

School District of Rhinelander
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, May 18, 2026

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Superior Diesel Advanced Learning Center at Rhinelander High School, 665 Coolidge Avenue, Rhinelander, WI.

Judy Conlin, Board Vice-President, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Judy Conlin, Mary Peterson, Mike Roberts, Duane Frey, Merlin Van Buren, Ronald Lueneburg, Patricia Townsend, and Kurt Helke.

Board Members Absent: Ronald Counter

Others present included Superintendent Eric Burke, Director of Business Services Bob Thom, Director of Instruction Ryan Ourada, Director of Learning Support Richard Gretzinger, and Director of Human Resources Michele Cornelius. Also, in attendance were Ken Zastrow, Senior Employee Benefits Consultant with USI Insurance Services, Secretary/Deputy Clerk Shelley Anderson, Heather Schaefer of the Northwoods Star Journal, and Ardith Carlton of the Northwoods River News. Eight other people also attended.

Declaration of Public Notice

Vice-President Conlin indicated that the 'Declaration of Public Notice' was printed with the meeting agenda. This notice identifies the public places where the meeting agenda was posted and/or shared.

Citizens/Delegations

- Ella Miljevich and Hayley Schiek spoke regarding the cell phone policy.
- Cere Yeager spoke regarding health insurance.

Report Topics/Updates

President's Report – No report/comments were given.

Vice-President's Report – Judy Conlin – No report/comments were given.

Referendum Construction Project Update on Budget Status and Funding – Bob Thom.

Director of Business Services Bob Thom reported that the Rhinelander High School woods classroom remodel will start before the end of the school year. Work will begin on the remaining areas once this school year is ended. The project remains on budget and on time. So far, \$22,000,000 of the \$27,000,000 has been spent with the remaining funds to be used for completion of the technical education areas and bathrooms.

Revenue:

- **Interest:** \$1,299,295.07
- **Bond Proceeds:** \$26,000,000.00
- **Donations:** \$513,257.68
- Total Revenue:** \$27,812,552.75

Expenses:

- **Construction Services:** \$21,571,318.22
- **Supplies:** \$283,869.28
- **Equipment:** \$715,778.89
- **Insurance:** \$34,899.00
- **Fees, Permits, etc.:** \$61,255.21
- Total Expenses:** \$22,667,120.60
- The \$26M in bond proceeds is invested in CDs and Treasury Bills with Ehlers Investment Services. The return is currently 3.16%.

Committee Chair Reports

Instruction and Accountability Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

Employee Relations Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

CESA 9 Representative Report

- Merlin Van Buren, the Board's representative to CESA 9, shared that the end-of-year dinner will be held in June. There is not a scheduled meeting in July and the organizational meeting will once again be held in August. Also, as stated on the agenda, the appointment of the 2026 CESA #9 board seat is up for appointment.

Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics

Discussion and/or Action on the District's Health Insurance Renewal for the 2026-2027 School Year. Information was presented by Ken Zastrow, Senior Employee Benefits Consultant with USI Insurance Services.

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by M. Van Buren.

Increase deductible for plan 1 from \$1,000/\$2,000 (single/family) to \$1,500/\$3,000 (single/family).

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke,
Nay: None
Motion passed 8/0.

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by D. Frey.
Increase the emergency room co-pay from \$150 to \$300 within both plans.

Aye: D. Frey, R. Lueneburg,
Nay: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, M. Van Buren, P. Townsend, K. Helke,
Motion failed 2/6

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by M. Van Buren.
Increase the specialist office co-pay from \$25 to \$60 within both plans.
Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke,
Nay: M. Roberts
Motion passed 7/1.

MOTION: P. Townsend, seconded by M. Van Buren.
Adjust full-time employee cost (including retirees) share from 4.53% to 8% for both plans.
Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke,
Nay: None
Motion passed 8/0

Consider Approval of the Minutes from the April 20, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by K. Helke.
Approve the minutes of the April 20, 2026, Regular Board Meeting as printed.
The motion passed with a voice vote.

