

Minutes for Feb 4, 2026  
School Board Work Session  
Holdingford Public School

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

Members present: Evelyn Martini, Ben Christensen, Nicole Burg, Lori Opatz, Rob Knettel, Sarah Hansen, Pat Meier and Student Board Member Afton Scegura. Absent: None

Also attending was Superintendent Chris Swenson, Secondary Principal Tom Cooper, Business Manager Garrity Gerber, Community Education Director Amanda McDonough, Administrative Assistant Linda Zapzalka, Mike Harding (Account Executive) and Dave Overbeek (Project Manager) from Johnson Controls.

Com. Ed. Director Amanda McDonough explained that she was approached by community members requesting the Fitness Center be open to the public. She started researching the feasibility, discussing options with colleagues involved with the Fitness Center and Com. Ed. Directors from local Districts that have Fitness Centers open to the public. Ms. McDonough conducted a survey with overwhelming support to have it open to the public. She entertained questions, informed the Board of some concerns from the local fitness business in town, however there are different types of equipment and the clientele seems to be different. She thanked the Board for their input.

The consensus of the Board was for Com. Ed. to work towards a final plan with detailed information.

Mr. Gerber opened discussion on the HVAC renovation project and introduced Mike Harding Dave Overbeek from Johnson Controls. Mike reviewed the flyer with talking points to help answer questions and asked if the Board would like anything added or changed. There were a few recommendations. After entertaining questions Dave explained the importance of the timeline to get the best pricing and to complete the HVAC renovation during the summer of 2027. The Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) study will be done first to provide our baseline performance against current code. Mr. Gerber has secured a grant to cover the cost of the study & report. A chart was reviewed of the age against the expected life expectancy of our boilers, HVAC units and exhaust fans being considered. The majority are past their life expectancy. Mr. Overbeek praised the upkeep of our equipment, kudos to the Custodial staff!

Mr. Gerber explained the funding source will be through facility maintenance bonds. He plans to meet with the facility committee when the study report is complete to finalize the recommendations to be brought back to the Board for approval. Information will be prepared to communicate the needs and financial impact to distinct residents.

Mr. Gerber presented information on the partnership project with the District and the Husker Athletic Booster Club to replace the Football/Track Scoreboard that has surpassed its life expectancy. He explained that the Booster Club is providing the funds through sponsorships and fundraising to cover the Daktronics Large LED Video Scoreboard, fiber and electrical infrastructure, and installation with a total cost of \$267,000. The Scoreboard will be located on the opposite end of the field for better access to existing fiber and electrical infrastructure. Consensus from the Board is to move forward with finalizing details and include a written agreement between the District and Booster Club. The proposal is to have it up and running for the fall of 2026.

Mr. Gerber presented the FY 25-26 Revised Budget Forecast and the assumptions to be considered when making decisions on the projected budget for FY 26-27. Without making any cuts the FY 26-27 budget projects \$336,000 in deficit spending.

Mr. Swenson opened discussion on proposed cuts for FY 26-27. He explained that all areas are being evaluated and he has met with the Principals to determine staffing needs for next school year and potential positions that may be cut. Mr. Swenson reminded the Board of the different silos of money and some of the money is restricted, meaning it can only be spent on certain things. For example maintenance facilities money can't be spent to pay a teacher salary. He asked the Board to reach out to him if they have questions or concerns.

Board Chair Lori Opatz opened discussion on the superintendent evaluation seminar that four of our Board members attended at the MSBA Conference. She recommends using one of the examples they received at the conference. The consensus is to use sample form #3 and to get the eval process started prior to the end of the school year. Ms. Opatz asked the Board to contact her with any input regarding the form.

The agenda was completed at 8:39 PM with a motion to adjourn by Christensen and a second by Burg. Motion carried. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Evelyn Martini, Clerk