

Minutes for February 19, 2025 Regular School Board Meeting

Chair Opatz called the regular meeting of the School Board of Independent School District #738 to order at 6:00 PM in the meeting room.

Members present: Ben Christensen, Nicole Burg, Lori Opatz, Rob Knettel, Pat Meier, and Student Rep Morgan Pellett.

Members absent: Evelyn Martini, Ed Feia.

Also attending was: Superintendent Chris Swenson, Elementary Principal Jim Stang, Business Manager Garrity Gerber, Adm. Assistant Linda Zapzalka and Natasha Barber from Star Publications. Guest attending: Brody Anderson. Absent: Secondary Principal Tom Cooper. Mr. Cooper arrived at 6:15 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion by Christensen, second by Knettel, to approve the amended agenda. Add Items 6.5. Strategic Plan is at places; and 6.9. Adopt the Resolution Directing the Administration to Examine The Financial Condition Of The District And To Make Any Recommendations For Reduction In Programs and Positions and Reasons Therefore. Motion carried. All In Favor (AIF).

Motion by Christensen, second by Burg, to approve the consent agenda. Items in the consent agenda included: approval of the minutes from the 1/8/25 Organizational School Board Meeting & 2/5/25 Board Work Session; approval of the schedule of bills in the amount of \$297,689.64. Computer checks approved #57272 through #57441 and #31223 through #31242 in the amount of \$3,491.54; approval of the electronic transfer for Jan. 2025, \$1,217,783.40; acknowledgement of the Treasurer's Report balance per books \$5,968,514.24; approval of lane change from BS40 to MS effective at the start of Qtr. 3 of FY25 for Marian Lyngaard; approval of lane change from BS to BS10 effective at the start of Qtr. 3 of FY25 for Amanda McDonough; accepted the resignation from KidZone Assistant Natalie Sobania effective 1/9/2025; Accepted the following donations: \$50 From PTA to Art Club, \$35.50 from Box Tops to the Elementary Activity Fund, \$26.90 from Box Tops to the HS Activity Fund, \$1000 from the Lions Club to the Backpack Fund, \$500 from the Lions to Trap Shooting, \$1000 from the American Legion to Trap Shooting, \$30,000 from Booster Club (2 donations, \$5000 and then \$25,000), Donation from WalMart in Little Falls of Seeds, Seed starter kits, Jiffy pots, at least 3 Grow lights and many more items too numerous to list estimated to be \$2,500 in value, Holdingford food shelf for \$617.92. \$100 for preschool snacks and \$517.92 for covering the cost of Kids' Zone milk over the summer and Blattner Energy to the Ag Shop of 560 new cans of spray paint at roughly \$6/can, estimated to be at least \$3,360 in paint. On Roll Call voting in favor: Christensen, Burg, Opatz, Feia, Knettel and Meier. Voting against: None. Motion carried unanimously. Board Chair Opatz recognized and thanked all the Donors for their generosity!

Chair Opatz welcomed fellow board members, administration, staff and guests.

Citizen Participation: None

Superintendent Swenson gave a shout out to the Dance Team and Wrestling Team for their successes and heart breaks this past weekend in playoff competition! They have represented the District very well.

Student Board Representative Morgan Pellett reported NHS provided a well received staff meal during conferences, a successful Blood Drive, and they are planning the 5-8 Activity Night. She informed the Board that the Business Club is being revived after a couple years of no activity, that Track & Field is holding a Meat Raffle this upcoming weekend, and also this Saturday is the Semi Formal Dance sponsored by Student Council. Lastly Morgan expressed student concerns about the weight room ceiling height, athletic storage space, cell phone restrictions and CIS space. The Board members thanked Morgan for her input on behalf of the students.

Elementary Principal Stang thanked PTA for providing the following events: Will Sings Concert for Preschool - 1st graders were singing and moving was enjoyed by all and I Love to Read Month activities. He reported on Parent Teacher Conferences which had a 95-96% in attendance and is anticipating a lot of excitement with the Kindergarten Round-up on March 3rd. Mr. Stang also talked about AIMSWEB to Fast Bridge and the implementation of the Read Act and thanks to the Lion's & Lioness Club donations along with Ms. Meemken's efforts, the backpack program is sustained and providing help to students who would otherwise go home hungry. The program services 17-22 kids. He reviewed some upcoming events including the March 6th Library Night featuring a Magician, April Math Night, Summer School, Title student graduations and Bus RTI training.

