

School District of Rhinelander
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, March 24, 2025

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, March 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Superior Diesel Advanced Learning Center at Rhinelander High School, 665 Coolidge Avenue, Rhinelander, WI.

Ronald Counter, Board President, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Judy Conlin, Mary Peterson, Mike Roberts, Doug Artus, Patricia Townsend, Ronald Lueneburg, Merlin Van Buren, and Ronald Counter

Board Members Absent: Duane Frey

Others present at this meeting were: Superintendent, Eric Burke; Director of Business Services, Robert Thom; Director of Human Resources, Michele Cornelius; Director of Learning Support, Richard Gretzinger; Director of Instruction, Ryan Ourada; Secretary/Deputy Clerk, Shelley Anderson, Shari Wendland, Elaine Rumney, Abby Beyerl, Paula Norman, and Heather Schaefer of the Northwoods Star Journal. Six other people were also present.

Declaration of Public Notice

President Counter indicated that the "Declaration of Public Notice" was printed along with the meeting agenda. This notice identifies the public places where the meeting agenda was posted and/or shared.

Citizens/Delegations

- Kurt Helke addressed the Board regarding Target-Based Grading.

Report Topics

President's Report

- President Ron Counter stated that agenda item g would not be discussed, as the Instruction and Accountability Committee had made no recommendation.
- Patricia Townsend, Doug Artus, and he attended the WASB Day at the Capitol in Madison, advocating for increased special education funding with legislators.

Vice-President's Report

- Vice-President Judy Conlin had no report.

Rhinelander Education Association Representatives Report(s)

- Shari Wendland, Rhinelander Education Association Representative, did a team-building exercise with the group.

- The Rhinelander Education Association is informing the public about the upcoming referendum, promoting voter participation, and collaborating with the League of Women Voters to address registration questions.

Referendum Construction Project Update on Budget Status and Funding

Summary of revenue and expenses through February 2025 provided by Robert Thom.

Revenue:

- **Interest:** \$553,517.21
- **Bond Proceeds:** \$26,000,000.00
- **Donations:** \$313,907.68
- **Total Revenue:** \$26,867,424.89

Expenses:

- **Construction Services:** \$1,274,325.06
- **Supplies:** \$17,148.94
- **Equipment:** \$138,634.00
- **Fees, Permits, etc.:** \$22,481.23
- **Total Expenses:** \$1,452,589.23

Construction will begin in April.

Committee Chair Reports

Instruction and Accountability Committee

- Judy Conlin, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee recommended agenda item f for full Board approval.
- Summarized the Achievement Gap Report (AGR) for attendees, which was previously presented at the Instruction and Accountability Committee meeting.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

- Mike Roberts, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee did not meet.
- Agenda item i was recommended for a second reading by the full Board last month.

Employee Relations Committee

- Ron Counter reported that the Committee did not meet.

Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- Mike Roberts, Committee Chair, reported that no meeting was held. The full Board will discuss agenda item k on project bids.

CESA 9 Representative Report

- Merlin Van Buren, the Board's Representative to CESA 9, reported that CESA 9 has been discussing the Wisconsin Virtual School and changes that are being made to meet the needs of the districts they serve.

Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics

Discussion and/or Action on Library Plan

- **Learner-Centered Literacy:** Fostering a culture that encourages reading and literacy among students.

- **Use of Space & Time:** Optimizing library environments and schedules to support diverse learning needs.
- **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment:** Integrating library resources into the educational framework to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.
- **Personalized Professional Learning:** Providing ongoing training for staff to stay current with educational and technological advancements.
- **Robust Infrastructure:** Ensuring that library facilities are equipped with up-to-date technology and resources.
- **Budget & Resources:** Allocating appropriate funding to maintain and improve library services.
- **Community Partnerships:** Collaborating with local organizations to enrich library offerings and student experiences.
- **Data & Privacy:** Upholding policies that protect student information and promote ethical use of data.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** Encouraging teamwork among library staff, educators, and administrators to achieve common goals.

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by M. Peterson.

Approve the School District of Rhinelander Library Media Plan.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Minutes of February 17, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by P. Townsend.

Approve the minutes of the February 17, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as printed.

M. Roberts abstained.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Review of February Budget Status Report

Robert Thom, Director of Business Services, shared the following information:

- Nothing to note, last year expenses at this time were roughly \$55.6 million, and this year they are \$54.2 million.
- Looking like everything is falling in line with the budget.

Consider the Approval of the February Payment of Claims and Contracted Services

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by D. Artus.

