

River Valley School District
Thursday, February 13, 2025
Regular Meeting
Middle School Library
7:00 p.m.

Present: Minich, Iausly, Carstensen, Bettinger, Maier, Gauger, Cates, Issac Ziebarth (Student Representative)

Absent: Jennings, Young

Admin: Glasbrenner, Krey, Knoll, Peterson

Others: Bob Neuheisel, Emily Beck, Michelle Weiss, Diane Been, Shawn Duren, Judy Ettenhofer, (Home News), Luukas Palm-Leis (Valley Sentinel), Paula Wedige (Administrative Assistant)

Acting President Bettinger opened the meeting. Bettinger noted that the meeting had been properly posted and notice had been provided to the appropriate media and each School Board Member.

Iausly moved to proceed with the legal meeting. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Approval of Agenda

Minich moved to approve the agenda items as submitted. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

Community Spotlight

This is a monthly agenda item to recognize an individual, group, or business in our community for supporting River Valley schools. Bob Neuheisel (Mr. Bob) and his guide dog in training, Ember, were present. He was recognized and introduced by Michelle Weiss, Kindergarten teacher. Bob visits the classroom and reads with kids and plays games. He brings along guide dogs that are in training and educates the kids about how to act around the dogs. Bob is a volunteer for OccuPaws, which is a volunteer organization for training guide dogs.

Public Comments

None.

Student Council Report

Issac Ziebarth, Treasurer, was present and reported that today was high school registration and cotton candy was sold as a fundraiser. There is a talent show coming up next month. A Family School Partnership program with a meal and activities for 4K-4th grade students and their families is happening in the evenings at the elementary through Ms. Hauden. Ms. Bindl's 1st grade students are writing about the sun and moon and visited a planetarium. At the high school, Mr. Hollenberger and the mock trial team are the number one seed for the state tournament in March.

April 1, 2025, Referendum - Community Referendum Information Sessions

Sessions are scheduled as followed: (Tuesday) March 4, 2025, at 5:00 pm (Arena – Grandma Mary's Café Event Hall); (Monday) March 10, 2025, at 6:30 pm (Plain – Early Learning Center Gymnasium); (Tuesday) March 11, 2025, at ~~6:00~~ 5:30 pm (Lone Rock – Lutheran Church Community Hall); and (Tuesday) March 18, 2025, at 5:30 pm (Spring Green – Middle School Library).

A mailer will be sent out next week to River Valley residents. It was confirmed that the Early Learning Center will close whether the referendum passes or fails.

Update from WASB Convention

Glabrenner attended sessions for Title IX and 4K; Carstensen attended for Title IX and referendum information; Iausly attended for school finance and funds used and cybersecurity and resources; Gauger attended for community engagement, safety, and staff engagement; and Krey attended for finance and saw David Daniel from APT do a presentation about storytelling in the classroom and what a teacher can do to springboard into different discussions. Glasbrenner is proud of the work we are doing at River Valley and noted it is beneficial to see what other districts are dealing with and what they are doing.

End of Semester Review of Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Program

Peterson provided an end of semester review. There was new testing for grades K-3 in January as required by state law. We are tracking student progress in reading and math.

Results of the School Perceptions Staff and Parent Surveys

The annual surveys of parents and staff were both done by School Perceptions to keep responses anonymous with only summary reports shared by the company. Derek Gottlieb from School Perceptions attended through a Zoom meeting. He noted that the company has been around for 20 years and has served over 1,000 school districts. He stated that we now have baseline data and can compare to responses in future years and to other like size districts.

The parent survey summary showed a 31% response rate—25 to upper 30 is typical, per Derek. When comparing our results to districts similar in size and demographics, we are right around average. Strengths are above 90% and in important areas of treating kids with dignity and respect, feeling welcome at school, and being comfortable with at least one staff member to contact with ideas or concerns. Areas for improvement are common compared to other districts—bullying, school culture, and parental involvement. Overall satisfaction is encouraging with many giving a 7-10 overall rating.

The staff survey summary showed a 69% response rate, which is typical. River Valley is above comparison averages for staff satisfaction. Strengths are very high in areas of healthy working relationships with coworkers, staff doing a good job of educating students, and the feeling of safety at work. Areas for improvement are consistency in student discipline, effectiveness of discipline practices and policies, and fair pay practices, with student discipline common compared to other districts. Overall satisfaction is encouraging with many giving a 7-10 overall rating.

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee will discuss the larger in-depth report and strategies for improvement. Data will be used by administration to set building and district goals for next year. School Perception offered to provide information from other districts who have used the surveys and made improvements.

Update on School District Operations from Administration

There has been much discussion and planning since the Board's decision in January to close the Early Learning Center at the end of this school year. Administration met with each person being affected by reductions. The February 14 all staff inservice agenda includes the 2025-26 building layouts and classroom placements, referendum information, and staff development work. At the

elementary level, there is a focus on early literacy training based on legislation. We are working on significant changes and are ahead of schedule compared to neighboring districts.

Board Reminders, Announcements, and Training Opportunities

There will be a Special Board Meeting (closed session) on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 7:00 pm in the Middle School Library for an expulsion hearing.

Legislative Update

Glasbrenner noted that we will work with general counsel regarding any Title IX regulations.

