

GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

August 12, 2024

MINUTES

President Shannon 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 Barnes indicated the presence of **Board Members**: Toni Glasscoe, Ben Cwayna, Jon Shiflett, Denise DuFort and Nicole Shannon. **Members Absent**: Ashley Kuykendoll and Jarrod Smith. **Central Office Administrators**: Bill Barnes, Steve Gabriel, Kelly Jones and John Ellsworth. **Others in Attendance**: Brenton Bell, Sharon Dukes, Katherine Bussard, Tim Totten, Amy Hirshchman, Therese Edgett, Kathryn Farr, Ryan Guimont, Jamie McKennon, Marcie Flood, Lana Gallagher, Jon Wise, Boomer Stevens, Sean Stevens, Jill Chapman, Emma Chapman, Sally Jo Nelton, Melissa Mazzola, Carlos Buttell, Amber Emerson, Mike Emerson, Brian Zakrzewski, Kim Laforet, Mark Laforet, John Oberst, Paige Duprest, Ethan Emerson, Aaron Buem, Miles Buttell, Kristi Zakrzewski, Josh Donnoe, Coban Holmes, Kali Stevens, Alysiah Wallace, Frank Belknap, Aaron Belknap, Jason Munsch, Susan Hazen, Nicole Halliwill, Jack Temsey, and Kim Manning

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. DuFort reviewed the rules for giving public comment.

Brenton Bell addressed the board expressing his opposition to the Title IX policy being considered by the board tonight.

Sally Jo Nelton addressed the board expressing his opposition to the Title IX policy being considered by the board tonight.

Kathryn Bussard addressed the board expressing his opposition to the Title IX policy being considered by the board tonight.

Tim Totten addressed the board expressing his opposition to the Title IX policy being considered by the board tonight.

Mark Laforet addressed the board expressing his opposition to the Title IX policy being considered by the board tonight.

Kim Laforet addressed the board expressing his opposition to the Title IX policy being considered by the board tonight.

Alysiah Wallace on behalf of the Holbrook PTO, addressed the board expressing Holbrook parents' and students' support of the hiring of Kathryn Farr as the new principal for Holbrook Elementary School and offering a heartfelt welcome to Ms. Farr.

Michael Emerson addressed the board on behalf of concerned swim parents and the use of the pool conference room at Beagle as the ISS room.

ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF BOARD POLICY PO 2264 – TITLE IX

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to recognize there is a compelling reason to adopt a new Title IX policy that addresses recent revisions to the Title IX regulations after one reading under Bylaw 0131.1 to ensure the Board's policies comply with 2024 Title IX regulations effective August 1, 2024.

Superintendent Barnes noted it is unfortunate there are misinterpretations on what this policy is for and clarified this policy is not enacting Title IX as that was already done at the Federal level. This policy is clarifying how the district will process or handle a Title IX complaint filed with the district. He noted unless there is an injunction telling Grand Ledge Public Schools not to adopt the new policy, we cannot not adopt the new policy. Approval of this policy keeps us in compliance with the new, federal Title IX. The concerns expressed are with the Title IX Policy at the federal level. The district did not enact Title IX, the federal government did. We are merely establishing the process for investigating a Title IX complaint that happened on, or after, August 1, 2024, as if required to keep us in compliance with Federal Law. If we do not pass this policy tonight, it puts Grand Ledge Public Schools in the very precarious position of being out of compliance with a federal requirement. He noted he wanted to be clear that as a public school district, it is our responsibility to ensure that all of our students, all of our families, all of our staff feel safe, secure and welcome. That is what we are doing tonight. We have consulted with the district's legal counsel, who is representing many school districts, and this is what the district must do to remain compliant with federal law.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve Board Policy PO 2264, Title IX – June 2024 New Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities, as presented.

President Shannon noted the Governance Committee, made up of Dr. Glasscoe, Mr. Cwayna and herself, met with Dr. Barnes and reviewed the policy in detail. She noted the committee went back to legal counsel and Neola for clarification on items and received their input when necessary. She explained all public school districts must follow state and federal laws. She remarked that each member serving on this board

swore an oath to uphold the law, whether we like it or not, it is the law and we, as a public school district, have to follow the law

President Shannon then reviewed the options the Governance Committee is recommending for Board Policy PO 2264. She noted a change on page 29 of the document that it is the recommendation of the Governance Committee to use Option 1, not Option 2.

A detailed discussion among the members noted this policy does not necessarily represent our individual values or what we individually believe. It is an operational policy that public institutions, public schools, are required to follow as set forth by the government. The district did not choose this. If the policy is not approved, the district will be required to muddle through the federal guidelines. Regardless of whether this is passed tonight or not, we are still required to follow the federal requirements. Questioning whether to table this item for tonight with Superintendent Barnes advising from his perspective, as Superintendent, does not believe is the wise decision noting we have to follow federal guidelines. Further discussion among the members noted people are allowed to disagree with the federal government, but we, as a public school district, cannot ignore federal requirements and it is disheartening to hear candidates who are running to be on this school board suggesting this board not follow the law. This is not the board saying it agrees with the revisions to Title IX, this is the board meeting its required oath to uphold all state and federal laws. The board does not have the option to ignore Title IX.

