

## **Eau Claire School Board Minutes**

**Monday, December 2, 2019**

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### **Members present**

Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

### **CALL TO ORDER - 5:30 p.m.**

President Eric Torres called the meeting to order at 5:35pm. Board Clerk Laurie Klinkhammer confirmed that the meeting had been properly noticed and was in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. A roll call was conducted to verify quorum.

Motion by Laurie Klinkhammer, second by Tim Nordin to adjourn to Closed Session pursuant to 19.85(1)(e);Deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session and 19.85(1)(c);Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.

Motion carried.

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

### **OPEN SESSION - 7:00 p.m.**

President Torres called for the Board to reconvene in Open Session at 7:04pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Northwoods Elementary student Arianna H.

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Lanette Hesse expressed concern about the absence of outdoor running water and restrooms at Memorial High School which she believes poses a hazard for students, staff, and guests and prevents Memorial from hosting certain events.

### **BOARD/ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

#### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Hardebeck reviewed the School Board Calendar of Upcoming Events. She recognized the North High School Boys Hockey Team who recently completed a fundraiser and donated \$1,300 to Feed My People Food Bank. She recognized Student Representative Morgan Priem who was WQOW-18's

Student of the Month for November. Dr. Hardebeck acknowledged National Special Education Day, and recognized Mandy Van Vleet, Director of Special Education and the special education staff of the ECASD. Dr. Hardebeck also recognized Todd Johnson, Montessori Principal who will be retiring at the end of the 2019-20 school year and thanked him for his service.

### **Board President's Report**

President Torres said the Superintendent's position description is complete. Information is available at [www.ecasd.us/SuperintendentSearch](http://www.ecasd.us/SuperintendentSearch) for all to learn more about the application and process. The Board has begun accepting applications.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

#### **Student Representative Report**

Morgan Priem from Memorial gave a sports update for the kickoff of winter sports. She recognized the MHS Teen Literacy Club who is holding a book sale. Orchestra is having their annual cookie walk and carnival on December 14. Admission is free and open to all.

### **OTHER REPORTS**

#### **School Board Committee Reports**

Learning Environments and Partnerships Committee, Budget Development Committee, and Demographic Trends and Facilities Planning Committee all had not met since the last Board meeting.

Policy & Governance met that morning and approved two additional policy revisions to bring forward on December 16.

### **Legislative Update**

The State Legislature is on a break.

### **CONSENT RESOLUTION AGENDA**

Motion by Tim Nordin, second by Aaron Harder to approve the following consent resolution agenda items.

- Minutes of November 18, 2019
- Human Resources - Employment Report
- Summer School Agreement
- Shared Services Agreement Between the City of Eau Claire and the Eau Claire Area School District

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

## **INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED RESOLUTION(S)**

### **School Board Member Applications, Interviews & Appointment**

Dr. Torres thanked everyone for their applications. Dr. Hardebeck read the policy language regarding the voting process. Board Secretary Meta Miske conducted a roll call of applicants to verify attendance. Tom Meyer and Michelle Vorpahl withdrew their applications. Each applicant drew a number to determine the order of statements to the Board.

Tyler Bahr is originally from Chippewa Falls and works in engineering. He believes his skills in critical thinking, conscious decision making, customer service, and budget management would help him contribute to the Board. He would like to join the Board to improve the school system his children are a part of.

Karla Svedarksy is an ECASD parent who recently moved to Eau Claire. She was previously vice-president of School Board in Eleva-Strum. She believes her previous board experience with policies, WASB, and a superintendent search would help contribute to the Board.

Erica Schorbahn holds a leadership role in the financial industry. She said culture and continuous improvement are vital and she would like to help with that. She has experience making tough decisions, working with CVTC in their "money matters" program, and serving on an advisory board for a local medical center which makes her well-suited to the position.

Kerrie Ackerson works at CESA 10. She was confident the Board would make a great decision no matter whom they select and believes this is an opportunity to look at their makeup and fill areas that may be underrepresented.

Phil Lyons is the vice chancellor for administration at UW-Stout and has 30 years of experience with institutions of higher education. For three years he has been a member and is now chair of the Demographic Trends & Facilities Planning Committee. He hopes the Board will find a candidate who will devote the time and energy needed.

Lisa Pronchinske grew up outside Milwaukee, lived in Chicago, moved to Eau Claire to slow down a bit. She has young children and therefore many years ahead with the District. She is motivated to make school the best experience possible for all children and is ready to dedicate 100% toward the position.

Sarah McCracken has spent many years as a public defender primarily in juvenile justice and has served on the McKinley Governance Board. She is

passionate about finding unique styles of learning to help all students succeed. She has a lifelong love of learning and understands the impact a positive early childhood education can have.

