

## Minutes for ISD #738 Holdingford Public School March 5, 2025 School Board Work Session

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: Ben Christensen, Nicole Burg, Lori Opatz, Ed Feia, Pat Meier, and Evelyn Martini. Absent: Rob Knettel.

Also attending was Superintendent Chris Swenson, Secondary Principal Tom Cooper, Business Manager Garrity Gerber and Administrative Assistant Linda Zapzalka.

Mr. Gerber presented a recap of where the budget is at and where he anticipates the District being at the end of the fiscal year. Revenue and expenditures are trending along as anticipated. The projected fund balance is 15.8% at the end of FY25.

He explained that for FY26 the general education aid will increase by 2.74% because new legislation locks in the inflationary increase. Mr. Gerber doesn't anticipate any other substantial increases in revenue. ADMs drive Gen Ed Revenue and after analyzing the enrollment numbers in K-12 for FY26 he is projecting a decrease of about 26 students.

Because it is a negotiating year Mr. Gerber has to budget an increase in salary and wages along with the cost increases in supplies and services; the 2.74% increase in revenue from the state doesn't come close to keeping up with the increasing costs.

Mr. Swenson started the conversation on cost saving measures, and reiterated that revenue is not and will not, moving forward keep up with inflation and the unfunded mandates such as unemployment and students going PSEO make things worse.

Discussion ensued on the tech levy that is in place and the fact that 75% of school districts in Minnesota have operating levies, Holdingford does not. Mr. Gerber showed some charts adding operating levy revenue of \$1,000, \$1,200 and \$1,400 per pupil unit. Knowing that this would have to be passed by the voters, it would increase property taxes and the time it takes to pass a referendum he presented some possible temporary adjustments to get through FY26. The Board and administrators did some brainstorming on cuts and raising fees.

It was decided that the facility committee will meet to continue the discussion and to come up with a plan to present to the Board.

The meeting continues with Mr. Swenson presented Policy 524.5 Personal Electronic Communication Devices and highlighted the section added that addresses cell phone exceptions for college class students. He continued with Policy 104 School District Mission Statement explaining that the newly adopted Mission Statement was inserted. Next Policy 506 Student Discipline was reviewed noting that MSBA added statute clarification on a School Resource Officer and this policy is one of three that have to be reviewed annually even if there are no changes.

Mr. Swenson moved on to revised Policy 507 Corporal Punishment And Prone Restraint which MSBA added reasonable force language and corrected a legal reference and Policy 509 Enrollment of Nonresident Students which MSBA removed School Readiness Plus and added School of Parents' Choice Law. Lastly he explained the last two policies 722 Public Data & Data Subject Requests and 806 Crisis Management Policy have no changes but must be reviewed annually.

Mr. Swenson discussed with the Board some temporary coverage options for while the Elementary Principal is out.

The agenda was completed at 7:58 PM with a motion to adjourn by Christensen, and a second by Martini. Motion carried. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Pat Meier, Clerk