

# NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## School Board Minutes

February 22, 2021

Northfield District Office Boardroom

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Julie Pritchard called the Regular meeting of the Northfield Board of Education of Independent School District 659 to order at 7:00 p.m. Present: Baraniak, Butler, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. In accordance with Governor Walz's Stay Safe Plan, this meeting was set up in accordance with the plan's social distancing guidelines. In addition, all those present wore face coverings the duration of the meeting. Present at this meeting was Dr. Matt Hillmann, Superintendent and Anita Aase, Executive Administrative Assistant. Present via video conference was Hope Langston, Director of Instructional Services; Erin Bailey, Director of Community Education; and Val Mertesdorf, Director of Finance. This meeting was live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted to the school district website.

II. Agenda Approval/Table File

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board approved the agenda.

III. Public Comment

To accommodate the public comment portion of our meeting, members of the public were invited via the school district website to submit feedback to the Board via email by 5:00 p.m. on February 22, 2021. All submissions that followed the district policy regarding public comment were read by Chair Pritchard. There were public comments from Kathryn Clements, Northfield; Matthew Rohn, 908 West 1st Street, Northfield; Sujata Owens, 25 Jefferson Lane, Northfield regarding the renaming of Sibley Elementary School.

IV. Announcements and Recognitions

- The Minnesota School Boards Association has set February 22-26 as Minnesota School Board Recognition Week. Strong schools help build strong communities and our Board devotes countless hours to making sure our schools are helping every child learn at a higher level.
- The American Association of School Administrators is celebrating public schools during Public Schools Week, February 22-26, 2021.

V. Items for Discussion and Reports

A. Portage Beyond the Pandemic

Director Langston discussed the District's application process for designation as an official online learning provider through the Minnesota Department of Education. We are engaging with an internal planning team and with families that have volunteered to participate in our focus groups. Program evaluation is focused on continuous improvement which includes strategic planning, data driven decision making, advancing the program mission and vision, and internal and external evaluation of practices. The data will be utilized to evaluate the online program, services for various stakeholders, and operational planning.

B. Proposed 2021-2022 Debt Service Fund Budget

Director Mertesdorf presented the 2021-2022 Debt Service Fund Budget. State statute requires the District to ask the voters for authority to bond. This means that property taxes are the main source of revenue for the debt service fund. The majority of our bonds are voter approved and we are required by statute to levy 105% of our debt service payments annually. This is part of our levy certification process we do each fall. The expenditures of the debt service fund are restricted for principal and interest payments as well as any potential service fees we might incur from the debt. The revised budget for 2020-21 includes \$10,760,000 in the other sources category. In November, the district sold refunding bonds to refund our 2011A and 2012A bonds. This resulted in saving the taxpayers about \$367,000. The revenue for 2021-22 is consistent with prior years. We are expecting less interest revenue in the coming year. The Board will be asked to adopt the budget at the May 10, 2021 Board meeting.

C. Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Ten Year Plan

Director Mertesdorf reviewed the Long Term Facilities Maintenance ten year revenue and expenditure plan. In addition, the Indoor Air Quality Management Plan is part of the ten year plan and must be reviewed annually. The board approved plan must be submitted to the Department of Education.

D. Budget Containment Report

Director Mertesdorf presented five areas the District's leadership team has identified that can proactively provide relief for the District's general fund budget. These areas include an early retirement incentive for teachers, office employees and educational assistants; exploring advertising revenue in key locations throughout the district; utilizing an online payment vendor for activity officials; utilizing a maintenance ticket system to allocate staff salaries to LTFM on a project basis, and activity & credit card fees. This will be an item for individual action at the March 8, 2021 Board meeting.

E. COVID-19 Response and Operations Update

Superintendent Hillmann informed the board we are currently working on the replacement lease for our teacher laptops. Governor Walz announced modifications to the Safe Learning Plan intended to get middle and high school students back onto school campuses in at least a hybrid model. All Northfield Public School students in PreK-12th grade have returned to campus either in person or in the hybrid learning model. We thank Northfield Hospital+Clinics for prioritizing educators for COVID vaccination. Nearly every regular staff member and substitute interested in vaccination has had an opportunity to receive one. We are creating contingency plans should we have a situation where enough staff become temporarily ill after their second dose.