Consent Agenda: Checks, Invoices, Receipts – January 2025; Open Session Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2025, Regular Meeting and January 20, 2025, Special Meeting

Iausly moved to approve the consent agenda items as submitted. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

Public hearing and consideration of resolution regarding the petition to alter school district boundaries initiated by owner under Wis. Stat. § 117.12; to wit, petition to detach property located at E7142A Mill Road, Spring Green, WI 53588, from the River Valley School District and attach it to the Sauk Prairie School District

Diane Been was present. She explained that her property had been in Sauk Prairie School District for many years until a township assessment moved the property line and resulted in her property being in River Valley School District. She has filed a petition to have her property be part of Sauk Prairie. Another family has filed a petition to have their property be changed from Sauk Prairie to River Valley. It was noted that we will be receiving higher tax dollars than we are giving up.

Bettinger moved to adopt the Resolution to Alter School District Boundaries to detach property located at E7142A Mill Road, Spring Green, WI 53588, from the River Valley School District and attach it to the Sauk Prairie School District. Cates seconded. Polled vote was 7-0 in the affirmative with 2 absent. Motion carried.

Public hearing and consideration of resolution regarding the petition to alter school district boundaries initiated by owner under Wis. Stat. § 117.12; to wit, petition to detach property located at S12104 Badger Road, Spring Green, WI 53588, from the Sauk Prairie School District and attach it to the River Valley School District

Maier moved to adopt the Resolution to Alter School District Boundaries to detach property located at S12104 Badger Road, Spring Green, WI 53588, from the Sauk Prairie School District and attach it to the River Valley School District. Minich seconded. Polled vote was 7-0 in the affirmative with 2 absent. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Curriculum & Instruction Committee Recommendation

The Committee discussed the technology audit results. We need a process for how to add technology to our systems. Response time from our tech team is going well. They also discussed the open enrollment parent survey results, which showed that many of the families that open enroll out of the district do so for reasons that we can't change. The Committee discussed the 4K schedule for next year and met with districts that have school 5 days a week for 4K students. Action on this item will be taken later during this meeting.

Consideration & Action on 4K Schedule for 2025-26 School Year

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee discussed the 4K schedule changing from 4 to 5 days a week for 4K students. No additional staff is needed for this transition and the change might positively affect our enrollment if we offer 5 days a week. The change could impact our before/after school program, especially with early release on every Wednesday next year. Iausly moved to change the 4K schedule from 4 to 5 days a week for 4K students. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Buildings and Grounds Committee Recommendations

Kramer Brothers provided information on the wood shop remodel with an estimated cost of \$730,000 with a \$50,000 contingency, not including equipment replacement.

The River Valley Booster Club donated \$50,000 for weight room equipment at the high school which leaves a balance of \$39,000. As recommended by the Committee, Iausly moved to approved \$39,000 for weight room equipment. Carstensen seconded. Our annual facility budget would be used for this cost. The weight room will be utilized by 7th-12th grades next year. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Committee, Iausly moved to hire Brent Winkers to excavate and do stump removal in the school forest for \$3,200. Bettinger seconded. Dick Powell will donate his time to pile brush. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Policy Committee Recommendations

As recommended by the Committee, Cates moved to approve the second reading 470.1 ~~Co-Curricular~~ User Fees. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Committee, Iausly moved to approve the first reading of the following policies: 722.3 Rule School Closing Procedure; 443.4 Weapons in the Schools; and 837 Weapons on School Premises. Minich seconded. Motion carried.

Policies 751 Student Transportation Services, 751 Rule Bus Routing Guidelines, 850 Public Sales or Solicitations, and 851 Advertising, Sponsorships, and Commercial Activities were reviewed with no changes.

Consideration & Action on Budget/ERC Committee Recommendations

Krey noted that the state budget considers special education aid “sum certain,” not “sum sufficient.” Sum certain means there is a fixed amount of money in a budget while sum sufficient means there is money available for as much funding as is necessary. Since special education aid is sum certain, the reimbursement rate for 2024-2025 is now estimated to be 29.9%—not 33% as was budgeted. This will result in a decrease of approximately \$100,000 in Fund 27 Special Education revenue. As recommended by the Committee, Iausly moved to amend the 2024-25 budget for Fund 27 revenue to reflect \$100,000 less in state special education aid. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Committee, Iausly moved to adopt the Resolution Authorizing Execution of Sub-grant Agreement for the FEMA BRIC grant. Minich seconded. This allows us to continue moving forward with the application process. Polled vote was 7-0 in the affirmative with 2 absent. Motion carried.

It was noted that health, dental, and vision insurance renewal numbers will be available in March, but that health insurance is trending in the lower double digits while dental and vision are

trending in the 2-4% range. Our insurance broker will investigate if joining the CESA 3 cooperative is a viable option, since they also utilize Quartz insurance. Krey stated that new projections for the 2025-26 budget resulted in a lower mill rate and a lower referendum amount needed.

Consideration & Action on Resignations/Retirements, if any

Iausly moved to accept the retirement of Lori Hoffman, Business Education Teacher. Cates seconded. Hoffman worked in the district for 34 years. It was noted that a WRS retiree must wait 75 days after their retirement date before they can return to WRS employment. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Hirings, if any

None.

Consideration & Action on Resolution Accepting Gifts, if any

Maier moved to adopt the Resolution Accepting Gifts of \$774 to Project Lunchbox from Spring Green Community Church. Iausly seconded. Polled vote was 7-0 in the affirmative with 2 absent. Motion carried.

Maier moved to adjourn at 8:33 pm. Minich seconded. Motion carried.

Submitted by Paula Wedige for:

_____ Sara Carstensen, School District Clerk