

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, December 9, 2024

HLWW High School Media Center

The Monday, December 9, 2024 Regular School Board meeting of Independent School Dist. #2687 (Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted) was called to order at 6:31 pm. by Chairperson Heuer. After the pledge of allegiance, roll was taken with the following members present: Heuer, Koch, Borrell, Bravinder, Marketon, Mulvihill and Puncochar; Bravinder left at 7:13pm; Bravinder returned 8:20pm. Also present were Superintendent Nate Walbruch, Principals Stephanie Kuehn, Jim Schimelpfenig, and Jennifer Olson, and Board Secretary Marilyn Greeley.

(Item IV) Megan Tormanen, Business Manager, presented the truth in taxation hearing information. Chairperson Heuer asked if there were any public comments; there were none.

(Item V) Koch recommended approval of the agenda; Borrell seconded; passed unanimously.

(Item VI) Heuer asked if there were any questions or comments from visitors.

Scott Eastling expressed concern about the survey that was sent out to the community and the questions that were asked.

Mary Schlieff expressed concern about student IEP's and 504 plans, and there should be help available for students and parents until 3:15pm.

Heuer asked if there were any other questions or comments from visitors, there were none.

(Item VII) Superintendent Walbruch reviewed the grade level buildings proposal. The board members discussed the grade level proposal.

Bravinder left the meeting at 7:13pm

Heuer indicated the board can table this discussion until Bravinder returns or the board can vote on the proposal now. Walbruch indicated he would prefer to wait until all the board members are present.

Marketon motioned to hold voting on the grade level building proposal until Bravinder returned; Koch seconded; passed unanimously.

(Item VIII) Item will be discussed later in the meeting.

(Item IX) Borrell recommended approval of the consent agenda; Mulvihill seconded; passed unanimously.

The consent agenda included the November 12, 2024 Regular Board meeting minutes, November 25, 2024 Work Session meeting minutes, bills, monthly treasurer report, enrollment, the FMLA leave request for **Morgan Dockendorf** effective approximately March 31, 2025 and returning June 2, 2025 and the elementary laker newsletter.

(Item X, Subd. A) Heuer indicated the final levy limitation certification is for \$6,222,983.96

Borrell recommended approval of the final 2024 payable 2025 levy certification; Puncochar seconded; passed unanimously.

(Item X, Subd. B) Heuer indicated this is a yearly approval. Superintendent Walbruch indicated that the City of Howard Lake may change their polling location to the new library.

Koch recommended approving the resolution designating the Howard Lake City Hall, Waverly City Hall and Winsted City Hall as the school districts combined polling place; Marketon seconded; those in favor: Borrell, Koch, Puncochar, Mulvihill, Marketon and Heuer; opposed: none; passed unanimously.

(Item X, Subd. C) Curriculum Director, Stephanie Kuehn, reviewed and recommended the following new course proposals: advanced floral design, agribusiness, agronomy, competitive individual team sports, composition, digital game design, drawing & painting, food products, MN authors, MN wildlife, sculpture & ceramics II, and sports & event management.

Puncochar recommends approval of advanced floral design, agribusiness, agronomy, competitive individual team sports, composition, digital game design, drawing & painting, food products, MN authors, MN wildlife, sculpture & ceramics II, and sports & event management course proposals; Mulvihill seconded; passed unanimously.

(Item X, Subd. D) Marketon recommended approval of the overnight student trip for High School FFA students December 8-10, 2024 to St Cloud State University; and High School Speech students from January 31-February 1 2025, to Duluth; Borrell seconded; passed unanimously.

(Item X, Subd. E) Michelle Heuer reviewed the process she had used to assign committee assignments for 2025. Puncochar asked if Resource Training is an elected position, Heuer indicated she will check. Puncochar also indicated the buildings and grounds meeting are before each work session.

Puncochar recommended approval of the 2025 school board committee assignments; Borrell seconded; passed unanimously.

(Item X, Subd. F) Heuer read the donations.

Borrell recommended approval of the resolution accepting donations; Marketon seconded; those in favor: Marketon, Mulvihill, Puncochar, Koch, Borrell and Heuer; those opposed: none; passed unanimously.

(Item XI, Subd. A) Superintendent Walbruch reported:

- Winter activities have started.
- Community Ed hosted a craft fair that was well attended.
- There will be a holiday staff party on December 20th in the afternoon at Blue Note.

(Item XI, Subd. B) Principal Kuehn reported:

- We are working with advisory groups focusing on organizational and preparedness skills.

- We have received donations for the Laker Pantry and Laker Locker.
- We have had some vandalism in the locker room areas, and we are working on resolving this issue.
- Jeff Granrud was awarded the MREA Educator of Excellence.

Principal Schimelpfenig reported:

- The administration team will be attending a Wright County wide security training.
- December 19th we will host cookies and cocoa as a fundraiser for Food For Kidz.
- There is a middle school choir concert tomorrow and band concert next week.
- Thank you to Michelle and Paul for your years of service and all the work you have done.

