

FRESHWATER EDUCATION DISTRICT # 6004

Board Meeting Minutes, March 25, 2026

2222 Industrial Drive, Wadena, MN

The meeting was called to order by Chair Huttunen at 5 PM.

Board Members Present: **Chair** -Rod Huttunen-Sebeka; **V. Chair** - Barb Tumberg-Wadena-Deer Creek; **Clerk** - Scott Veronen-Verndale; **Treasurer** - Jodi Hillmer-Browerville; Russ VanDenheuvel-Bertha-Hewitt; Rodney Thalmann – Henning; Katie Howard-Menahga; Ryan Wright-Staples-Motley.

Board Member Absent: Chuck Wolf- Long Prairie-Grey Eagle.

Supervising Supt: Lee Westrum- Wadena-Deer Creek.

Administration: Eric Weber, Jamie Wothe, Jordan Anderson, and Sharon Thiel.

Others: Alecia Wahlin, Robin Rothstein, Jena Osberg, Ruth Bowman.

MOTIONED BY VanDenheuvel and SECONDED BY Tumberg to approve the agenda as Presented. VOTE- U/C

MOTIONED BY Tumberg and SECONDED BY Wright to approve the consent agenda as presented.

January 28, 2026, Governing Board Minutes.

February & March Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes.

February & March Superintendent Advisory Minutes.

MSBA Policy Updates 306, 410, 503, 506, 530, 712, & 400.12L.

26.27 School Year Menu Options Districts #787, 545, 553 & 2155.

Renewal of the LCSC Service Agreement for the 25/26 SY.

Renewal of the Infinitec Agreement of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

February & March 2026 Pupil Transportation Agreement with Aksamit Transportation Inc.

Resignation of K. Hardstad, School Psychologist.

Hiring of: E. Ausland, SPED Program Assistant at Grade 8/Step 9, effective February 16, 2026; C.

Cardini, School Psychologist, at Therapist, Grade 14 for 181 days, effective the 26/27 SY.

Posting of the following positions for the 26/27 SY: School Chemical Dependency Counselor; D/APE

Teacher; ECFE Parent Educator; ECFE Child Educator, LPGE; ECFE Child Educator, Menahga;

School Psychologist; (2)-SPED EBD Teacher; Speech Language Pathologist; ECFE Child Educator; (2)

ECFE Parent Educator.

Reassignment of: T. Becker, Behavior Interventionist from Step 4 to Step 5, Transportation Assistant to

Grade 9/Step 4, RVR Driver at Step 10, effective July 1, 2025; J. DeYoung, from Program Assistant to

MA Billing Specialist at Grade 11/Step 9, effective February 2, 2026.

Increase in Hours effective the 25/26 School Year: M. Wolhowe, ECFE Parent Educator/Program

Specialist, from 1,100 hrs. to 1,120 hrs., effective March 3, 2026; H. Haase, ECFE Child Educator,

from 762 hrs. to 782 hrs., effective March 3, 2026.

Lane Change Request: K. Lehmann, Special Education Teacher, from MA+10 to MA+20, effective

January 1, 2026. S. Christenson, Special Education Assessment Specialist, from MA+30 to Doctorate,

effective the 25/26 School Year.

VOTE: U/C

Superintendent Report:

Board members were reminded to complete the Executive Director Performance Rating Survey.

READ Act update: Six staff members completed CAPTI screener training and will conduct required student screenings this spring. ALC teachers will complete the required Phase 2 training through STRIVE.

GYO Grant update: The five-year Adult Pathway grant expires at the end of FY26. A new five-year grant application was submitted but not awarded. The Secondary Pathway grant remains in place through FY27, and the program will reapply during the next grant cycle in January.

Paraprofessional/RVR Driver negotiations remain ongoing with no settlement reached.

Facilities: DOT inspections for vans were completed in February. One van required body repair and is awaiting reinspection; all other vans passed.

Area Learning Center/Targeted Services: The physical LPALC site will be dissolved, though services will continue to be available. Enrollment updates were provided, including Family Education and School Readiness spring enrollment.

Technology: Staff is exploring the use of security grant funds to install an intercom and camera system at the main building entrances on both the business and school sides.

Carl Perkins: The coordinator continues to work with district CTE staff to support teacher and student needs.

Report of Special Ed Director:

Update on the Spring Fling event and Monitoring.