Consider the Approval of the February 2025 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$850,762.59 and the February 2025 Payment of Contracted Services in the amount of \$551,999.93 as printed.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Artus, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Consider Acceptance of Various Gifts/Donations Contributed to the District

MOTION: M. Peterson, seconded by P. Townsend.

Accept with sincere gratitude the following gifts/donations:

- Twenty sheets of 3' x 5' galvanized sheet metal valued at \$410.00 from Dahlquist Heating and Cooling

- \$100.00 from Margaret Barnes
- \$1,250.00 from Frasier's Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
- \$99,000.00 from the Hodag Schools Foundation
- Winter gloves, hats, crayons, Legos, pencils, erasers, and Band-Aids valued at \$200.00 from Kelly Wranosk
- \$100.00 from Terry Wagner
- \$700.00 from Terry Wagner, PGF Softball

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on High School Start College Now Requests for 2025 Fall Semester

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by D. Artus.

Board of Education approve an expenditure of up to \$43,000 for dual credit coursework in the 2025 fall semester through the Start College Now program at a technical college level.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Early College Credit for 2025 Fall Semester

No action taken – was not brought forward from the Committee.

Discussion and/or Action Concerning Tentative Offers for Employment

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by M. Roberts.

Authorize the Superintendent and/or his designee to offer tentative employment to qualified applicants, with final employment upon approval of the Board for the 2025-2026 school year.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Second Reading of New Policies Relating to Program, Support Staff, Property, and Operations

MOTION: D. Artus, seconded by M. Van Buren.

Board approve the first reading of :

- Policy 2440.01 - Summer or Interim School Attendance
- Policy 4124 - Notice of Reasonable Assurance of Employment
- Policy 7540.07 - District-Issued Student E-Mail Account
- Policy 8125 - Consultants
- Policy 8305 - Information Security
- Policy 8315 - Information Management

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Revision to Policy 6325 Procurement – Federal Grants/Funds

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by D. Artus.

Board approve the revision to policy 6325 Procurement - Federal Grants/Funds.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Part 3 Bids for Construction Project as a Whole

MOTION: D. Artus, seconded by M. Van Buren.

Board approve the Part 3 bid recommendations for the Rhinelander High School and James Williams Middle School remodel project as outlined by C.D. Smith.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Artus, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend,

M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None
Motion passed 8/0

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Eric Burke provided the following update to the board:

- Target-Based Grading (TBG)
 - Now in its fourth year. This has been a partnership of administration and teachers.
 - The grading system, as stated in policy, is an administrative decision.
 - Staff have been involved from the start and receive ongoing training and support.
 - TBG is regularly evaluated through staff surveys and opportunities for feedback from students and families.
- Referendum Update
 - Election Day: April 1
 - Referendum
 - Hundreds have attended to receive accurate information.
 - Department of Education
 - Impact on federal funding remains uncertain.
 - The District received \$2,454,277 in federal funds supporting:
 - School meals
 - Special education services
 - Learning and mental health supports
 - Educator professional learning
- School vouchers
 - Private schools using public funds are not held to the same standards as public schools, such as standardized testing and special education.
 - Voucher use reduces public school funding.
 - Private schools are not required to accept students with disabilities or behavior issues, unlike public schools.
- The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction project at Rhinelander High and James Williams Middle School is set for 4:00 p.m. on April 7, 2025, at Rhinelander High School.

Enter Closed Session

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by D. Artus.

Enter closed session pursuant to

- a. Wis. Stats. 19.85 (1) (c), to consider employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.
- b. Wis. Stats. 19.85 (1) (f) to consider financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations.

More specifically, to address matters related to staff contracts, including the hiring of staff, staff layoffs, and/or resignations, and retirements, as well as to review an agreement concerning a specific individual and/or contracted service and/or to consider the histories and/or disciplinary data of specific individuals.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Artus, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Closed Session

Closed-session topics were discussed.

Return to Open Session

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by D. Artus.

Return to open session.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Artus, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Open Session

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by M. Roberts.

Approve the hire of Amanda Olson and Kyle Barber as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by J. Conlin.

Approve the resignation of Mattia Beske and Lauren Rosendahl as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by P. Townsend.

Approve the resignation of Candice Cook as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by Doug Artus.

Approve the continuation of health insurance and dental insurance through 6/30/2025 as proposed, for Candice Cook.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Artus, R. Lueneburg., M. Van Buren,
R. Counter

Nay: P. Townsend

Motion passed 7/1

Adjournment

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by M. Roberts.

Move to adjourn.

Motion passed with a voice vote at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Peterson, Board of Education Clerk