GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Work Session – October 12, 2026

MINUTES

President Kuykendoll called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Superintendent Bill Barnes indicated the presence of ***Board Members***: Matt Oppenheim, Kali Stevens, Nicole Shannon, Denise DuFort, Coban Holmes and Ashley Kuykendoll. ***Board Members Absent:*** Toni Glasscoe. ***Central Office Administrators***: Bill Barnes, Steve Gabriel, Adrienne Barna, Wendy Seida, Bill Albrecht, Kelly Jones, Mark Deschaine and John Ellsworth. ***Others in Attendance:*** Kevin Garthe and Kim Manning.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Superintendent's Evaluation Update – Staff Relations

Superintendent Barnes presented the board with current initiative and data information surrounding the Staff Relations section of his evaluation including staff feedback, staff communication, personnel matters, delegation of duties, recruitment, labor relations (bargaining), and visibility in the district.

A discussion among the board covered data information that may be helpful in the future including but not limited to climate voice, retention data, staff feedback, exit surveys, stay surveys and possibly checking in with new staff who came from another district.

B. Welcome – Staff & Students from Lohne, German

The Board took a short recess at 6:19 p.m. to go over and welcome the staff and students visiting us from our sister school in Lohne, Germany.

The meeting reconvened at 6:33 p.m.

C. Portrait of a Learner

Superintendent Barnes led the board in the Portrait of a Learner activity that will help the district in its next phase of planning. He explained that he has conducted this activity with students, staff, and community members.

ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Holmes, seconded by Mr. Oppenheim for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the September 18, 2026 Meeting, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL OF TMP PROPOSAL FOR MORRIS & WACOUSTA COMMONS

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Ms. Shannon for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Proposal from TMP Architecture, Inc., as presented and authorize Superintendent Bill Barnes to execute the proposal on behalf of Grand Ledge Public Schools.

Dr. Barnes noted this is a culmination of finalizing items at Morris and working on the implementation of the culinary arts program at Wacousta Commons. He shared the district received a $400,000 grant from MDE through 61B funds to help offset the costs of the culinary arts program implementation. He further noted that this contract is not tied to the 2026 bond proposal in any way.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF THE PAYMENT OF SINKING FUND INVOICES

Motion by Mr. Oppenheim, seconded by Mr. Holmes for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the payment of Sinking Fund Invoices in the amount of $24,695.44, as presented.

Ms. Stevens noted this was reviewed by the Bond and Sinking Fund Committee and represents safety and security upgrades at Wacousta Commons.

The motion carried unanimously.

D. APPROVAL OF THE PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 1, SERIES 4 INVOICES

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Mrs. DuFort for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the payment of Proposal 1, Series 4 Bond Invoices in the amount of $623,000.95, as presented.

Ms. Stevens again noted this was reviewed by the Bond and Sinking Fund Committee and represents purchases of projector and screens district-wide, Chromebooks and iPads cases for Morris, electrical updates at Holbrook, Willow Ridge and the High School and some other support items for expanded learning spaces and shelving units at Morris.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF & BOARD

Director of Communications John Ellsworth commented he is proud to be a comet and shared numbers on why he is proud to be a comet: three years in a row Grand Ledge Public Schools has been voted the Lansing State Journal's community choice for public schools; families trust us with about 5,500 students, making us one of only 4 mid-Michigan schools at pre-pandemic enrollment; 175 is the number of years we have been teaching students; 7-0 GLHS varsity football team is undefeated and competing for a conference championship noting part of the reason he enjoys football is the community it brings together. In closing he noted Comet Country has a wonderful community and we have lots of great numbers to support that.

Executive Director of Technology Mark Deschaine reminded everyone that tickets for the upcoming production of Cinderella are on sale now and encouraged everyone to get their tickets.

Deputy Superintendent gave a shout out to Amy Firtl for her amazing work with the Lohne program noting this has been a part of this district for 40-years and commending the work that goes into making this program happen.

Dr. Barnes echoed what Dr. Gabriel said and thanking the board for taking a moment to go over and welcome our Lohne guests.

Trustee Oppenheim shared details from his most recent school building visit at Willow Ridge Elementary School. He commended the CKLA program and recognized the levels of classroom management that includes the hundred and thousands of decisions that are made every day by those professionals including before school, after school, and during the middle of the night. The daily operation of that work isn't fully engaged until you are doing it. In closing he commended the classroom management aspect.

Trustee Stevens gave a shout out to Holbrook teacher Kara Davis expressing her appreciation for her.

Trustee Shannon noted the Morris Ribbon Cutting on Friday Night was a great event with good turnout commenting the space is really impressing. She noted members of Dave and Betty Morris' family were able to join us for the event. In closing she commented teacher are enthusiastic and she is glad this if finally coming to fruition as it has been 25-years in the making.

Trustee Dufort commended the band invitational noting that while she was unable to attend this year, she has spoken with a lot of people who did attend and who really enjoyed the evening.

Secretary Holmes expressed he is really excited about the work we are doing at Morris and the culinary arts program expressing he thinks it is really important that we are allowing our students to engage in something that is not just a core academic program expressing he loves the career focused education and agriscience. In closing he noted he is excited about the production of Cinderella and shared you can buy your tickets at glmuscials.net.

President Kuykendoll Ashley gave a shout out to Audrey Vanderploeg on breaking the school diving record. Reminder of how tremendous so many of our students are so many things happening with our student athletes noting Katie Blue and former GLHS athlete Cooper Kim who could be making his way to the Olympics. In closing she shared highlights from attending the NAACP 60th Freedom Fund Dinner on Sunday highlighting the Educator of the Year, Doris Copedge. In closing she noted her heart is really full tonight as the district doing impressive things for our kids across the district.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Coban J. Holmes, Secretary

Attest:

Ashley A. Kuykendoll, President