We request families review the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Education guidelines regarding Spring Break trips. The District teaching staff participated in a three-hour professional development workshop with Equity Alliance Minnesota. This session focused on structural, institutional & interpersonal racism, impacts on students, and strategies for disrupting racism.

VI. Committee Reports

Chair Pritchard provided an update on the Legislative Action Committee and Board Member Baraniak provided an update on Northfield Forward.

VII. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Butler, the Board approved the consent agenda.

A. Minutes

- Minutes of the Regular School Board meeting held on February 8, 2021

B. Gift Agreements

- \$5,000.00 from Apple Autos Scholarship Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation for scholarships
- \$3,000.00 from Dakota Electric Association for Dakota Electric Fund Scholarship

C. Financial Report - September 2020

Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf requested that the Board approve paid bills totaling \$3,305,068.60, payroll checks totaling \$3,183,299.22, a wire transfer totaling \$1,535,846.31 from MN Trust Bldg Bond to MSDLAF Liquid, a wire transfer totaling \$300,000.00 from Frandsen General to Frandsen Sweep, a wire transfer totaling \$350,000.00 from Frandsen Sweep to Frandsen General, and the financial reports for September 2020. At the end of September 2020 total cash and investments amounted to \$34,643,701.19.

D. Personnel

a) Appointments

1. Anoulack Phousirith, .5 Assistant Olympic Weightlifting Coach for 2 hours/day 3 days/week at the High School, beginning 2/22/2021; Level I, Step 1.
  2. Correction: Linda Rosas Balvin, Community School Evening Site Assistant at Greenvale Park Elementary, for up to 3 hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, effective 2/9/2021 through 6/10/2021; Step 3 - \$14.37/hour.
  3. Eustacio Lazaro Chavez, Custodian at the High School, effective 3/2/2021, Step 3, \$18.72/hour.
- b) Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment
1. Natalie Amy, 1.0 FTE WILL Teacher at the Middle School, add an overload in lieu of prep, effective 2/2/2021-3/19/2021.
  2. Kayla Christmas, Special Ed EA PCA for 6.75 hours/day at Greenvale Park, add General Ed Supervision for .50 hours/day at Greenvale Park, effective 2/2/2021.
  3. Anna Kelly, Media Center EA for 5.50 hours/day at Greenvale Park, change to Media Center EA for 8 hours/day at the High School, effective 3/1/2021.
  4. Heather Kuehl, 1.0 FTE English Teacher at the Middle School, add an overload in lieu of prep, effective 2/2/2021-3/19/2021.
  5. Mary Magnuson, Regular Substitute for the District, add Due Process support up to 30 hours at the High School, effective 2/11/2021-6/10/2021.
  6. Peter Maus, .60 FTE Math Teacher at the Middle School, change to .80 FTE Math Teacher at the Middle School, effective 2/2/2021-3/19/2021.
  7. Marianne Moser, General Ed EA-Media at the High School, change to 1.0 FTE District office Receptionist Class II Office Employee, effective 2/17/2021. Class II, Step 3-\$19.99/hr.
  8. Rebecca Stoufis, LTS Fourth Grade Teacher at Bridgewater, effective 2/16/2021-3/12/2021, daily sub rate.
  9. Thomas Dickerson, Teacher at the High School, add Assistant Track Coach at the High School, effective 3/29/2021; Level F, Step 5
  10. Kristin Nesseth, Tennis Coach-Girls at the Middle School, add Tennis Coach-Boys at the Middle School, effective 4/1/2021-6/11/2021; Level I, Step 2
  11. Brynne Stellner, Teacher at the High School, add Assistant Track Coach at the High School, effective 3/29/2021; Level F, Step 2
  12. Christina Suhsen, EA PCA for 18 hours/week Mon-Thurs. at the NCEC, add 2 hours on Fridays at the NCEC, effective 3/5/2021-6/10/2021.
  13. Alexander Van Dyke, LTS 6th Grade Teacher at the Middle School, extending position to 3/5/2021, effective 3/1/2021-3/5/2021.
  14. Laura Vind, Teacher at the High School, add an overload in lieu of prep, effective 2/22/2021-6/10/2021.
- c) Leave of Absence
1. Lesly Martinez Reyes, Special Education Educational Assistant at Greenvale Park Elementary, unpaid leave of absence beginning April 1, 2021, through the end of the 2020-21 school year.
  2. Jacob Odell, Boys Tennis Coach at the High School, Leave of Absence for the 2020-2021 school year.
  3. Paul Ousley, Teacher at the High School, Family/Medical Leave of Absence, effective 2/10/2021 and may continue on an intermittent basis for up to 60 work days.
  4. Tiffany Ryan, Teacher at Bridgewater Elementary, extending Leave of Absence under Family/Medical Leave, effective 2/1/2021- 3/12/2021.
  5. Updated-Michelle Sonnega, Teacher at the High School, Leave of Absence, effective 2/1/2022-5/20/2022.
  6. Nives Bakic, EA PCA at the Middle School, Family/Medical Leave of Absence effective 3/9/2021 for 6 weeks.
  7. Kristy Malecha, Special Education EA at Greenvale Park Elementary, FMLA leave of absence beginning 2/26/2021-3/5/2021.
- d) Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
1. James Clinton, Office Generalist at the High School, resignation effective 2/26/2021.
  2. Becky Gainey, Teacher at Sibley, retirement effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
  3. Kathryn Schuman, EarlyVenture Teacher at NCEC, resignation effective 3/5/2021.