Chris Bell said he doesn't intend to run for election in the spring. He thinks he can provide a service in the interim and allow the voters make their own decision in the spring. He said he doesn't have a political position and is ready to help with the daily tasks of the position. He is a Firefighter/Paramedic and believes not all students will or need to go to college.

Erica Christensen is a Sam Davey parent, member of the PTA and member of Family Advisory Council. She has dedicated time to understanding the unique and challenging things the District faces by engaging in conversations with administration and others. She is interested in being involved in selecting a new superintendent and would like to be part of a board that leads from a creative point of view and with fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Karen Peikert is a parent who has worked with PTA's, Booster Clubs, and the Special Education program. She is interested in the interim position because the decisions in the next several months have long-term implications for the District, specifically the hiring of a new Superintendent. She would like to ensure the new Superintendent emphasizes inclusion, allows teachers greater autonomy and creativity, and values transparency.

Discussion occurred regarding whether to ask questions or conduct a first vote. Agreement to cast a vote and ask questions of remaining candidates. Ms. Abby Johnson passed out ballots, collected ballots, and read the votes aloud.

- Commissioner Klinkhammer - Phil Lyons
- Commissioner Harder - Phil Lyons
- Commissioner Vue - Chris Bell
- Commissioner Bica - Sarah McCracken
- Commissioner Nordin - Karen Peikert
- Commissioner Torres - Phil Lyons

President Torres invited questions from the Board for the remaining candidates.

Commissioner Bica asked the candidates to think of an issue or topic that was the focus of a Board meeting this semester. What are the sources they'd gather to gain better understanding of the issue and how would their expertise have contributed to the decision?

Phil Lyons recalled the consideration of a donation for Memorial High School athletic upgrades and time pressures. He believes the Board did the right thing by not accepting the pressure, by considering equity, maintenance costs, and implication on athletics. He would've pulled in his own experience in dealing with athletics and expenses to contribute to the decision making.

Sarah McCracken has followed the boundary changes closely. She's been reading Board minutes, talking with other parents, following demographic and population trends within the community. She would've used experience from her career to step back, rationalize, and remove her personal feelings to make the best decision. She prides herself on being levelheaded and seeing issues from multiple perspectives.

Chris Bell said the issue he noticed was the decision to sell Little Red. He knows that there was a lot of discussion and believes the decision to sell and make it a trade school was an excellent decision. He likes looking outside the box to support education. He appreciates that the Board doesn't stop educating students when they graduate and prepares them for post-secondary success.

Karen Peikert said she would take the opposite approach to Little Red. She thinks the Board took a public relation hit by having most discussions in closed session and not making any announcement until there would be a vote on the sale. She felt it could've been handled better and the community could've had more timely information. She expressed concern that the decision being followed by referendum discussions created a lost opportunity to build bridges with the community and voters. She doesn't oppose the decision, just the way it was handled.

President Torres called for a second vote. Ms. Johnson passed out ballots, collected ballots, and read the votes aloud.

- Commissioner Bica - Sarah McCracken
- Commissioner Nordin - Karen Peikert
- Commissioner Klinkhammer - Phil Lyons
- Commissioner Harder - Phil Lyons
- Commissioner Torres - Phil Lyons
- Commissioner Vue - Phil Lyons

Mr. Phil Lyons received the majority vote with four votes. It was announced that Mr. Lyons would take office on December 4. President Torres thanked all the applicants.

## **Election of Treasurer**

President Torres invited a nomination to fill the position of Treasurer which was vacated by Joe Luginbill.

Motion by Laurie Klinkhammer, second by Charles Vue, for Commissioner Harder to fill the role of Treasurer.

Commissioner Harder agreed to accept the role. There were no other nominations.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

## **ADJOURN TO COMMITTEE**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS/ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **Chippewa Valley Montessori Charter School Update and Contract Review**

Principal Todd Johnson was present to give a report on the highlights at Montessori and answer any questions about the Montessori contract.

Mr. Johnson reviewed academic highlights. He said ForwardExam scores increased in the last three years in all areas. He appreciates being able utilize District resources while still being a unique school.

The number of special education students at Montessori has increased. They are seeing improvements in ELA and Math scores for those students are working to keep students in the classroom and only pull out when necessary. They've increased enrollment of non-white students and are working to ensure they are responding to cultural differences, so all children are improving and growing.

One area for improvement is diversity as they try to match the District's overall diversity. Mr. Johnson shared strategies they've tried, and work they are doing to increase diversity in both staff and students. They have increased staff diversity over the last two years by adding two adult staff members of diverse background. They believe one barrier to increasing diversity is the lottery system and 4K bussing.

Another area for improvement is the growth scores. The growth of their children isn't coming out in the Forward Exam even though in other assessments such as AIM and STAR, students perform much better.

Points of interest were shared and it was noted that last year Montessori

received a \$100,000 grant for teacher certification and training for aides.

