students have an abundant amount of opportunities in this District and within this community.

A District Activity Update was shared by Superintendent Feil including the Youth Art Month reception at the Rahr-West Muesum celebrating the artistic talents of our students grades K-12. ACT Testing is completed and Parent Teacher Conferences were held at Lincoln and the Middle Schools last week. Superintendent Feil continues with the Referendum Presentation at our buildings' staff meetings as well as sharing the information with community organizations. There is another scheduled Public Referendum presentation scheduled this Thursday, March 16th here at the District Office/BoardRoom. Lincoln musicians participated in the District Solo & Ensemble Competition, we hosted a packed JFK for the Boys Basketball Sectionals, and Lincoln High School will also be participating in a "Fine Arts Concert" on March 27th.

Interim HR Director Mike Nault provided clarification to language in our current handbook and the suggested revisions. On motions brought forward from the February 13, 2023 Personnel Committee Meeting, the Board unanimously approved (7-0) both of the proposed Handbook Language Revisions for the "Absence Due to Death in the Family" and the "Teacher Job Sharing" as presented.

Remarks from the Board President included Art Show is still ongoing, Spring Break coming up. Collin also shared he met with City Council regarding the crosswalk by First German Lutheran School. The change in the traffic pattern from one way to two way on 8th street is showing an increase in the amount of traffic in that area. Manitowoc Police Chief Reimer stated we have a shortage of crossing guards. If anyone has an interest in becoming a crossing guard in any of our school zoned areas, please reach out to Chief Reimer with the Manitowoc Police Department.

The Board Governance Review suggested that Superintendent Feil work with Board President Soeldner to begin scheduling special meetings as the Committee of the Whole throughout the remainder of the school year so we can get started with some of our important budget discussions and to move forward with a more efficient Governance model for our Board.

Future meeting dates include a scheduled Finance & Budget Committee Meeting tomorrow, 3-15-23 at 5:30 p.m., an Ad-Hoc Student Behavior Advisory Committee Meeting has been moved to 3-30-23 at 4:15 p.m. due to Spring Break the week of March 20th. The next Board Meeting will be 3-29-23 at 6:00 p.m.

On motion from Tony Vlastelica, seconded by Matthew Spaulding, the Board unanimously voted (7-0) to adjourn the 3-14-23 Regular Board Meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Braun, Board Executive Assistant



Board President, Stacey E. Soeldner