Academies Enrollment

- i. White Pine - 8/8 (3 students transitioning)
- ii. Elm Tree - 12/12 (5 students transitioning)
- iii. Leaf River - 21/24 (8 students transitioning)

Completed & Upcoming Trainings

- iv. Principal Mtg, March 12th
- v. Disability Mtg's, March 24 -25
- vi. Speech Disability Mtg's, March 26

Report of the Finance Manager:

PAWN Update, CESO Consultation - Federal Special Education Usage, Discuss LTFM Levy for April Approval, Freshwater Sponsored Health Insurance Update.

New Business

MOTION BY Hillmer and SECONDED BY VanDenheuvel to approve the closure of Freshwater Education District Area Learning Center physical site at 308 1st St S, Long Prairie, MN 56347, discontinue seat-based programming at that location, and direct the administration to continue providing education services through an online instruction model, effective for the 26/27 School Year.

ROLL CALL VOTE: ABSTENTIONS: None AYE: Tumberg, Veronen, Hillmer, VanDenheuvel, Thalmann, Howard, Wright, and Huttunen. NAY: None ABSENT: Wolf. Motion Carried.

MOTION BY Tumberg and SECONDED BY Veronen to adopt the Cafeteria Plan Adoption Agreement plan between Aviben and Freshwater Education District #6004 as presented. VOTE- U/C

MOTION BY Howard and SECONDED BY Wright to approve the Mutual Termination and Release Agreement between Long Prairie - Grey Eagle School and Freshwater Education District #6004 for terminating the lease agreement for the LP ALC leased space. ROLL CALL VOTE- ABSTENTIONS: None. AYE Tumberg, Veronen, Hillmer, VanDenheuvel, Thalmann, Howard, and Wright. NAY: None. ABSENT: Wolf. Motion Carried.

MOTION BY Veronen and SECONDED BY Wright to approve the Special Education Finance consulting agreement with CESO. VOTE- U/C

MOTION BY Hillmer and SECONDED BY Howard to approve the business service agreement with Bertha-Hewitt ISD #786 as presented. VOTE-U/C

MOVED BY Tumberg and SECONDED BY VanDenheuvel that the School Board of Freshwater Education District #6004 gratefully accepts the following donations as identified below: Spring Fling:

Anonymous - \$160; West Central Telephone, Sebeka, MN - \$100; 1st National Bank of Henning, MN - \$50; Todd Wadena Electric, Wadena, MN - \$50; Wadena State Bank, Wadena, MN - \$100; American Food Group, Green Bay, WI - \$150; Anderson Homes, Sebeka, MN - \$50; VFW Post 6206, Menahga, MN - \$250; Arvig, Perham, MN - \$150; United Community Bank, Perham, MN - \$100; Staples Lions Club, Staples, MN - \$500; Super One, Wadena, MN - \$100; Perham Area Community Lions Club, Dent, MN - \$100; Veteran of Foreign Wars, Wadena, MN - \$200; Menahga Gateway Lions, Menahga, MN - \$250; Knights of Columbus, Frazee, MN - \$250; Reading for the Future: VFW Auxiliary No. 3922, Wadena, MN - \$200; Staples Lions Club, Staples, MN - \$250; Motley Lions Club, Motley, MN - \$1,000; American Legion Post #12, Long Prairie, MN - \$200; Mid-Minnesota Federal Credit Union, Brainerd, MN - 100; Lincoln Area Business Association, Cushing, MN - \$620; American Legion Post #124, Motley, MN - \$200; Eagle Bend Lions, Eagle Bend, MN - \$500; Staples Eye Clinic, Staples, MN - \$50; National Insurance Brokers, Verndale, MN - \$100; Long Prairie Dairy Queen, Long Prairie, MN - \$100; Faith Lutheran Church, Staples, MN - \$50; Benning Printing, Clarissa, MN \$25; Tower Pizza, Staples, MN - \$100.

VOTE on adoption of the Resolution was as follows: ABSTENTIONS: None. AYE: Tumberg, Veronen, Hillmer, VanDenheuvel, Thalmann, Howard, Wright, and Huttunen. NAY: None. ABSENT: Wolf.

WHEREUPON, said Resolution was declared duly adopted.

MOTION BY Howard and SECONDED BY Hillmer to adjourn the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Scott Veronen, Clerk
Freshwater Education District