MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Independent School District No. 820
Sebeka, MN 56477
Regular meeting April 20, 2026

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the District Office with the following members in attendance: Jeannie Arthur, Nathan Erickson, Kayla Frame, Rod Huttunen, Cheri Kangas, and JoAnn Olson. Absent Eric Nelson. Also present were Superintendent Dave Kerkvliet; K-12 Principal Amie Westberg; Business Manager Holly Paulson; AD Jon Lillquist, several community members with concerns about the 5th grade program and Girls Basketball; and Review Messenger Reporter Dave Hanson.

Kangas moved, Olson seconded to amend the agenda under Old Business by adding 8.1 Consideration of Activities Director's Recommendation to Non-Renew the Varsity Girls Basketball Head Coach.

Huttunen moved, Kangas seconded to approve the agenda with the following additions: 7.5.11 Resignation of Wade Hukriede as National Honor Society Advisor; 7.5.12 Contract for Transportation Supervisor Anni Olson; 8.1 Consideration of Activities Director's Recommendation to Non-Renew the Girls Varsity Head Coach and 9.7 Consider MOU with Park Rapids, Menahga and Sebeka to Coordinate FFA transportation. Motion carried unanimously.

Under Visitor or Delegation Comments, several community members and staff were present to comment on the 5th grade and Girls Basketball Head Coach position. Kim Thurston, a 5th grade parent, voiced her opinion regarding the cuts that have been made and how those cuts have affected the 5th grade class and wondering what the plan would be for the 2026-2027 school year. Also voicing their opinions regarding pros and cons for the non-renewal of the head Girls Basketball Coach were Head Coach Mike Heino, Curt Ronneberg, Mason Heino, Molly Heino, Melissa Huntington and Megan Olson-Lehner.

The Budget Committee has met to review ideas for cost containments and budgeting for the 2026-2027 school year and discuss the idea of an operating levy referendum.

The Negotiations Committee met with Superintendent Kerkvliet to discuss contract terms.

Business Manager Holly Paulson reported on: received third quarter Title funds in the following amounts: $42,332.47 in Title I; $6,271.26 in Title II and $4,817.00 in Title IV; completed and submitted first quarter payroll reports; attended the annual health insurance renewal meeting at LCSC and noted that health insurance will have a 7.2% increase on the Medica Plan; Delta Dental had no increase and Ameritas for our Vision plan had a minimal increase and will send out the information for the upcoming year to employees for open enrollment beginning May 4th; and working on FY2027 initial budget.

Activities Director Jon Lillquist reported on: Spring sports numbers: Baseball grades 7-12 have 29 boys and 8 in 6th grade; Softball grades 7-12 have 30 participants and nine (9) sixth graders; Track 7-12 has 11 participants (4 boys, 7 girls) from Sebeka and 29 (13 boys, 16 girls) from Menahga and Golf has 4 (2 boys, 2 girls) from Sebeka and 24 from Menahga (6 girls,18 boys); and approve Baseball Volunteer Coach Kolby Kiser; Softball Volunteer Coach Jessica Funk and Alayna Day as Golf Assistant Coach.

Principal Westberg's report included: MCA testing started the week of April 13th with Reading MCA's for grades 3-8 and 10; week of April 20th with Math MCA's for grades 3-8 and 11 and week of April 27th with Science MCA's for grades 5,8 and 10; Elementary pizza fundraiser totaled 3000 pizzas sold; May will be busy with elementary field trips, Ninja Anywhere, Day of Caring and the Color Run; reviewed of what will be on the Local Literacy Plan noting that it now has 16 sections and will be available to fill out beginning May 1st and due June 15th; and will be using the Capti test to indicate characteristics of dyslexia for the Local Literacy Plan this year.

Superintendent Kerkvliet reported on: updated legislative information from MREA, MSBA and MASA; waiting for MDE to list our online school option; Custodial Department - will plan to finish up the year with a few staff helping out the custodians at the end of the day and then will hire a regular custodian for the next school year; Food Service Department had their inspection with a few minor details reported; will be considering an MOU for transportation with Park Rapids, Menahga and Sebeka for FFA transportation; will be considering a change to Sebeka School District Policy 9.7 DISTRICT REIMBURSEMENT TO STUDENTS REPRESENTING SEBEKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR COMPETITIVE EXTRA-CURRICULAR, CO-CURRICULAR, AND ACADEMIC STATE, AND NATIONAL SCHOOL EVENTS by eliminating district funding support for national events for cost containments; completed a survey of support programs with Sourcewell that is planned to be used within our comprehensive package next school year; Freshwater superintendents voted against a merger with PAWN at this time but was in favor of hiring two Freshwater employees that will work at the Walker Level 4 program and be funded by the Walker Level 4 and will provide an opportunity to assess whether a merger would be beneficial to Freshwater; drafted a letter to be presented at the April 17th Wadena County meeting to encourage continued focus on pro-growth decisions that support new business development and residential homestead construction with the idea that with new development a reduction of tax burden in the county would be realized; reviewed a staff analysis report from the CESO studies that provides insight to staffing levels and compares them to other districts noting that there were some gaps in information and inconsistencies with how districts reported their information which complicated arriving to an accurate comparison; Northern Pines has acquired more funding support so we will see a reduction of $1.125 in addition to the 18.5% reduction from last year for counseling support; noted that the CRG (Critical Response Group) mapping is completed and is ready to be added as a piece to our emergency crisis plan; and thanked all of the staff, students and extended Sebeka School family for their prayers, support and kindness in support for the Rife family.

