MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Independent School District No. 820
Sebeka, MN 56477
March 9, 2026

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. with the following members were in attendance: Jeannie Arthur, Kayla Frame, Rodney Huttunen, Cheri Kangas, Eric Nelson and JoAnn Olson. Absent: Nate Erickson. Also present were Superintendent Dave Kerkvliet; Business Manager Holly Paulson; staff members Jerome Meyer, Melissa Koch, Andrea Rusk from Sourcewell, Jenny Hoppe from the Sebeka Foundation and several members from the PTA, a few 5th grade parents and Review Messenger Reporter Dave Hanson.

Under Visitor and Delegation comments, several members of the PTA, Sebeka Foundation and 5th grade parents were in attendance. Jenny Hoppe from the Sebeka Foundation reported on what the Foundation does and noted that they have raised $20,000 in seed money for building endowments and has received $1,000 in donations and also secured an Initiative School Project grant in the amount of $5,000. They were able to fund and award four teachers with projects by purchasing microscopes, acoustic guitars, solar cars and elementary sensory materials and were asking the school board to come together in unity to support an operating referendum to help with the school's funding. Jessica Rarick, a member of the Sebeka PTA, also spoke in favor of an operating referendum to help the school with funding and urging the school board to go forward with a referendum in November and Kim Thurston, a 5th grade parent, also voiced her opinion regarding the cuts that have been made and how those cuts have affected the 5th grade class. She noted that she would be in favor of an operating referendum if the board could give their assurance that moving forward, the school board would realize that K-6 education is very important and look for options as to what would be best for the students.

Also under Visitor comments, Andrea Rusk, Sebeka's Strategic Partner from Sourcewell, reviewed updates regarding Sourcewell's partnering with Sebeka School District to boost student success by participating in Metier, New Teacher Academy, Career Pathways and Effective Schools Blueprint Quick Look which helps districts identify the essential structures and practices of a strong educational system and utilizes data to prioritize and focus improvement efforts. She also reviewed the Sebeka School Service and Support plan for 2025-2026 regarding Education Solutions programs, student focused programs such as Metier, Student Competition (Knowledge Bowl, Spelling Bee), STEMbound, Students of Character Celebration, World Savvy Event, and student conferences; and the Educator Focused programs such as AVID, Educator Networks, Educators of Excellence celebration, READ Act, and New Teacher Training and Mentoring.

Frame moved, Kangas seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The Budget Committee reported that they have met a couple of times and are in the process of working through ideas for budget savings including capital needs, cost contaminants, new revenue streams, capital facilities bonds, and Federal funding.

The Negotiations Committee reported that they have been meeting with Superintendent Kerkvliet to negotiate a superintendent contract.

The Pairing Committee met in Menahga on Wednesday, March 4th. The committee reviewed pairing agreements for updates, additions and changes. They approved the Fall Cross Country coaching assignments for Ed Heltunen, Nick Jasmer, Nicole Oyster and Steve Schreiber as a volunteer coach contingent upon a successful background check. Discussion was held on the following paired sports: wrestling season, noting the positive season and state meet results; reviewed the agreement for wrestling cheerleading and bringing coaches together to come up with a student centered program; future meets for Speech; future of sixth grade competing on the junior high team for golf; track coaches and any future changes to any shared/paired positions. Discussion was also held on the alignment of school calendars for the year, staff development, transportation departments, activities and training.

Business Manager Holly Paulson reported that ACA 1095 Forms for 2025 have been completed and submitted to the IRS; received the Workers Comp modification rating of 1.03 from .74 last year and noting that it reflects claims for 2022, 2023, and 2024 and that it takes three years to drop our rating to a lower score and due to the increase in the rating we will be paying a higher premium; received an email from MDE regarding the Compensatory Revenue for FY2027 and reviewed the “What If” report they sent showing a decrease in compensatory revenue for FY2027; working on the FY2026 final budget revision to present at the April or May board meeting; and completing the FY2027 insurance package with MarchMcLennan agency which is due March 19th.

Mr. Lillquist’s AD report included that the Park Region Conference has decided to go with Bound for our scheduling platform for activities and noting that it will be more user friendly and will be better for displaying the calendar and events on our website; and he has not received any applications for the Summer Rec Director position so he is willing to do it for one more year and then will need to look at making some changes to the position so we can get some applicants.