Consider Approval of the Minutes from the May 11, 2026, Special Board Meeting/School Board Organizational Meeting.

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by K. Helke.
Approve the minutes of the May 11, 2026, Special Board Meeting/School Board Organizational Meeting as printed.
J. Conlin abstained.
The motion passed with a voice vote.

Consider the Approval of the April 2026 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$1,171,818.84 and the April 2026 Payment of Contracted Services in the Amount of \$556,325.55.

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by M. Van Buren.
Approve the April 2026 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$1,171,818.84 and the April 2026 Payment of Contracted Services in the Amount of \$556,325.55.
Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke,
Nay: None
Motion passed 8/0

Review of the April Budget Status Reports.

Director of Business Services Bob Thom reported that the District is currently on budget. If the Special Education Funding from the State comes in below 35%, the District will not meet budget. For the 2026-2027 budget, the District will plan a conservative 2% increase in funding.

Consider Acceptance of Various Gifts/Donations Contributed to the District.

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

Accept with sincere gratitude the following gifts/donations:

- \$100 from Nick Borski.
- \$25 from Cassie Denn.
- \$200 from Wendy Pradt Lougee.
- \$500 from Bob and Suzie Vig
- \$5,434 from the Rhinelander Community Foundation, Inc.
- \$6,800 from the Rhinelander Community Foundation, Inc.
- \$3,000 from the Rhinelander Community Foundation, Inc.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on the 2026-2027 Open Enrollment Applications for Student Enrollment Into and Out of the District.

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

Board approve the 'Full-Time Public-School Open Enrollment' applications for students requesting enrollment into and out of the School District of Rhinelander for the 2026-27 school year and authorize Superintendent Burke to deny any applications as he finds appropriate after review of non-resident student records.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Appointment of the 2026 CESA #9 Annual Convention Representative.

MOTION: K. Helke, seconded by M. Peterson.

Appoint Merlin Van Buren as the District's representative to the 2026 CESA 9 Annual Convention being held on Monday, August 3, 2026, at the CESA 9 office in Tomahawk, WI. The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on the 2026-2027 Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) Membership Renewal for Rhinelander High School.

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

Approve the Rhinelander High School Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association membership for the 2026-2027 school year.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Appointment of Administrator for Board Treasurer.

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

The Board of Education officially recognizes the Director of Business Services, Robert Thom, as the designated administrator as outlined in Bylaw 0152.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on 2026-2027 Breakfast and Lunch Prices.

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

The Board approve the increase of breakfast and lunch meals by \$0.10 for the 2026-27 school year.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke,

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Superintendent's Report – Eric Burke – School Year Updates and Celebrations

- The Northwoods Career & Collaborative Summit on May 13, 2026, at Nicolet Collage. The event included representatives from five area school districts and 12 employer partners. Discussions focused on expanding employers' perspective of students entering the workplace. Forty-five people attended the event.
- The 2026 RHS Scholarship was held yesterday. Over \$300,000 in scholarships were awarded to our incredible 2026 seniors. Congratulations to all of our students.
- The 2026 Rhinelander High School Graduation will be on Sunday, May31, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. in the Hodag Dome. It will also be live streamed for those who cannot attend in person.

Enter Closed Session

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

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.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Closed Session

The Board will convene in closed session to discuss staff hiring and resignations.

Return to Open Session

MOTION: D. Frey, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Roberts, D. Frey, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend, K. Helke

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Return to open session.

Open Session

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

Approve the hire of Heather Klimek, Aiden Belot, Lisa Chapman, and Sophia Cook as proposed.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

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

Approve the resignation of Rachel Riske, Maria Lokemoen, Jessica Scholtes, Mikaila Walker, Madison Schulz, Kari Roepke, and Jaelyn Brendemihl as proposed.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

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

Approve the resignation of Kyle Barber as proposed.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Adjournment

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

Move to adjourn.

The motion passed with a voice vote at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Peterson, Board of Education Clerk