

HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Students for Life

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Monday, January 13, 2025

6:00 PM –Meeting

Harper Creek Administration Building

7454 B Drive North, Battle Creek, MI 49014

<https://youtube.com/live/4wpKb76HBHk?feature=share>

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Bess led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.
- III. Roll Call: Mrs. Allwardt, Mr. Bess, Mr. Halverson, Mrs. Risner, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Waterson. Student Board Members: Sam Cook, Arabella Stanley, Alex Stiltner.
- IV. Review and Approval of Agenda: There were no modifications to the agenda.
- V. Ceremonial Oath of Office: Mr. Bess ceremonially administered the Oath of Office to our newly elected Board members Erin Allwardt, Chae Waterson, and first-time member Ashley Risner.
- VI. Organizational Meeting
 - A. Election of Officers
Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Waterson,
That the Harper Creek Board of Education agrees that the 2025 Board Officers as follows:
President-Beau Bess
Vice President -Barry Smith
Treasurer – Sara Wallace
Secretary -Erin Allwardt
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Bess Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mr. Halverson Y.
Motion carried: 7-0
 - B. Board Committees
Budget Committee: Brad Halverson, Barry Smith, Sara Wallace
Building Committee: Beau Bess, Barry Smith, Sara Wallace
Extra Curricular/Achievement Committee: Brad Halverson, Sara Wallace, Ashley Risner
Policy Committee: Erin Allwardt, Chae Waterson, Ashley Risner
Safety Committee: Beau Bess, Erin Allwardt
HC Board Assignments:
CASMBA: Barry Smith (D), Chae Waterson (A)
Distinguished Alumni/Citizen Selection Committee: Barry Smith
Educational Foundation (HCEF): Beau Bess, Brad Halverson
MASB: Chae Waterson (D), Barry Smith (A)
HC Board (Future) Ad-Hoc Committees:

Personnel Committee: Erin Allwardt, Sara Wallace, Chae Waterson
Superintendent Compensation Committee: Beau Bess, Barry Smith, Sara Wallace
Current Building Representatives:
High School: Brad Halverson
Middle School: Erin Allwardt
Beadle Lake: Sara Wallace
Sonoma: Chae Waterson
Wattles Park: Ashley Risner

C. Annual Authorizations

VII. ACTION: Annual Authorizations

Motion by Mr. Smith, supported by Mrs. Wallace,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the annual business meeting resolutions as reviewed and discussed by Superintendent Ridgeway.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Smith Y, Mrs. Allwardt Y, Mrs. Risner Y, Mrs. Waterson Y, Mr. Bess Y, Mrs. Wallace Y, Mr. Halverson Y.

Motion Carries: 7-0

VIII. Communications

A. President's Remarks: Welcomed everyone in the audience. Mr. Bess discussed the upcoming Joint Board Meeting on February 17, 2025, at Battle Creek Central High School at 5:15 PM. This is the second meeting of collaboration from area school boards. Mr. Bess stated that Board members should respond to the RSVP. Mr. Bess thanked Chef Ruemenapp for the wonderful basket of goodies members received for Board Appreciation Month. Mr. Bess also thanked Mr. Ridgeway for the framed photo of the football field.

B. Administration: Mr. Ridgeway thanked Board members for their dedicated service. He reminded the audience that being a Board member does not come with a paycheck. Harper Creek is grateful for the Board members and their tireless work to make Harper Creek the best it can be. Mr. Ridgeway also discussed the upcoming Calendar events including the Sonoma Winter Showcase on Friday, January 17, 2025, no school for students on January 20, 2025, and PD for teachers. Another event is the community breakfast, Beyond the Cereal Bowl on Thursday, January 23, 2025, in the HS Media Center. Breakfast begins at 7:30 AM and the speakers will begin at 8:00 AM. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the upcoming dates for the winter carnival. Another item Mr. Ridgeway discussed was the video shoot that he did with K-12 Media to help with consistent communication. Also, Mr. Ridgeway mentioned the CASB Awards were currently looking for nominations because two nominated from Harper Creek won the award last year Harper Creek chose not to submit names this year. Mr. Ridgeway called for a Policy Committee Meeting, a Building Committee Meeting in February, and a Personnel Committee Meeting in mid-February. Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the excused absence policy for students and student-athletes. He discussed excused absences for Athletics.

C. Board Secretary: Mrs. Allwardt thanked the Wiesler Family for their generous donation of \$5,000.00 to the Harper Creek Champions Project for the weight room renovation. Lastly, Mrs. Allwardt discussed the large donation for the same fund that the Board must accept with a motion. This donation is from Duckworth Construction and Concrete, Josh and Rebecca Duckworth.

