

Minutes for January 8, 2025 Organizational School Board Meeting

Acting Chair Opatz called the Organizational meeting of the School Board of Independent School District #738 to order at 6:01 PM in the meeting room.

Members present: Evelyn Martini, Ben Christensen, Lori Opatz, Pat Meier and Student Representative Morgan Pellett.

Members absent: Nicole Burg, Ed Feia, and Rob Knettel.

Also attending was: Superintendent Chris Swenson, Elementary Principal Jim Stang, Secondary Principal Tom Cooper, and Adm. Assistant Linda Zapzalka.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Oath of Office was administered to newly elected Board Member Benjamin Christensen.

Motion by Christensen, second by Martini, to approve the amended agenda. Item added: 1.1. Oath of Office; CORRECT- 3.7. Designation of Official Depository; CORRECT- 3.13. Endorse Legal Advisors for the District; 8.5. Approve lane change for Julia Pesta; and 8.6. Approve lane change for Abby Muyers. Motion carried. All In Favor (AIF).

Acting Chair Opatz called for nominations for Chairperson, Christensen nominated Lori Opatz, no other nominations were received. Acting Chair Opatz moved nominations to be closed. Opatz was the only candidate nominated for the office of chair, she was declared elected by acclamation, the acting clerk was directed to so record in the minutes. Lori Opatz was named Chairperson.

Chair Opatz called for nominations for Vice-Chairperson, Martini nominated Rob Knettel, no other nominations were received. Chair Opatz moved nominations to be closed. Knettel was the only candidate nominated for the office of Vice-Chair, he was declared elected by acclamation, the acting clerk was directed to so record in the minutes. Rob Knettel was named Vice-Chairperson.

Chair Opatz called for nominations for Clerk, Christensen nominated Pat Meier, no other nominations were received, Chair Opatz moved nominations to be closed, Meier was the only candidate nominated for the office of Clerk he was declared elected by acclamation, the acting clerk was directed to so record in the minutes. Pat Meier was named Clerk.

Chair Opatz called for nominations for Treasurer, Christensen nominated Evelyn Martini no other nominations were received, Chair Opatz moved nominations be closed, she was the only candidate nominated for the office of Treasurer, he was declared elected by acclamation, the acting clerk was directed to so record in the minutes. Evelyn Martini was named Treasurer.

The 2025 school board meeting calendar was reviewed. Approval took place at a previous meeting. Time and location are as follows: Meetings will begin at 6:00 PM, unless otherwise noted or publicized. Meetings will be held in the High School Meeting Room. Meet and Confer meetings are at 3:15 PM, in the Boardroom and Work Sessions are at 6:00 PM in the High School Meeting Room.

Motion by Christensen, to set the board salary as follows: \$60 for regular, special and committee meetings; \$85 for out of district meetings, and \$85 for meetings that exceed 6 hours in length; Chair \$300/year, Clerk \$100/year, Treasurer \$100/year, second by Meier. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Meier, second by Martini, to set the mileage rate at the established Federal IRS reimbursement rate while using your own vehicle on school business. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to set the meal reimbursement rates to follow the State of MN Commissioners' Plan while on school business. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to retain the Star Post as the official newspaper. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Martini, to retain Versa USA Bank Holdingford, MN Trust, and Minnesota School District Liquid Assets Fund (MSDLAF), and that the Superintendent/Business Manager are authorized to make deposits in official depositories. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Martini, second by Meier, to allow the use of facsimile board signatures affixed by computer on payroll and disbursement checks. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Meier, second by Christensen, to name district administrative assistant as clerk's designee for routine school duties and handling election duties. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Martini, to authorize the superintendent to sign/renew contracts and service agreements in amounts up to \$20,000. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to authorize the business manager as treasurer's designee for routine duties including investments and electronic transfers. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to authorize providing meals, coffee, and light refreshments to visitors. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to authorize the board chair and superintendent to be exclusive contacts with district counsel and to use one firm. Jovanovich, Dege, Athmann, PA of St. Cloud with Susan Dege as our Legal Counsel. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to participate in Title Programs I, II, and IV. The superintendent is the LEA representative for the programs. The elementary principal is authorized as the contact person. Motion carried. AIF.

Discussion ensued on board committee assignments. Approval will be at the February meeting.

