

MANITOWOC PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2023

Board Vice-President Matthew Spaulding called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6:00 p.m. Members present were: Mr. Chris Able, Mr. Biff Hansen, Mr. Matthew Phipps, Ms. Stacey Soeldner (attending virtually), Mr. Matthew Spaulding, Mr. Kerry Trask, and Mr. Tony Vlastelica. Also present were Superintendent James Feil, Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall, Directors, and Executive Assistant Laurie Braun.

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

A moment of silence was taken to acknowledge and show respect for the passing of MPSD Employee Timothy Robley.

Public Input began at 6:02 p.m. The Board received two (2) requests from the public to speak. The Board heard input regarding the teaching of certain curriculum that promotes the truth of capitalism, socialism, and communism and promoting teaching patriotism. Another individual spoke in support re-instating the finance committee to review and oversee the finances of the past year, and to re-instate all Board Committees. Public Input concluded at 6:15 p.m.

The Consent Agenda was next presented to the Board. Board member Hansen asked to discuss the closed session minutes from the June 13, 2023 meeting and from the June 27, 2023 meeting that were submitted. Board member Hansen stated the closed session minutes presented should state they were respectfully submitted by Stacey Soeldner rather than the Board Secretary Laurie Braun as she was not present for either of the closed session meetings. Board member Hansen also shared that more detail should have been included in the minutes to include the goals set for the Superintendent. Board President Soeldner stated after consulting with the Board's attorney, the content of the minutes are within the parameters of what is being submitted. Board member Hansen made a motion to respectfully amend the two sets of closed session minutes to reflect they were submitted by Board President Soeldner, Kerry Trask seconded the motion and unanimously carried (7-0) to approve the closed session minutes as amended, and the minutes from the 6-27-23 Special Board Meeting as presented.

The Personnel Report was presented to the Board by Director of Human Resources Mike Nault. Mr. Nault discussed the positions that currently need to be filled and the status of where the district is at with the interviewing and the plan for filling these positions. We are still working on filling the School Psychologist position, however we are making a plan with our team of what this may look like if this position is not filled. Mr. Nault shared the candidate pools are extremely low and we are looking at alternative ways to meet the needs to fill these positions. The District will be holding Open Interviews on August 11th. The Personnel Report consisted of seven (7) resignations, one (1) termination, the hiring of fifteen (15) professional staff, and three (3) support staff, and the current Administrator and Teacher positions that need to be filled. A motion was made by Kerry Trask, seconded by Chris Able and unanimously carried (7-0), to approve the Personnel Report as presented.

Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall introduced the 2023-2024 Academic Standards. Director of State & Federal Programming and Assessment Lee Thennes shared a summary of these standards and stated that their purpose is to serve as goals for teachers and learners. Setting high standards enables students, parents and educators know what is expected of students and what they have learned at a given point in time. Mr. Thennes stated State law requires approval of our academic standards annually and for them to be posted on our district website once approved. A motion was made by Chris Able, seconded by Biff Hansen and unanimously carried (7-0) to accept the 2023-2024 Academic Standards as presented.

Assistant Superintendent McCall addressed the writing curriculum components of SFA stating the groups that participated in site visits acknowledged there was a definite weakness in the writing component of the SFA model. A workgroup was established to review other writing curriculum options and narrowed it down to two recommendations; Writing by Design (K-8 Program), and Being a Writer (K-5 Program). Heidi Schroderus, Director of Educational Programs shared the groups were able to work with the reps from each of these programs and we will get to pilot these at no cost to the district for the first semester. Teachers will get to choose which program they would like to pilot and we will use the assessment data collected from the two pilots to make a recommendation to the Board in November. The anticipated maximum cost will be \$50,000.

Director of Business Services Angela Erdmann provided a 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget Update that included the increase to the low-revenue ceiling for schools where their per pupil funding plus \$325 is less than \$11,000. MPSD's per pupil funding is \$10,000 plus \$325 automatically moves our district to the \$11,000 minimum plus the \$325 for a total of \$11,325 per pupil. This increase will affect the revenue limit authority and the Board will want to consider factors such as the maximizing of aid earned on 2022-23 expenditures and the monitoring of equalized property valuation (released in August) which will be critical. Ms. Erdmann shared some of the scenarios to consider and how it could affect our tax payers. The Board discussed the suggestion of reinstating the Finance Committee to better review the budget information. Superintendent Feil stated that if an issue is important to a committee it is important for the whole Board or Committee of the Whole to work together on. Board member Hansen stated we don't want to spend extra because it is there, yet we need to address that we have capital needs in the district that need to be taken care of. Board President Soeldner stated that the budget is one of the most important things that a governmental body does and we need to be diligent on getting a better understanding of the budget as a Committee of the Whole so we can make a decision as a board together. The Board discussed being mindful of what we spend and the return it is giving, but to be aware that we don't want to put the district in the same situation it has been in for the last 20 years.