D. Student Board Member Report: Sam Cook surveyed the high school students on Future plans and counseling. Thirty-five students participated in the survey and most reported being at least somewhat prepared for future careers or college. Arabella Stanley and Alex Stiltner surveyed the students on the possible change from block scheduling to

traditional scheduling. They received 216 responses. Students expressed concerns and questions regarding the change.

IX. District Updates

A. Curriculum: Mrs. Williams celebrated the Middle School Robotic Team on their outstanding achievement at the Michigan State Competition. In addition, Mrs. Williams discussed the professional development that teachers are participating in to support the implementation of the curriculum. Elementary teachers participated in Bridges Math support sessions strengthening collaboration and confidence in delivering instruction. ELA elementary teachers collaborated to refine pacing and to address questions in the new units of instruction in the ELA curriculum.

B. Facility: Mr. Robinson discussed custodial teams from DM Burr and the possibility of Harper Creek being a test site for autonomous cleaning machines. The machines would not replace current personnel. In addition, Mr. Robinson discussed the ongoing projects. Another item Mr. Robinson discussed is planning for projects and options concerning project management. Lastly, Mr. Robinson discussed the grant for the Filter First project has allowed the team to begin replacing and installing the filters.

C. Finance: Mrs. Obermyer overviewed her reports to the Board. Mr. Obermyer reported that using the MILAF+ to invest the district has made \$18,000.00 from October 2024 to December 2024. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway stated that the PA152 bill would cause the district-paid insurance cap to increase if passed into law. The cost to the district would be an additional \$190,000.00 for this school year. Mrs. Obermyer and Mr. Ridgeway will inform the Board if this is passed into law.

D. Technology: Mr. Maynard discussed the classroom notification/clock progress on installation, wiring, and configuration at Beadle Lake and the middle school. Once these two buildings are complete the next building will be addressed. In addition, Mr. Maynard discussed the camera installation at Sonoma and Wattles Park as part of the county project. The team is now working on the software end and will get users onboard and the vendor will provide training. A new server was part of this project and with Beadle Lake being added to the scope of the project a second server will be needed.

X. Comments Related to Agenda Items

XI. Consent Agenda - All items on this consent agenda were previously considered by the Harper Creek Board of Education, recommended by the Central Office, and will be acted upon in a single roll call vote of the Board. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a board member so requests, in which event the matter shall be removed from the consent agenda and considered as a separate item.

A. Approve the General Fund checks, School Services Fund checks (Food Service), and Student/School Activities Fund Checks, in accordance with the list discussed.

1. Approves December 9, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes
 2. Approves December 9, 2024, Closed Session Meeting Minutes
 3. Approves January 9, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
- Motion by Mr. Halverson, supported by Mrs. Wallace

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the consent agenda as follows:

Approve the General Fund checks, School Services Fund checks (School Lunch), and Student/School Activities Fund checks, in accordance with the list discussed.

Approve the following minutes as reviewed:

- Approves December 9, 2024, Regular Board of Education Meeting Minutes

- Approves December 9, 2024, Closed Session Meeting Minutes
- Approves January 9, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Roll Call Vote:

Mrs. Wallace __Y __, Mr. Smith __Y __, Mr. Bess __Y __, Mrs. Risner __Y __,

Mrs. Allwardt __Y __, Mrs. Waterson __Y __, Mr. Halverson __Y __.

Motion Carried: 7-0.

XII. Information and Discussion

A. School Safety Update: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the safety committee meeting and the tabletop event that Mr. Robinson prepared. He stated that all in attendance worked on a scenario. The goal of the tabletop events is to discuss situations that may arise and create safety protocols and plans. Chris Young then provided feedback on enhancing safety. The team will continue to run through tabletop scenarios to be prepared if a situation were to arise. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the Emergency Operation Plan is being updated and should be reviewed by the safety committee and then finalized by the Board in March. Also, Mr. Ridgeway discussed that drills are being done by buildings during off times like passing time or recess to better prepare staff and students in case of an emergency.

B. High School Scheduling Update: The schedule that the high school is currently using is a block schedule. There is a potential schedule change to traditional scheduling. Some issues that have caused the schedule to potentially change are teacher shortages, retirements, gaps in schedules, culture, and test scores below the state average. Area schools have traditional scheduling. Harper Creek staff have attended training at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Illinois considered to be one of the best schools in America. They use traditional scheduling. In addition, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the need to get more information out to families and look at flexibility to provide the best for our students. Lastly, Mr. Ridgeway discussed the March 1, 2025, deadline to make a decision.

