

School District of Rhinelander - Board of Education
Employee Relations Committee
Monday, February 9, 2026

Minutes

The Employee Relations Committee meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 9, 2026, in the Professional Development Center, Rhinelander High School, 665 Coolidge Ave., Rhinelander, WI.

Duane Frey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Duane Frey, Judy Conlin, and Kurt Helke
Committee Members Absent: None

Others present at this meeting were Superintendent, Eric Burke; School Board President, Ron Counter; Director of Business Services, Bob Thom; Director of Human Resources, Michele Cornelius; Director of Instruction, Ryan Ourada; Director of Learning Support, Richard Gretzinger; Senior Employee Benefits Consultant for USI Insurance Services, Ken Zastrow, Secretary/Deputy Clerk, Shelley Anderson, and Heather Schaefer of the Northwoods Star Journal. Five other people were present.

Committee Chairperson Report

- No report was given.

Superintendent Report

- No report was given.

Citizens/Delegations

- No citizens/delegations wished to address the Committee.

Report, Discussion, and/or Action Topics

April 7, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by K. Helke.

Accept the minutes of April 7, 2025, as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion/Information only regarding Health Insurance

Ken Zastrow, Senior Employee Benefits Consultant for USI Insurance Services, presented a comprehensive review of the School District of Rhinelander's employee health insurance plans, including plan performance data and benchmarking comparisons to similar peer groups. The analysis highlighted the overall competitiveness of the District's plan design value (plan richness), employer-funded accounts (HSA/HRA contributions), employee payroll contributions, and total employee healthcare costs for both individual and family coverage. Financial modeling was also shared to illustrate potential cost savings associated with various deductible adjustments and possible migration to higher-deductible plan options.

The presentation concluded with a discussion of possible future considerations, including wellness incentives, additional HSA contribution strategies, spousal coverage incentives, evaluation of clinic utilization, and other approaches to balance long-term cost management with maintaining competitive employee benefits. Further discussion will continue at the March committee meeting.

Adjourn

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by K. Helke.

Move to adjourn.

Motion passed with a voice vote at 6:13 p.m.