Superintendent Feil reiterated to the Board that as one of our Strategic Plan components, we feel it is important to take a look at feedback from our stakeholders. This includes reviewing data from staff, student and parent surveys. Director of Human Resources Mike Nault shared workforce engagement summary that included retirement and resignation data from the last 5 years, national teacher turnover data, exit survey results of factors not contributing to the decision to leave, and factors contributing to decision to leave. Mr. Nault explained that we had 498 staff participate in the survey which is equivalent to a 62% participation rate. The survey summary included the number of years worked in the district, responses related to building specific questions, work environment, district administration and the Board of Education. Staff survey indexes regarding academics, engagement, support, student experience and staff experience were also shared. Mr. Nault acknowledged that we have areas to celebrate, however, there are areas for significant improvement. The Board had the opportunity to ask questions and provide

comments. The Board acknowledged that the results reported are not a huge surprise as we have seen division within our district and community. Board President Soeldner stated we need to do better and this why we have put some of the changes in place such as the Strategic Plan and the SFA model. These changes will help us have the systems in place to become a culture of excellence. The Board continued discussion surrounding the data presented and thanked Mr. Nault for sharing the results from the staff engagement survey.

The District Activity Update included Superintendent Feil sharing a summary from the SFA Conference in Baltimore. Twenty-seven of our staff participated and we witnessed our leadership take charge asking to do and to learn more. Jackson Elementary SFA Coordinator Dean Sleger and new Monroe Elementary School Principal Alexandra Nugent-Timofeeva shared some insight on the SFA training. Both stating it was framed around collaboration and teamwork helping them feel prepared for the start of the new school year. The biggest takeaway is providing students with the 90 minute block of reading time at each student's reading level. They also shared that teachers will be able to use their own individuality with SFA while teaching with fidelity. Mr. Sleger also shared that the first two weeks of this school year will be a transitional period for the students to get acclimated to a new system. Students will then be evaluated and re-evaluated throughout the year so we can make any adjustments along the way. Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall provided an overview of what that first week will look like for staff when they return. SFA is sending a team of people to buildings to train and work with our staff to get them ready for the new year. Director of Pupil Services Katie Eichmann also provided an explanation of how SFA will work and support students with disabilities. These students will be included in the general education classroom for the reading and literacy part as much as possible.

Director of Human Resources Mike Nault provided a preface to the pay scale adjustment review for Paraprofessional and Clerical Staff was presented to the Board. The good intentions of what the Board approved for the paraprofessional increase last year didn't provide an equitable scale increase for those employees who have been employed by the district for a longer period of time. What is being recommended is to help employees feel more equitable. A motion was made by Stacey Soeldner, seconded by Matthew Phipps, and unanimously carried (7-0) to approve the pay scale adjustment for Paraprofessional and Clerical Staff as presented.

Fundraising for District Athletic Projects and the partnership with the MPSD Foundation was next discussed. Athletic & Activities Director Stan Diedrich shared some of the current projects that need to be addressed which have a significant cost to the district. Mr. Diedrich stated the track in the JFK has more than served it's purpose for over 40 years and there are groups groups with a connection to this community and our schools who would like to contribute. These groups are waiting to start fundraising for some of these projects to help offset the overall cost to the district. It was also asked if some of these projects could be named after certain individuals who had a big impact on our district and our students. Some of the names include Pam Kjono, Earl Herbert, Dennis Kosloski, and Mike Zupke. The MPSD Foundation will help with organizing and market this fundraising effort and they will be able to earmark these funds for specific projects. The Board had significant discussion surrounding the process of naming rights and what the cost is to maintain these projects. The Board also agreed that we want to have facilities in our district that will attract people to our community and students to our programs. The Board agreed we need to follow guidelines before we agree to move forward with this. Matthew Phipps made a motion to table this until we have an administrative guideline in place to follow, Chris Able seconded the motion and the motion unanimously carried. This agenda item will be brought back to the Board at the August 8th meeting.

Remarks from the Board President included Ms. Soeldner reminding the Board the first meeting in August will have a shortened business agenda and will include a Strategic Planning and Review Session. She also referenced tonight's meeting that if Board members are looking for additional information, please reach out to our administrators to get that information to help clarify things.

Future meeting dates include the next Board meeting is scheduled for August 8, 2023, with a start time of 5:00 p.m. This meeting will have a shortened business agenda to allow the Board to discuss Strategic Planning and Review session in more detail.

On motion from Biff Hansen, seconded by Chris Able, the Board unanimously voted (7-0) to adjourn the July 25, 2023, Special Board of Education Meeting at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Braun, Board Executive Assistant



Board President, Stacey E. Soeldner