C. MASB Update: Mrs. Waterson discussed the October Leadership Conference she attended with MASB. Mrs. Waterson highlighted the sessions. Some areas of learning included legislative updates, mental health focus, equity diversity and bias training, and universal preschool for all. In addition, Mrs. Waterson discussed working on a more robust new member orientation for Board members. Lastly, Mrs. Waterson stated that one of her favorite speakers was Adolf Brown, who held a Whole Student Breakout.

D. Strategic Plan Update: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the revisions to the Strategic Plan. The original language was cumbersome and difficult to understand. The revised version contains the same information but in a clearer format as well as a targeted action plan. The strategic plan is a living document. The Board will vote on the Strategic Plan in February,

E. Summer Tax Levy Resolution: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the annual notification of summer tax collection to the townships to collect school property tax must be voted on. This allows Harper Creek Community Schools to not have to borrow money which involves both attorney fees and interest. Mr. Ridgeway recommends that the Board approve the summer tax levy resolution.

F. Donation: Mr. Ridgeway stated that Athletic Director, Melissa Feasel, received a \$50,000.00 donation from Duckworth Construction and Concrete, Josh and Rebecca Duckworth. This donation is for the Champion Project Weight Room Renovation and is a matching donation. Because the donation is over the threshold it is recommended that the Board accept this generous donation.

G. AP Lit. Chicago Trip: Mr. Ridgeway discussed the AP Literature trip to Chicago. The class is seeking approval for an out-of-state trip to Chicago on February 10, 2025, to see a Shakespeare play and visit Navy Pier. The group will be taking a charter bus and the cost of the trip is \$98.65 per student. Mr. Ridgeway recommends approving the trip to Chicago.

XIII. Comments From the Audience: Talon Robb addressed the Board with concerns about the funding of the High School Robotics Team. Mr. Robb discussed the high cost of competing in robotics. He also stated that key skills are learned in the robotics program including engineering and stem skills.

XIV. ACTION

A. Summer Tax Levy Resolution:

Resolution

Harper Creek Community Schools, Calhoun County, Michigan (the "District")

A regular meeting of the board of education of the District (the "Board") was held on the 13th day of January 2025, at 6:00 o'clock in the PM (the "meeting").

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bess, President.

Present: Mrs. Allwardt, Mr. Bess, Mr. Halverson, Mrs. Risner, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Waterson

Absent: None

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Mrs. Wallace and supported by Member Mrs. Waterson:

WHEREAS:

1. This Board desires to request that each city and/or township in which the District is located agree to collect the summer tax levy of 100% of annual school property taxes, including debt service, upon property located within the District for 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Superintendent or designee is authorized and directed to forward to the governing body of each city and/or township in which the District is located a copy of this Board's resolution requesting that each such city and/or township agree to collect the summer tax levy of 100% of annual school property taxes, including debt service, upon property located within the District for 2025.
2. The Superintendent or designee is authorized and directed to negotiate on behalf of the District with the governing body of each city and/or township in which the District is located for the reasonable expenses for collection of the District's summer tax levy that the city and/or township may bill under the Revised School Code. Any such proposed agreement shall be brought before this Board for its approval or disapproval.
3. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as the conflict with the provisions of this resolution are rescinded.

Ayes: Mrs. Allwardt, Mr. Bess, Mr. Halverson, Mrs. Risner, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Waterson

Nays: None

Resolution Adopted: 7-0

B. Donation:

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mrs. Waterson,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the donation to the HC Champions Project of \$50,000.00 from Duckworth Construction and Concrete, Josh and Rebecca Duckworth as a matching donation.

Roll call vote: Mr. Smith __ Y __, Mrs. Risner _Y __, Mr. Bess __ Y __, Mrs. Allwardt __Y __,

Mrs. Wallace __Y __, Mrs. Waterson __Y __, Mr. Halverson _Y __.

Motion carried: 7-0.

C. Ap Lit. Chicago Trip

Motion by Mrs. Wallace, supported by Mr. Halverson,

That the Harper Creek Board of Education approves the AP Lit. Class trip to Chicago on February 10, 2025, to see a Shakespeare play.

Roll call vote: Mrs. Risner _Y __, Mr. Bess __ Y __, Mrs. Allwardt __Y __,

Mrs. Wallace __Y __, Mrs. Waterson __Y __, Mr. Smith __Y __, Mr. Halverson _Y __.

Motion carried:7-0.

XV. Items for the Next Meeting

XVI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM.

This meeting is a meeting of the Board of Education in public for the purpose of conducting the School District's business and is not to be considered a public community meeting. There is a time for public participation during the meeting as indicated on the agenda.