## VIII. Superintendent's Report

### A. Items for Individual Action

1. Proposed Sale of District Property. On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board approved the option agreement to sell the school district property located across Lincoln Parkway from Greenvale Park Elementary. The legal description of the property is Outlot B, in Greenvale School Plat, in the City of Northfield, Rice County, Minnesota; except that part of said Outlot B lying within the Plat of Green Meadows, in the City of Northfield, Rice County, Minnesota. Voting 'yes' were Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. Voting 'no' was Butler. Abstaining was Baraniak.

2. Policies 424 and 425. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Butler, the Board approved Policies 424 and 425 as presented at the February 8, 2021 Board meeting.
3. Rename Sibley Elementary School. On a motion by Gonzalez-George, seconded by Butler, and in accordance with Policy 809, the Board approved the Sibley Elementary School be renamed Spring Creek Elementary effective July 1, 2021. The District will also ensure that acknowledgement of the building's history and the area's connection to Indigenous Peoples through a historical marker at the school.
4. 2021-2022 Operating Capital and Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Budgets. On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Baraniak, the Board approved the 2021-2022 Operating Capital and Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Budgets as follows:
 

	<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Operating Capital	\$1,895,066	\$1,908,318
Long-Term Facilities Maintenance	\$1,499,409	\$ 993,500
5. Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Ten Year Plan. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Baraniak, the Board approved the Long Term Facilities Maintenance Ten Year Revenue and Expenditure Plan and the Indoor Air Quality Management Plan.
6. Resolution Requiring Administration to Make Recommendations Regarding Programming and Staffing for Next Year. On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Goerwitz, the Board authorized the administration to make recommendations for additions and reductions in programs and for adding or discontinuing positions. On a roll call vote, voting 'yes' were Baraniak, Butler, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Pritchard, Quinnell and Stratmoen. No one voted 'no'.

IX. Items for Information

No items for information.

X. Future Meetings

- A. Monday, March 8, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield School DO Boardroom
- B. Monday, April 12, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield School DO Boardroom
- C. Monday, April 26, 2021, 7:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield School DO Boardroom

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Stratmoen, seconded by Quinnell, the Board adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Noel Stratmoen  
School Board Clerk