Motion by Christensen, second by Martini, to approve Pat Meier to be the Benton Stearns Education District Board Representative. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Martini, to approve the consent agenda. Items in consent agenda included: approval of the minutes from Dec. 18th School Board Mtg; approval of the schedule of bills in the amount of \$611,140.83; Computer checks approved #57147 through #57271 and #31203 through #31222 in the amount of \$3,666.88; approval of the electronic transfer for Dec. 2024, \$675,917.70; acknowledgement of the Treasurer's

Report balance per books \$5,654,863.50; and accept the donation \$250 from Cherry Berry to HS PBIS; \$1271.48 to the Elementary Social Worker for Holiday gifts from various donors including the Rudolph, Walley and Wentland Families; \$2,500 From Aggressive Masonry to the Greenhouse in the form of an in-kind donation; \$5,000 from the FFA Alumni to the Greenhouse for equipment; \$3,000 to Post Prom from the Bowlus Fireman's relief foundation; and \$1,400 from Affinity Plus to pay for Special Education bowling trips. On Roll Call voting in favor: Martini, Christensen, Opatz, and Meier. Voting against: None. Motion carried unanimously. Chair Opatz thanked the Donors individually for their generosity and support!

Chair Opatz welcomed fellow board members & administration.

Citizen Participation: None

Superintendent Swenson reported the District is in the third year of participating in the Big Brother/Big Sister program and students Casey Knettel and Emily Ottman are our High School Big Brother and Sister of the Year; Declan is the Little Brother of the Year and Journey is the Little Sister of the year. He thanked all those involved in assisting with the collection of data for the Annual Civic Report. Mr. Swenson updated the Board on the Counselors Office location concerns of noise and privacy due to their close proximity to the Weight Room. A plan to move those offices over the summer is in the works along with plans to replace the flooring in the Weight Room. Lastly, He informed the Board, the 2025-26 and 2026-27 School Calendars are being created. The 2026-27 calendar is difficult with Labor Day being Sept. 7th, the latest it can be.

Student Representative Morgan Pellett reported student concerns have quieted down but are still on their radar realizing changes are being looked at for next school year regarding phones, open campus and a space for college-in-the-school students. Lastly, Ms. Pellett announced the Knowledge Bowl Team had their first meet today!

Mr. Cooper reported the staff is recharged after winter break, the holiday festivities were great and his highlight was playing Santa and handing out treats. Mr. Cooper updated the Board on the failure report that he diligently tracks and follows up with students and staff. The result is a decrease in failures to date. He is looking ahead and planning for the start of quarter three and student registration for next year's class schedules.

Elementary Principal Stang thanked teachers, students, and families for allowing us to have holiday concerts, games and celebrations. He is amazed with the generosity of the service organizations, individuals, and families with the support shown to the less fortunate families who were given donated gifts and groceries to make their holidays special. Mr. Stang is looking ahead to the end of quarter two report cards, testing, I love to read month, Magic Show, Science Exhibits, and Will Sings who will be performing to preschoolers. He informed the Board of the need to revisit RTI with Bus Drivers to help with handling discipline issues. Mr. Stang then shared his appreciation of the entire staff including administration, with high hopes that they stay with the District across the board.

The BSED meeting will be on the third Wednesday of the month.

Business Items:

Motion by Meier, second by Christensen, to approve the District Certified Staff Seniority list for 2024-2025 as presented. Motion carried. AIF.

Mr. Swenson informed the Board that the report shows the District is in compliance with Pay Equity. Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to approve the submission of the 2025 Pay Equity Report. Motion carried. AIF.

The final review meeting for the Strategic Plan was postponed. It will take place at the 2/5/2025 Board Work Session to be held at 5:00 PM and the Resolution to adopt will be at the regular February meeting.

Item 7.4 was deleted. The Work Session will be held as originally scheduled.

Personnel:

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to approve Medical Leave request for Jill Grebinoski from Feb. 5th through approximately March 19th, 2025. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to accept the Retirement Resignation from Nancy Ethen effective 5/30/2025, at the end of the 2024-25 school year. Motion carried. AIF. With many many thanks to Ms. Ethen for her 35 years with the District! The Board wished her good luck and much enjoyment.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to approve a request for a Five Year Leave of Absence from Dominic Ryan starting with the 2025-2026 school year. Motion carried. AIF. With many thanks to Mr. Ryan for his 26 years with the District and well wishes in his next chapter.

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to approve a lane change for Hunter Ahrens from BS20 to BS30 to be effective at the start of quarter 3 of the 2024-25 school year. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Christensen, second by Meier, to approve a lane change for Julia Pesta from BS10 to BS20 to be effective at the start of quarter 3 of the 2024-25 school year. Motion carried. AIF.

Motion by Martini, second by Christensen, to approve a lane change for Abby Myers from BS to BS10 to be effective at the start of quarter 3 of the 2024-25 school year. Motion carried. AIF.

A review of the upcoming meeting dates took place.

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

Meet & Confer Meeting February 19, 2025 @ 3:15 PM in the HS Board Room

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

Board Chair Opatz shared she took some time to walk through the building and commented how clean the whole entire school is and noticed all the great artwork displayed. She is very proud of the amazing job done by the custodians and respectfulness of the facilities shown by students and staff.

Adjourn

Agenda completed at 6:47 PM with a motion to adjourn by Christensen and a second by Martini. Motion carried. AIF.

Respectfully Submitted by
Clerk Patrick Meier