Principal Westberg’s report included that she did a podcast with Sourcewell about our Career and College Readiness program; attended the “I Love U Guys” workshop with Mrs. Kern; our “820online” school is getting closer to being live, noting that we have started 4 Credit Recovery with our seniors and Mrs. Kern is working on making a course catalog and researching what most schools do for forms noting that most schools use two types of forms, an interest survey which gives the school a general idea of who the student is and once submitted then parents would be contacted to explain how 820online works and if it is a good fit then enrollment papers, records request and open enrollment forms if needed would be sent out.

Superintendent Kerkvliet reported on the Sebeka Foundation noting that they have obtained some grant funds and was able to support projects in Science, Music and Special Education; reviewed a new policy from MSBA that addresses AI in schools; attends MREA meetings on Mondays to stay informed on legislative updates; MASA is also providing legislative updates with federal level support; applied with MDE to create a new school site for our online option; scheduled roof replacements for the multipurpose room and the 1957 gym with Herzog for July and coordinated the gym floor maintenance; will be working on contracts for next year for the transportation supervisor and transportation mechanic as they were on a one-year contract; noted that Principal Westberg participated in Sourcewell's “Ed Soul” podcast to present on the great programming we have implemented with Trojan Pathways; attended a Freshwater meeting on March 4th noting the main part of the discussion was if Freshwater should consider taking on PAWN (Park Rapids, Akeley, Walker, Nevis) and expand the territory; Principal Westberg and Mrs. Kern showcased the Trojan Pathways and CTE offerings within our master schedule for the Lead-CTE meeting in February; received a thank you note from the Joyce Olson family for the plant and recognition of her dedication to Sebeka School as an educator in her memory; and submitted a report to the state regarding the school mascot issue.

Under Discussion Items, the Board reviewed the online school plan with “Subject” for the 2026-2027 school year; reviewed an amended resolution amending and restating a prior resolution to state the intention of the school board to issue general obligation facilities maintenance bonds and capital notes in the amount of $1,050,000.00 for roof replacement and purchasing school buses and Superintendent Kerkvliet noted that the Budget Committee has met a few times to review cost containments for the 2026-2027 school year. Some recommendations include approving an amended resolution to add a Capital Note sale for transportation vehicle purchases, Online school option approval, pass an operating levy referendum in November, program cost containments and staffing cost containments.

Huttunen moved, Frame seconded to approve the following consent agenda items: February 9th regular meeting minutes; Treasurer and Investment report for March; monthly bills at $675,814.92; Spring Sports Coaches: Resignation of Jerome Meyer as Co-Head Softball Coach and thanked him for his years of service as a softball coach; Track - Head Tom Smith, Assistants Ed Heltunen and Thor Johnson; Baseball - Head Jeff Lake, Assistant Reggie Kiser, Jr High Jason Steinke and Tanner Burgau; Softball - Head Coach Jon Lillquist, Assistant Madison Kurzenberger, Jr.High Ryan Tuorila; and Golf - Head Tim Wurdock, Assistants Becca Pulju; and March enrollment at 415 students K-12. Motion carried unanimously.

Arthur moved, Olson seconded to approve the second reading of the 2026-2027 school calendar starting with new teachers August 26th and all staff on and all staff on the week of August 31st through September 3rd with the option of one floating day the week of August 24th; first student day starting on September 8th; Graduation and last student day on May 28, 2027 and teacher in-service on June 1st. Motion carried unanimously.

Frame moved, Kangas seconded to approve the resolution accepting the following donations - $500 from West Central for tablets for the Track program. Motion carried unanimously.

Frame moved, Kangas seconded to approve a resolution amending and restating a prior resolution to state the intention of the school board to issue general obligation facilities maintenance bonds and capital notes in the amount of $1,050,000.00 for roof replacement and purchasing school buses. Motion carried unanimously.

Frame moved, Arthur seconded to approve an MOU with Wadena County DAC for the use of transportation and shelter in case of an emergency. Motion carried unanimously.

Huttunen moved, Kangas seconded to approve a quote from Herzog Roofing in the amount of $171,200.00 for roof replacements for the multipurpose room and the 1957 gym. Motion carried unanimously.

Arthur moved, Kangas seconded to approve changing the April 13th board meeting to Monday, April 20th at 6:00 p.m. in the District Office. Motion carried unanimously.

JoAnn Olson,
Clerk of Sebeka School District