Under Discussion Items, Mr. Kerkvliet gave an update of the online school plan noting that the webpage, advertising and a handbook are being developed and close to going live and once completed, work will be done on advertising and enrollment; discussed budget options such as maintaining our current staffing levels, making some program cost containments, launching our online option and considering running an operating referendum in the fall; and end of year responsibilities noting that the last student day will be May 22nd with graduation at 7:30 p.m. that evening.

Kangas moved, Arthur seconded to approve the following consent agenda items with the exception of 7.5.10 Approve a three-year leave of absence for Jerome Meyer: regular meeting minutes from the March 9th regular meeting; Treasurer and Investment report for April; monthly bills at $830,339.49; assignment of Jon Lillquist as Summer Rec Director; Peer Coaches Emily Crabb and Nicole Oyster; assignment of Asher Hoeper as Summer Technology Assistant; Summer Contracts for Instrumental Music and Agriculture; Two-year contract with Superintendent Kerkvliet; assignment of Transportation Mechanic for Casey Strayer; assignment of K-12 Secretary for Kristy Steinke; Summer Rec workers Jaylin Lillquist, Max Lake, Kylah Watson, Vyolette Lysne and part-time Emma Ness and Hudson Nelson; resignation of Vicki Makela as Custodial Helper and thanked her for her years of service to the custodial department; resignation of Wade Hukriede as National Honor Society advisor and thanked him for working with that program; Transportation Supervisor contract for Anni Olson and K-12 enrollment at 417 students. Motion carried unanimously.

Huttunen moved, Erickson seconded to approve a three-year leave of absence for 5th grade teacher Jerome Meyer beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Kangas moved, Frame seconded to approve the recommendation of the Activities Director to non-renew the varsity GBB head coach position. A roll call vote was taken and the following voted in favor of the non-renewal of the Girls Basketball Head Coach: Arthur, Erickson, Frame, Huttunen, Kangas and Olson; against: none; absent Nelson. Motion passed unanimously.

Erickson moved, Kangas seconded to approve the resolution accepting the following donations: 1. $400 from Menahga VFW for Prom; 2. $25 from Peterson Farms Seed to FFA; 3. $250 from R.D. Offutt Farms Co. to BPA for Nationals; 4. PTA fundraiser donations: $1,420 to 12th grade; $1,245 to 11th grade; $1,490 to 10th grade; $1,140 to 9th grade; $1,525 to 8th grade; $1,910 to 7th grade and $1,350 to 6th grade. Motion carried unanimously.

Arthur moved, Huttunen seconded to approve the following budget cost containments as recommended for FY26-27: pause National support through policy change; continue summer band lessons funded privately; continue reduced summer ag contract; continue delay on uniform purchases; eliminate non-conference long distance games; post CESO transportation study and continue to look for cooperative transportation savings with Menahga transportation; convert to head custodian model with direct support of facilities management within the superintendent position; continue with MARSS/EDFI coordinator to minimum days as needed and provide appropriate paraprofessional support depending on child specific needs. Motion carried unanimously.

Huttunen moved, Arthur seconded to approve a change in the District Policy 9.7 District Reimbursement for State and National events by eliminating district funding support for national events for cost containments. Motion carried unanimously.

Kangas moved, Erickson seconded to approve the first reading MSBA Policy 625 - RESPONSIBLE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. Motion carried unanimously.

Arthur moved, Erickson seconded to approve an intent to run an operating levy referendum on the November 3rd election. Motion carried unanimously.

Kangas moved, Arthur seconded to approve the 820Online handbook as presented by Mrs. Westberg and Superintendent Kerkvliet thanked Mrs. Westberg for all the work she has done for our 820Online plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Olson moved, Arthur seconded to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to coordinate FFA transportation with Park Rapids, Menahga and Sebeka Schools. Motion carried unanimously.

Erickson moved, Kangas seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:24 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

JoAnn Olson
Clerk of Sebeka School District