Mr. Johnson discussed 4K bussing. The Board is not required to provide bussing to charter schools so they are thankful to have K-5 bussing. They believe bussing for 4K is a barrier because 4K students are given priority to K at Montessori, which leaves fewer seats remaining in the lottery. There are a few other adjustments in the contract regarding the length of time for teachers and principal to obtain Montessori certification since there's a new, closer opportunity at UW-River Falls for staff to obtain the certification.

Mr. Johnson then invited questions from the Board.

Commissioner Vue commended Mr. Johnson for the academic achievement and the climate of the school. He said the diversity is not representative of the District and asked them to work toward 17% students of color.

Commissioner Bica asked for additional information. In the Charter School Agreement, the Board can ask for the Diversity Plan. She would like that plan and any data collection around the plan. She would like data on the Forward Exam and a comparison to other elementary schools in the District. She would like the data disaggregated by race, class, and gender and would like data of any significant change.

Commissioner Bica asked about 4K bussing and to what extent Montessori has been drawing students from their own neighborhood who would be walkers/bikers. She asked for clarification that priority is given to students already attending the school and if that means 4K students are given priority to 5K. Mr. Johnson said yes, and state statute allows them to give 4K priority going into 5K. Commissioner Bica asked how he would disentangle the need for bussing for 4K from the priority given for those students to go in to 5K.

Commissioner Harder thanked Mr. Johnson for the report. He is a Montessori parent who has enjoyed the experience and with his wife serving on the Montessori Governance Board he's had a closer look at the bussing issue than most. The Governance Board believes not providing bussing in 4K creates a barrier going in to 5K.

President Torres has expressed concern to the Governance Board regarding the lack of diversity in the school and within the Governance Board and has made suggestions. He is concerned with the performance of economically disadvantaged children. In both ELA and Math, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students below the proficient level is very high, ranging from 40-60% plus. He asked what strategies have been

implemented to address the issue and what have been the results.

President Torres asked Ms. Abby Johnson for transportation information. Ms. Johnson said the District provides 4K transportation to Prairie Ridge only. There are some 4K students at Montessori who are receiving bussing, either because they live by a bus stop going to Montessori or because they have a sibling attending there. She worked with Student-Transit to review the budget impact of 4K transportation for Montessori. The mid-day transportation alone would cost approximately \$52,000/year. Morning and afternoon transportation costs are harder to estimate.

President Torres asked about the extended time for training to four years which could mean there is a full cohort of non-certified Montessori teachers. Mr. Johnson said they added a clause that a teacher must start the training within their first year of being hired. It's a Master's program which for a new teacher might be immediately after completing a bachelor's degree and can be financially difficult. The hiring committee would always prefer to hire a teacher with full certification.

Commissioner Klinkhammer thanked Mr. Johnson for his service. She asked for clarification on the grant and how it's divided. Mr. Johnson said a small part paid for Montessori's six general school assistants to go to a Montessori training workshop. The majority went toward teacher education. They allowed everyone in the ECASD to apply for the grant and held interviews to pay for the program at River Falls. Commissioner Klinkhammer why they opened it up for all in the District. Mr. Johnson said they had only one teacher at Montessori who needed it, so they opened it up to others to obtain a Montessori certificate. They can't hold on to it for future Montessori hires.

### **Five-year Capital Selected Projects**

Mr. Darryl Petersen gave the proposed 2021-21 Capital Improvement Plan. There is \$1.6M allocated to District facility needs. When creating the plan they look at key areas including facility exteriors, interiors, and HVAC/plumbing/electrical needs.

Mr. Petersen reviewed the proposed projects. He noted the roof over the Tech Ed section of Memorial is not the highest priority and may be delayed if the solar panel project is not approved. If the solar panels are approved, they want to make sure the solar panels aren't disturbed for 25 years and would therefore replace the roof a bit earlier than necessary.

Commissioner Bica asked if the Daktronics accessibility issue is at Memorial only? Mr. Petersen said yes because of its location in the balcony area as



opposed to North on the main floor. Commissioner Bica asked why Daktronics is one of the items in the budget for North. Ms. Koller said the issue at North is curricular accessibility because during Phy Ed classes the technology students cannot access the Daktronics station. Mr. Petersen said there are a few options to move the North Daktronics station to provide curricular accessibility but they haven't finalized where it would be moved and area waiting further information from the staff at North.

Commissioner Bica asked about the facility exterior at Memorial and the shed/restrooms. Mr. Petersen said there's a group working to ensure that a restroom added to the current shed won't impede other projects to the area. Ms. Koller said there are two things they would like information on before deciding about the shed expansion: 1) the footprint of the track and fence expansion, and 2) possible donation from a past donor group so that any work on the shed isn't "undone" by future work.

#### **REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

#### **ADJOURN**

Motion by Charles Vue, second by Aaron Harder, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Aaron Harder, Laurie Klinkhammer, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.