GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Regular Meeting – October 26, 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, Toni Glasscoe and Ashley Kuykendoll. **Board Members Absent:** None. ***Central Office Administrators***: Bill Barnes, Steve Gabriel, Adrienne Barna, Bill Albrecht, Wendy Seida, Kelly Jones and John Ellsworth. ***Others in Attendance:*** Tim Totten, Tariq Jones, Heather Brown, Erin Laferier, John Piper and Kim Manning

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Ms. Shannon, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the October 26, 2026 Agenda Items, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Motion by Mr. Holmes, seconded by Mrs. DuFort for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the October 26, 2026 Consent Agenda Items, as presented.

Included on the Consent Agenda were the October 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes and he October 19, 2026 Meeting and Closed Session Minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

A. CAPITOL CONNECTIONS

Mr. Holmes advised he had nothing to report, but reminded everyone it is election season and early voting has already started. Election day is next Tuesday. He encouraged everyone to get informed on the issues and candidates.

President Kuykendoll reiterated Mr. Holmes comments encouraging everyone to get informed.

B. EATON RESA

Mrs. DuFort noted the RESA is looking at their next 5-year strategic plan with a focus on three goals: (1) People First with special education; (2) Learner Centered Services for general education; and (3) Impact and Collaboration for career and technical

education. She then shared information specific to GLPS included in the Annual Report. In closing she advised the RESA Board also reviewed their Audit.

C. GRAND LEDGE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Ms. Shannon commented this is a very exciting time of year for GLEF noting at their upcoming meeting on Wednesday they will review applications for their grants. This year the Foundation has implemented a "Big Impact" grant that will provide a larger potential funding source. She shared there were six applications for the big impact grant and another eight for the classic teacher grant. On Wednesday they will make decisions on the classic teacher grant applications and narrow down the big impact grants for a presentation to the board.

Dr. Gabriel noted all of these grants are made possible through the GLEF Fundraisers conducted throughout the year the biggest being the 5K Comet Chase and sharing they are looking into a bingo night and hosting a retro-tshirt sale.

Dr. Glasscoe commended Foundation President Erica Ledesma commenting she has done an excellent job in the evolution of the Foundation since she joined the committee.

Ms. Shannon echoed Dr. Glasscoe's comments on President Ledesma.

D. DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Ms. Stevens advised the October Meeting was cancelled and they will meet in early November.

Superintendent Barnes shared he has met with students who have expressed interest in serving on the Student Advisory Board. He will be sending out an email to the student to sign up. Selection will take place in December and they will join the Board in January 2027. He also reminded the Board that at the November meeting the Board will recognize our Veteran nominees noting letters went out to the five nominees and their nominator today.

E. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Holmes noted the October Governance Committee was cancelled the committee will meet in early November.

F. BOND UPDATE

Bond and Capital Projects Supervisor John Piper provided the board with updates on construction at the high school and the Delta Center gym. He shared the district is working with the Architects to add a barn, pavilion, greenhouse and possibly a sugar shack at the Morris School as well as preparing for the culinary program at Wacousta Commons this coming Fall.

G. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Community Bond Presentation

Dr. Barnes highlighted the 2026 bond proposal information that is shared on the district website at GLcomets.net/Bond2026. He noted information for the 2018 bond can still be found at the top of the Bond 2026 page. He highlighted the information shared on the webpage including his video series highlighting what will be taking place at each site, the impact on the current tax rate noting this is a zero mill increase, and the slide deck that includes maps of every project remarking the location of a project may change, but the project itself will not. The mailing that went to all voters within our district is on the site noting there were a couple of edits to correct some things brought to our attention after the mailing went out and the Frequently Asked Questions which continues to grow as any questions are brought forward. He thanked staff, district leaders, community members and students who have asked questions during his presentations at PTO, PTA and PTIA meetings and multiple community open houses. He commended Communications Director John Ellsworth for the amazing job he has done with the bond webpage and keeping him on track. In closing, Dr. Barnes reminded everyone that if they have questions about the bond proposal, they can email bond2026@glcomets.net or contact his office at 517-925-5401. Dr. Barnes closed his presentation by reviewing the specific plans for each building and site.

Dr. Glasscoe thanked Dr. Barnes for the information noting is very helpful for the board members when they are out in the community.

Mr. Holmes also thanked Dr. Barnes and everyone for this information.

President Kuykendoll reiterated this bond is a zero mill increase that will continue to support our students and families. She commended the transparency and accessibility of the information for anyone who is interested in learning more.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Totten addressed the board regarding the community bond stating his feels it is a disingenuous representation of student growth, the new grant for Wacousta Commons and stating the district doesn't need the Taj Mahal. He believes that the elimination of the Student Inclusion, Mental Health and Wellness Supervisor position is money that could be put back to the teachers and in the classroom.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF & BOARD

Communications Director John Ellsworth noted he tracks attendance in the area and whil most of mid-Michigan's schools are seeing a 7% drop in enrollment, only four districts are back to pre-pandemic enrollment including Grand Ledge Public Schools. He highlighted the awards the district receives and expressed he is excited about the student population growth.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gabriel shared there is lots of excitement surrounding the football team and the upcoming playoff game against Rockford on Friday. In addition, he shared the district's volleyball team had a 29-5 season and place 2nd in the conference, the boys tennis team finished 2nd in the conference with their coach being named regional coach of the year. Both of our cross-country teams, boys and girls participated in the Greater Lansing Invitational with the boys winning the invitation and going on to take the conference championship and the girls finishing 2nd. He congratulated student athlete Rylan Richie on his individual school record.