A friendly amendment to the motion was offered by President Shannon and seconded by Mr. Cwayna to amend the motion from as presented to with the noted correction selection Option 1 on Page 29 of the document with five days.

The friendly amendment was accepted by Mr. Shiflett and Dr. Glasscoe.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL OF JULY 8, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Meeting Minutes, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF TEACHER LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Mrs. DuFort for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Teacher Leaves of Absence for Marcelina Bedolla and Tara Barnhill, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. APPROVAL OF TEACHER HIRINGS

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Mr. Cwayna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the teacher hiring of Kenneth Bedwell, Tanya Cisneros, Chelsi Hillard, Rachelle Jagger, Michelle Oppenheim, Amanda Van Vliet and Angela Vereecke, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE HIRINGS

Motion by Dr. Glasscoe, seconded by Mr. Shiflett for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the administrative hiring of Kathryn Farr as Principal of Holbrook Elementary School and Abbie Burmeister as the District's Instructional Supervisor, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

F. PAYMENT OF SINKING FUND INVOICES

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Mr. Cwayna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Sinking Fund Invoices in the amount of \$271,691.47, as presented.

Mr. Shiflett advised this was reviewed by the Board Bond Committee and approved to be brought forward for the board's consideration. This represents work at Wacousta, Neff and asphalt sealing.

The motion carried unanimously.

G. PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 1, SERIES 2 BOND INVOICES

Motion by Dr. Glasscoe, seconded by Mr. Cwayna for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Proposal 1, Series 2 Bond Invoices in the amount of \$600,384.52, as presented.

Mr. Shiflett advised this was reviewed by the Board Bond Committee and approved to be brought forward for the board's consideration. This represents work at Wacousta.

The motion carried unanimously.

H. PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 1, SERIES 3 BOND INVOICES

Motion by Mr. Shiflett, seconded by Mrs. DuFort for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Proposal 1, Series 3 Bond Invoices in the amount of \$3,901,691.38, as presented.

Mr. Shiflett advised this was reviewed by the Board Bond Committee and approved to be brought forward for the board's consideration. This represents work at the High School, Neff and small amount for Wacousta.

The motion carried unanimously.

I. PAYMENT OF PROPOSAL 1, SERIES 4 BOND INVOICES

Motion by Mr. Cwayna, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Proposal 1, Series 4 Bond Invoices in the amount of \$555.00, as presented.

Mr. Shiflett advised this was reviewed by the Board Bond Committee and approved to be brought forward for the board's consideration. This represents architectural fees for GMB.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF & BOARD

Mr. Ellsworth shared news of Grand Ledge Public School and our Adventure Club were both winners in the Community Choice Awards noting this further represents the great work we are doing here and people recognize that.

Dr. Gabriel welcomed all the new hires noting he looks forward to spending time with them tomorrow during New Teacher Orientation.

Dr. Barnes congratulated the entire district and the Adventure Club staff and program on the Community Choice Award; shared we are on track with Wacousta noting we will welcome staff into the building this week and crediting Mr. Piper, Clark Construction and GMB for keeping everything on track; gearing up for the start of the 2024-2025 school year with new teacher orientation tomorrow and Wednesday, building office staff are back at work, staff opening day is next Wednesday and students return the following week. He shared he spoke with the swim folks and Mr. Emerson and advised his assistant will reach out to Mr. Emerson to schedule a time to meet to discuss further.

Dr. Glasscoe gave a shout out to the staff who coordinated the el row internship this summer noting it was a phenomenal opportunity for students and gave a shout out to Kelly Jones for her work in the hiring process, expressed her appreciation to Mr. Cwayna for the way he handled tonight's touch discussion and her perspective on Title IX.

Mr. Shiflett asked, and received confirmation that the district does have an employee assistance program and you can find it on our website at glcomets.net/HR. In closing he noted the only reason the board had a Series 4 bond bill tonight is because this board saved its' taxpayers \$1.7M by restructuring the sale of the bonds.

Mrs. DuFort thanked the Governance Committee for their work that was shared in the board packet, noting the board packet was shared publicly on Friday so the community had time to review it prior to the board's action tonight which made her comfortable in making the decision tonight, she welcomed our new staff members, good things happening here in Grand Ledge.

President Shannon thanked Mr. Cwayna and Dr. Glasscoe, as well as Dr. Barnes, so the Governance Committee could do the work needed for Title IX. She noted she is a swim parent and takes their concerns very seriously and she trusts that our administration and everybody involved will do what is best for kids. She acknowledged the conversation from the community tonight commenting she feels there is a lot of confusion, but recognizing this is a challenging topic commenting she is very proud that part of the district's strategic plan is that Grand Ledge Public School will create an inclusive learning environment where every person is valued, where Comets welcome all. She remarked she felt there were some discouraging and concerning things said tonight but she is proud this is a district that welcomes all kids and we are going to serve everyone equally.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:



Ashley Kuykendoll, Secretary



Nicole Shannon, President