

--UNOFFICIAL MINUTES--
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE MENOMONIE AREA
MENOMONIE, WISCONSIN
AUGUST 26, 2024

The budget hearing and annual meeting of the School District of the Menomonie Area were held in the Tiered Lecture Hall at Menomonie High School, 1715 Fifth Street West, in Menomonie, Wisconsin, on Monday, August 26, 2024.

Board members in attendance were Rachel Henderson, Amy Riddle-Swanson, Amber Kersting, Abe Smith, Dominique Stewart, Angela Wolf, Michelle Dupree, Emily Hines, and Dale Dahlke. Directors and administrators in attendance were Dr. Joe Zydowsky, Tonia Kowieski, Samantha Hoyt, Diane Schofield, Brian Seguin, Stacy Lee, Keila Drout, Shannon Branch, Michael Kennedy, Casey Drake, Mark Anderson, and Leah Theder. Electors and others registering attendance included Margaret Breisch, Mary Oehler, Amy Zuber-Seguin, and Kathy Weber. Recording Secretary Jenny Mikesell and videographer Steve Hanson were also present.

School board president Rachel Henderson convened the annual meeting and budget hearing at 6:00 p.m. Abe Smith nominated Rachel Henderson as chairperson of the meeting; Michelle Dupree seconded the nomination. Henderson was named chairperson by voice vote.

Chairperson Henderson appointed Dominique Stewart as parliamentarian, with Samantha Hoyt and Tonia Kowieski as tellers. Henderson recognized current and past board members and thanked them for their hard work and dedication.

The August 21, 2023, annual meeting minutes were presented for review.

Leah Theder, Director of Business Services, presented the Treasurer's Report and Audit Summary on page six of the annual meeting booklet.

District Administrator Joe Zydowsky welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced and recognized the administrative team, board members, and district staff. District facilities included Menomonie High School, Menomonie Middle School, Downsville Elementary School, Knapp Elementary School, Oaklawn Elementary School, River Heights Elementary School, Wakanda Elementary School, the Administrative Service Center, and the Bjornson Environmental Center. The district's current demographics are as follows: a student population of 3,241 students, 257 teachers (4K-12), 75 paraeducators, 109 support staff personnel, 1 district administrator, one assistant superintendent, eight directors, seven principals, and three assistant principals.

The 2023-24 school year highlights included: the SDMA met expectations on the 2023 state accountability report card; staff members further developed the multi-level systems of support plan and made significant progress toward developing trusting relationships with students; professional development opportunities were provided for faculty and staff across the district; changes were made to the district's health insurance plan design and a high deductible plan was added to better control costs; renovations were completed at the MHS pool to replace original components and reinforce the structure; and after a failed referendum in February, nearly \$2 million was cut from the preliminary budget for 2024-25.

Major impacts/initiatives for 2024-2025 include continued work on the SDMA strategic plan, which provides for career, college, and life-ready graduates; student social and emotional wellness; our talented workforce; and parent and community partnerships. The District's work plan includes Goals for new Act 20 and Title IX mandates. We are onboarding a new business manager, transitioning readiness & school safety grants, and advocating for the next state budget. Strategic planning for the future of the SDMA and building a preliminary budget for 2025-26 that balances community expectations with available resources.

Leah Theder, Director of Business Services, reported that the total budget, which is expected to be \$64.3 million, includes several major funding categories, and every expenditure in the SDMA is recorded within a specific fund. Property values for the district over recent years have increased. For budgeting purposes the equalized value of property estimate is 3% for 24-25. The estimated mill rate is \$5.88; a projected increase of \$0.19 from last year. This is likely to decrease based on state aid certification and property valuation.

Theder shared the notable budget changes for 2024-25, which include the following additions: revenue cap increase at +\$325, salary increase of 4.12%, health insurance increase of 0%, and staffing plan increases. Reductions include ESSER I, II, and III grants, elimination of Fund 46 Capital Projects Transfers, and contingency. The elimination of technology support coaches, the French program, the budget reduction for substitute employees, health insurance, utilities, youth service officers, and transportation reflect recent trends and a slight decrease in Wisconsin virtual school tuition based on enrollment.

Theder reported a projected 3.94% decrease in revenues and a .79% increase in expenses from 2023-24. Operating expenses for 2024-25 break down as follows: 77%-salaries and benefits (includes transfers for special education), 13%-purchased services/communication, 6%-transportation, 0%-equipment; 3%-supplies, books, software; and 1%-miscellaneous expenses. A look at operating revenues for 2024-25 shows that 60% is from state equalization and pupil aid, 31% from local property taxes, 3% from federal grants, 2% from other state aids and grants, and 4% from miscellaneous revenues.

The cost of private school vouchers is added to the SDMA tax levy each year, and state aid is reduced by the amount of the additional tax levy. The estimated voucher impact in SDMA is \$722,281 in 2024-25. For budget purposes, the voucher impact remains the same as the previous year. The actual is based on the 3rd Friday Count in September.

Theder reported that the Fund 10 balance is sufficient for operational and cash flow needs, eliminating the need for short-term borrowing. The general fund balance is currently projected to decrease in 2024-25. The 2023-2024 Fund 46 balance is \$8,655,840 unaudited, with no contribution in 2024-25. The school district has reduced the OPEB debt and transitioned from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan. The 2023 actuarial study indicated that savings in the trust surpassed anticipated benefits accrued by SDMA retirees, so no additional contribution was needed in 2023-24. The 2024 actuarial study will be released this fall. No additional contribution to Fund 73 was needed in 2023-24. The Fund 80 tax levy is projected to remain the same for 2024-25. Fund 80 had a deficit of \$697.80 in 2023-24 (unaudited).

The SDMA has a long history of balancing the budget and planning for the future. The enrollment has declined in the SDMA and will impact the budget if enrollment continues to decline. Costs for desired programming and mandated services are increasing, outpacing new revenue. The SDMA is working through a fiscal cliff created by discontinued pandemic funding and high inflation. Solutions include budget cuts, deferring expenses (capital maintenance & technology), reducing programming (staffing), spending fund balance, or additional revenue (referendum).

Margaret Breisch made a motion, seconded by Amy Zuber-Seguin, that \$17,948,927 be levied upon the taxable property of the School District of the Menomonie Area for the operation of district schools and discharge of long-term debt obligations for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Margaret Breisch made a motion, seconded by Abe Smith that the members of the Board of Education be compensated with annual salaries as follows: Board President—\$1,200, and all other members—\$1000 each. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Brian Seguin made a motion, seconded by Mary Oehler, that members of the Board of Education be compensated for actual and necessary travel expenses incurred in performing duties. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Tonia Kowieski made a motion, seconded by Sam Hoyt, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. The motion passed with a voice vote.

/s/ Dominique Stewart

Dominique Stewart

jm