Superintendent Barnes reminded everyone we did add classrooms in the 2018 bond and they are all full. When you enter Willow Ridge, where we added two classroom, there are itinerant staff working in closets and the back of classrooms, there are teachers on carts at Holbrook even after converting the teacher lounge into a classroom because we are flat out of classroom. We look at growth, where that growth is happening and how that growth is happening. Continuing the focus on being good stewards of our community's tax dollars, and looking at the future and projecting out, people want to be a part of GLPS. We are very happy that this is a place people want to be.

Trustee Oppenheim thanked Dr. Barnes and staff for putting together the bond proposal and recognizing appropriate needs to be able to continue to do this with the current funding with a zero mill increase. He noted he is glad the proposal is here for us and here for our students.

Trustee Shannon pointed to the graphic that shows how GLPS stacks up to other districts around us and commenting this district asks less of its taxpayers than every other district around us, except Lansing Public Schools. She noted this proposal is asking for a place where teachers can go instead of being on a cart. She expressed her appreciation that people are asking questions and noting there has not been a question asked that hasn't been answered thoughtfully and in good faith. In closing she reminded everyone that Friday will be a busy day in Grand Ledge with the downtown trick or treating from 5-7 and then the football game. She encouraged everyone to consider taking a detour instead of coming through downtown. She also gave a shout out to the Fall Festival of Bands remarking it was tremendous and the kids were amazing.

Trustee DuFort shared information from the Annual Leadership Conference she recently attended and shared a letter the Eaton RESA Board received from a Grand Ledge student thanking them for the opportunity to attend the Washington Leadership Institute in Washington DC and highlighting what he gained from attending the Institute. She wanted to ensure that the board, students and community are aware of the many CTE opportunities that are available for students.

Secretary Holmes commented the wealth of opportunities available at GLPS is why his family chose to be here. He reminded everyone to get their tickets to Cinderella at glmusicals.net. Opening night is November 19th.

Vice President Dr. Glasscoe thanked Mrs. DuFort and stating she would love to have further conversation. She shared information from her recent trip to Ghana commenting she realized how fortunate we are in the USA pointing out different students have different needs and it is refreshing and encouraging, when possible, for us to make accommodations to assist in student success. To that point, she expressed her appreciation for Mr. Castillo who was an integral part in assisting her with events through LCC and noting there are many things that would not have taken place had it not been for his position as the district's Student Inclusion, Mental Health & Wellness Supervisor. She encouraged people to look at an article on moneyinc.com: The 30 Best School Districts in Michigan. She encouraged everyone to put the Michigan Heritage Rodeo on their calendar for November 20th – 22nd at the MSU Pavillion. She spoke regarding the Lohne program and spoke with Dr. Barnes regarding possibly doing a letter writing initiative with students from Ghana. In closing she remarked she is loving the Morris School and thanking everyone for their work that went into that school.

President Kuykendoll noted she wanted to be very clear that any bond money spent is allocated for construction projects and ensuring people understand that bond funds can NOT be used for payroll or benefits. She went on to remark that she encourages us to think globally before suggesting that one role can be eliminated to support funding additional teachers. She stated our teachers are wonderful, incredible individuals, and we are so fortunate in Grand Ledge. But like in any ecosystem, teachers alone are not the only things that provide our students an education. Our bus drivers, food service staff, paraprofessionals, secretaries, every role within this district contributes to keeping students safe, to keeping our district one that is well awarded and highly sought after and ultimately contributing to the future mission, vision and values of our district. She expressed that for her, personally, Mr. Castillo's position as the Student Inclusion, Mental Health and Wellness Supervisor is a role she very much supports stating she would be remiss if, as board president, she didn't commend Mr. Castillo for how often he is going above and beyond in his role stating she would not champion the elimination of one single position saying this one elimination is going to fund, or support, our teachers because that is not how budgeting works. She pointed out the board has a finance committee and there are several budgeting presentations throughout the year. While she is grateful for all the projects to date, and the Facilities Management Plan that makes us proactive in our approach in maintaining our facilities, she certainly would not call any of our facilities the Taj Mahol, but she is grateful for all the opportunities we have to offer and grateful for the support of our community that keeps us such a desirable district and a place where people can learn, do their best growth and enter world prepared to take on everything put before them.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Coban J. Holmes, Secretary

Attest:

Ashley A. Kuykendoll, President