Principal Olson reported:

- We had two classrooms apply and receive a Como Residency program grant. They will be working on plans with Como Park for a week-long experience.
- December's theme at the elementary is empathy. We are recognizing a need for support in our community especially during this holiday season.
- We hosted our annual VIP breakfasts, and we served about 950 students, families and staff.
- The elementary fundraiser was successful and will be used to continue to support schoolwide learning experiences.

(Item XI, Subd. C) Heuer indicated there is one report from the Title committee. Superintendent Walbruch reported Wright Tech will be working with an agency to move forward on their search for a new director.

(Item XI, Subd. D) Upcoming Board Member Event Appearances:

Calendar Link

Students of Excellence April 23, 2025-Resource Training @ 4:30pm
Staff holiday party at Blue Note December 20, 2024 3:30pm

(Item XII) Next Meeting Dates:

Regular Board Meeting-January 13, 2025 6:30 pm HLWW HS Media Center

Work Session Meeting- January 27, 2025 6:30 pm HLWW HS Media Center

(Item XIII) Items for next meeting

Regular Meeting:

- Bill Reader for January-Mulvihill
- New Board Members Oath of Office
- Organizational Meeting
- Department Report-Food Service
- Recognition's
- Leave/Resignations/Retirements
- Employment Recommendations
- Approve Second Reading of Policies
- Approve First Reading of Policies
- Approve Treasurer Report-January, April, July, October
- Monthly Budget Report

- Review/Approve 2025-26 School Calendar
- Approve Resolution for reduction in curriculum, programs, and staff

(Item XIV) Superintendent Walbruch thanked Heuer for her years of service.

Heuer indicated we need to go back to item VII and VIII.

Puncochar motioned to reopen item VII and VIII; Borrell seconded; Heuer reopened item VII and VIII.

(Item VII/VIII) Superintendent indicated his recommendation was to move forward with the grade level building proposal for the 2026-27 school year.

Puncochar indicated we have heard feedback from the community, staff and parents. Puncochar also indicated the reason we asked high school and middle school parent their opinions was because it is a district concern, not just an elementary concern. Puncochar said we want an equitable service for all students, and the line idea does not have that.

Mulvihill indicated she felt similar to Puncochar on why we asked middle and high school families. Mulvihill also indicated it creates an equitable experience at the grade level vs a line.

Borrell indicated that there is no easy decision and we've had a lot of input and it has been heard and recognized. However we still have to make a choice, said Borrell. Borrell said the information from other districts indicated that it brought classes together and this will help to become part of the Laker community.

Marketon indicated he has gone back and forth, and we want people to be happy here. Marketon indicated we are in the business of education, and if we can do it better, than that is the way to go.

Koch indicated she has some reservations about the proposal. Koch also indicated she likes keeping the elementary schools in the towns and prefers the PreK-4 grade model.

Heuer indicated that she has also wrestled with the decision. Heuer also said we do need to make a decision to move forward, and we don't take that decision lightly. However I do see the potential for positives, said Heuer.

Heuer asked if there is any additional discussion from the board.

Puncochar asked if we can put in a check point incase there is something that changes before we move on.

Marketon said we shouldn't leave it hanging, we need to have closure and make plans.

Walbruch indicated there are many different ways to go about this process. Walbruch reported in January 2026 we will have completed audit numbers. Walbruch indicated busing and staff will need to be determined for the next school year.

Puncochar clarified she didn't want to wait on the decision, but to put in a checkpoint to make sure things are able to move forward.

Marketon indicated he liked giving the extra year to implement.

Walbruch indicated the planning provides time for staff input and to feel empowered.

Heuer asked Jen Olson, Elementary Principal, and Jim Schimelpfenig, Middle School Principal if they had any points to share with the board.

Principal Olson indicated regardless of the decision it is an emotional one. Olson also reported, we are in a unique position that budget is driving the decision, however it is the best scenario for the situation we are in.

Principal Schimelpfenig indicated from the fifth grade prospective, it eliminates the rivalry between Winsted and Waverly. Schimelpfenig also stated the grade level proposal will allow collaboration to take place on an ongoing basis, which is a huge benefit.

Bravinder returned to the meeting at 8:20 pm.

Heuer updated Bravinder on the status of the meeting and discussion on the grade level building proposal.

Bravinder indicated there are advantages of knowing those kids from the beginning. Bravinder also indicated that listening to families that change will be difficult and we have to do something to mitigate costs or reduce costs, but there is building going on in the district and those students will help us. Bravinder reported if we are only doing it to save the budget, then can we look at other things such as not replacing teachers, and wage freezes. Bravinder also stated do we want to wait to make adjustments in 2025-26. Bravinder also thanked Superintendent Walbruch for all his work on this proposal. Bravinder indicated that he was just not ready to move on.

Borrell recommended approval of the moving to elementary grade level buildings proposal effective the 2026-27 school year; Marketon seconded; Heuer indicated she would take a voice vote because she thought there could be a split vote; those in favor: Marketon, Mulvihill, Puncochar, Borrell and Heuer; opposed: Koch and Bravinder; passed by majority.

Superintendent Walbruch thanked Bravinder for his years of service.

Heuer adjourned the meeting at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Koch, Clerk