Secondary Principal Cooper reported the FACS position will be filled at this meeting hiring Rebecca Fiedler, the Master Schedule is nearly complete, 74% of the students made the A or B Honor Roll and he is sending a letter to parents explaining more elective classes have been added, more College In the Schools (CIS) classes have been implemented into the schedule to entice students to take college classes here in the District receiving college credits rather than going PSEO off campus creating a big expense to the District. Mr. Cooper entertained questions from the Board regarding CIS classes and student registration which will start in March.

BSED report, Pat Meier reported a short quick meeting took place including policy reads and discussion on the boiler issues at Voyagers. Board Chair Opatz inquired about the BSED facility search and Mr. Swenson informed the Board a facility has not been found that could house all the programs and offices, therefore they are still searching for other options but the Voyagers program is in dire need of relocation.

Business Manager Gerber reported expenses are trending on budget, the Greenhouse is nearing completion and are anticipating it being ready for the growing season. He informed the Board that he drew up the Federal funds earlier than normal to secure receipt of them.

Business Items:

Motion by Knettel, second by Meier, to approve the Board Committee Assignments as presented. Motion carried. AIF.

The meeting continued with the first reading of revised Policy 503 Student Attendance; first reading of revised Policy 524 Internet and Technology Acceptable Use and Safety Policy and first reading of new Policy 524.5 Personal Electronic Communication Devices. Mr. Swenson explained Policy 503 is mainly changed due to statute changes, cell phone language is removed from Policy 524 and the new Policy 524.5 will be the cell phone policy.

Mr. Swenson explained the changes made at the Work Session have been implemented. Motion by Knettel, second by Christensen, to adopt the Resolution for Adoption of the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan as presented. On Roll Call voting in favor: Christensen, Burg, Opatz, Knettel and Meier. Voting against: None. Motion carried unanimously. Chair Opatz thanked everyone involved in the work of creating the plan.

Motion by Christensen, second by Burg, to add a March 5, 2025 Work Session to the Board Calendar. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Meier, second by Knettel, to approve adding the new course offering Physiology of Physics in Sports or Sports Science. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to approve adding the new course offering Introduction to Art. Motion carried. AIF. This is a College In Schools Course being added along with Medical Terminology and Weight Training.

Mr. Swenson explained this Resolution is procedural and done annually. Motion by Meier, second by Christensen, to adopt the Resolution Directing the Administration to Examine The Financial Condition Of The District And To Make Any Recommendations For Reduction In Programs and Positions and Reasons Therefore. On Roll Call voting in favor: Christensen, Burg, Opatz, Knettel and Meier. Voting against: None. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel:

Motion by Christensen, second by Knettel, to hire Rebecca Fiedler for the Secondary Family & Consumer Science Teacher position at BS40 Step 6 starting with the 2025/2026 school year. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Knettel, second by Burg, to accept the Letter of Resignation from Elementary SPED Teacher Melyssa Sakry effective at the end of the 2024/2025 school year. Motion carried. AIF. Mr. Stang thanked Ms. Sakry for her year of teaching and looks forward to seeing her around in the Subbing capacity.

Motion by Christensen, second by Knettel, to approve a seven day Paternal Leave for Secondary Math Teacher Chad Haugen starting 4/3/2025 to 4/11/2025. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to accept the Letter of Intent to Negotiate from Custodians International Union of Operating Engineers Local Union No. 70. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Knettel, second by BChristensen, to accept the Letter of Intent to Negotiate from Education Assistants International Union of Operating Engineers Local Union No. 70. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Burg, second by Christensen, to approve FMLA Leave for Kate Korte from 8/25/2025-11/16/2025. Motion carried. AIF.

A review of the upcoming meeting dates took place.

Work Session March 5, 2025 @ 6:00 PM in the HS Meeting Room.

School Board Meeting March 19, 2025 @ 6:00 PM in the HS Meeting Room.

Adjourn

Agenda completed at 6:45 PM. A motion to adjourn was made by Chrisytensen, and a second by Knettel. Motion carried. AIF.

Respectfully Submitted by
Clerk Patrick Meier