

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Independent School District No. 820

Sebeka, MN 56477

Monday, September 8, 2025

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The following members were in attendance: Jeannie Arthur, Nate Erickson, Kayla Frame, Rod Huttunen, Cheri Kangas, Eric Nelson and JoAnn Olson. Also present were Superintendent Dave Kerkvliet; Principal Amie Westberg; Business Manager Holly Paulson; staff member Melissa Koch and Review Messenger Reporter Dave Hanson.

Frame moved, Arthur seconded to approve the agenda with the following additions: 7.5.5 Assignment of Meagan Anderson as paraprofessional (she has declined the position); 7.5.6 Assignment of Cassie Chapman as a short-term paraprofessional; 7.5.7 Employee contracts for the Principal, Food Service Manager, Technology Director, SLPA, School nurse, Administrative Assistant, Account Technician, MARSS/EdFi Coordinator, and Business Manager, and 7.5.8 Approval of the 2025-2027 EMS Master Agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Principal Westberg reported that the Student Council is busy planning Fall Festival week which will be held the week of September 22nd.

The Negotiations Committee noted that they have settled contracts with EMS, Technology Director, Business Manager, Administrative Assistant, Accounts Payable, MARRS Coordinator, School Nurse, SLPA, Food Service Director and Principal. They are having continued meetings with the bus driver group and the ESP (custodians, food service, and paraprofessionals) group.

The Pairing Committee met on August 18th in Menahga. Items of discussion were reviewing pairing agreements for any updates, additions, or changes; school calendar alignment for the school year; discussion on activity fees; Track Fund set aside; all paired sports and future changes to any of the shared/paired positions.

Business Manager Holly Paulson reported on Title funds; Summer Levy completed; audit update; received REAP grant for FY26 in the amount of \$29,381 noting the amount is \$5,000 less than last year; and working with Superintendent Kerkvliet on solar project grants.

Jon Lillquist's AD report included the following fall activity numbers: Football Cheerleading - 6 girls; Football - grades 9-12 have 24 boys; Volleyball -A, B, and C teams have 21 girls and Junior High (6th-8th) have 21 girls; Cross Country - Girls 7-12 has 16 participants (Menahga - 9 and Sebeka - 7) and Boys 7-12 has 12 participants (Menahga - 11 and Sebeka - 1); noted that Arrysa Kessler has accepted the position of Jr. High Volleyball coach so they now have 2 coaches; and attended a MSHSL meeting on September 8th and will be attending the PRC AD meeting on September 17th.

Principal Westberg reported that the first day of school went great and the collection of cell phones went surprisingly well and the beginning of the year pep fest was one of the best; teachers 1st-8th were introduced to Read Naturally which is a new literacy program that covers the five components of the science of reading and noted that it is an online program for a 60-day trial run to see how the program works; week of September 15th-19th we will be participating in the "Start with Hello" week and noted that it is a program that is open to any school or community organization that wants to celebrate the importance of kindness and belonging and teaches students how to look for the signs of social isolation and increase inclusivity and empathy with their classmates; this week will also be the kick-off to our "Say Something" program noting that the program empowers students to recognize and report warning signs of potential harm and learn how to become Upstanders and know the signs of violence or self-harm in a classmate or themselves and can "say something" to a trusted adult to help for a peer in crisis or oneself; and noted that this year, all paraprofessionals need to have their PCA certification and their Phase 1 READ Act requirements.

Superintendent Kerkvliet reported on the solar project and is working on the rebate process and grants to help pay the project; will be attending the MREA conference on November 17th & 18th; noted that the annual MSBA Leadership Conference will be held January 15th and 16th; MASA continues to lobby and monitor support at the federal level for public schools and will hold their Fall Conference in Duluth on September 28th-30th; custodians did a good job of preparing the building for the school year; thanked the Food Service staff for preparing a breakfast for the staff on Wednesday of workshop week and the new online menu is up and running; transportation department is adjusting to the 9-route system; has been attending meetings at Freshwater, Wadena County Joint Task Force and a newly formed Sebeka Foundation and Initiative Foundation noting that the Sebeka Foundation aims to generate financial support for our school district through fundraising, donations, grants and scholarships.

Under Discussion Items, Superintendent Kerkvliet reviewed beginning of the year programming, enrollment, and staffing noting that the start of the year went well but enrollment continues to be a challenge and also discussed the following Superintendent goals for the 2025-2026 school year-(1) budget - noting that this continues to be a challenge due to rising inflationary costs and declining enrollment; (2) Emergency Crisis Plan - working with the Wadena County Joint Task Force, Wadena County School District and training with the school safety "I Love You Guys" organization; (3) Lead CTE Network - was accepted as a member of the Lead CTE Network program noting that the organization's main goal is to empower educational leaders to transform CTE in schools to provide the latest and best educational opportunities for students; and (4) Climate and Culture which is a part of the Strategic Plan.

Huttunen moved, Frame seconded to approve the following consent agenda items: August 11th regular meeting minutes; Treasurer & Investment report for September; monthly bills at \$692,631.56; resignation of Homecoming Co-Chair Nicole Johnson; assignment of long-term Guest Paraprofessional Tanja Richter; assignment of Jr. High Volleyball Coach Arrysa Kessler; assignment of Paraprofessional Meagan Anderson (now has declined this position); assignment of short-term Paraprofessional Cassie Chapman; employee contracts for Principal, Food Service Manager, Technology Director, SLPA, School Nurse, Administrative Assistant, Account Technician, MARRS Coordinator, and Business Manager; EMS Teacher Master Agreement for 2025-2027; and student enrollment K-12 at 427. Motion carried unanimously

Huttunen moved, Kangas seconded to approve the resolution accepting the following donations: \$250 from Wadena VFW for software for the Elementary Math and Reading programs. The following members voted in favor: Arthur, Erickson, Frame, Huttunen, Kangas, Nelson, Olson; against: none; therefore, the resolution was duly adopted.

Huttunen moved, Frame seconded to approve the proposed 2025-Payable-2026 Tax levy by maximizing the levy with final approval done at the December 8, 2025 Truth in Taxation meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Olson moved, Arthur seconded to approve to continue setting aside \$15,000 per year for resurfacing of the track as per the recommendation of the Pairing Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Frame moved, Kangas seconded to approve the following goals for Superintendent Kerkvliet's for the 2025-2026 school year: (1) budget - noting that this continues to be a challenge due to rising inflationary costs and declining enrollment; (2) Emergency Crisis Plan - working with the Wadena County Joint Task Force, Wadena County School District and training with the school safety "I Love You Guys" organization; (3) Lead CTE Network - was accepted as a member of the Lead CTE Network program noting that the organization's main goal is to empower educational leaders to transform CTE in schools to provide the latest and best educational opportunities for students; and (4) Climate and Culture which is a part of the Strategic Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Erickson moved, Frame seconded to approve the adjustment of meal prices for adults and second meals for students (K-12) from \$5.05 to \$5.25 and breakfast at \$2.50. Motion carried unanimously.

Frame moved, Kangas seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:59 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

JoAnn Olson
Clerk of Sebeka School District