

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
July 14, 2025

President Ulman called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2025.

Mrs. Ulman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Malewska, Edmonds, Bruning, Jenkins, Miller, Butzin, Ulman
Absent: None
Tardy: None

Administrators Present: Danek

POSITIVE HIGHLIGHTS

There was no positive highlight at tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Mrs. Ulman asked if there were any public comments on agenda or non-agenda items. There were no comments.

Motion by Ulman, with support from Malewska to amend the consent agenda to include an additional letter of retirement from Robin-Marie Loucks. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Bruning, support by Jenkins, to approve the consent agenda items which included the approval of the June 23, 2025 special meeting minutes and the payment of bills as follows: the monthly contractual and prepaid expenses for the general fund in the amount of \$1,183,851.42 and the sinking fund expenses in the amount of \$62,686.00 and the lunch fund expenses in the amount of \$35,518.92. There were no presented monthly bills to be paid. A letter of resignation was received from high school media center educational assistant, Joanna Frye, effective immediately. A letter of retirement was also received from kindergarten teacher Mrs. Robin-Marie Loucks, effective August 29, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek stated that in March 2025 the Board approved a 90-day extension of unpaid medical leave for custodian Robert Stephenson, effective March 5, 2025. This approved leave period has since expired, and Mr. Stephenson is now requesting an additional extension of his unpaid medical leave. According to documentation from his medical provider, Mr. Stephenson anticipates being able to return to work no later than August 25, 2025. Mrs. Danek said that she had reached out to the district's attorney and was informed that Mr. Stephenson must have a return date and suggested that the Board approve this extension with a return date of August 25, 2025, subject to termination if Mr. Stephenson does not return to work on that date. Motion by Ulman, support by Malewska to approve the extension of unpaid medical leave as presented with a return to work date of August 25, 2025 and subject to termination in the event that Mr. Stephenson does not return. Motion carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Livingston is recommending that Mrs. Sara Shrout be hired as a 5th grade teacher at the middle school. Mrs. Shrout holds a degree in Christian Education from West Coast College and is currently enrolled in the Teachers of Tomorrow program to obtain her Michigan teaching certification. She has over ten years of teaching experience from Florida and Wisconsin and was identified as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Jenkins, support by Malewska to hire Mrs. Sara Shrout as a middle school teacher. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Danek said that Mr. Livingston is recommending that Mrs. Delisa Roulo be hired as an educational assistant in the media center. Mrs. Roulo previously worked for the district in this position and was an asset to the team. She left on professional terms and was selected as the top candidate for this position. Motion by Edmonds, support by Jenkins to hire Mrs. Delisa Roulo as an educational assistant in the media center. Yes: Malewska, Edmonds, Bruning, Jenkins, Miller, Ulman. Abstain: Butzin. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Reports – Mrs. Danek said that the hockey ad-hoc committee met prior to tonight's meeting to discuss a request from the Red Line Association to review the current contract. The Red Line Association proposed some changes to the contract, basically to align the contract with what is actually being done. The meeting began with a refresher on the historical aspects of the creation of hockey as a varsity sport and then as a co-op. The committee reviewed the current contract and the proposed changes. Mrs. Danek said she will update the contract per the committee's feedback and send it to Thrun for review. Once the contract has been reviewed and approved by Thrun it will be presented to the Red Line Association and the Huron Hockey & Skating Association for approval.

Mrs. Malewska asked about contractual control of the hockey coach and what that looked like. Mrs. Danek explained that the coaching recommendations are brought before the Board on a yearly basis and that would be the time to discuss the coaching position.

Legislative Report – Mrs. Danek stated that she had just received notice from the Michigan Department of Education that a lawsuit has been filed by the attorney general in response to the U.S. Department of Education June 30 notification that states would not be receiving appropriated federal Title funding that supports students and schools. MDE states that the Trump administration's decision to withhold these critical funds is cruel and punished those who need the most support.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Danek said that the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) recently announced its decision to endorse the policy services provided by Thrun Law Firm. In response, NEOLA has issued a statement expressing that they were not given prior notice of this change. While they expressed disappointment, NEOLA reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality policy services to their partner districts throughout Michigan.

She said that at this time, the Board has the authority to determine whether the district will continue its partnership with NEOLA for policy services or consider transitioning to Thrun Law Firm, in alignment with MASB's new endorsement.

Mrs. Danek stated that recently Whittemore-Prescott Schools District transitioned to Thrun's policy services and the cost to transition alone was \$10,000. She also explained that in the past when the district has contacted Thrun there have been numerous occasions where they have stated that they are not familiar with our policy, and transitioning to their services may alleviate this issue.

The Board requested more information regarding any current contract that we may have with NEOLA and what the fees/costs are for the services they provide. They also requested a quote from Thrun for these services as well as an idea of what transitioning would look like. Mrs. Danek will bring this information to the next meeting to discuss further.

INFORMATION & PROPOSALS

Superintendent Report – Mrs. Danek said that the school success liaison position has been offered and they are waiting on an acceptance at this time. She said that she sat in on 2 interviews, both hireable candidates. She went on to say that she recently attended a meeting with the

endowment group that supports the career development position. They discussed the lack of communication to students, teachers and parents on the purpose of this position and how to alleviate this issue. Mrs. Danek said she also discussed oversight of the position with them and possible ways to better monitor this role.

Student Representatives – There were no student representatives at the meeting.

Administration – There were no administrators present at this meeting.

From the Board – Mrs. Malewska thanked Mrs. Danek for her forward thinking and for everything she does. Mrs. Ulman made a statement reminding board members of their purpose as a member of the Board, policy, budget and superintendent evaluation. She said that she wants everyone to feel like they are being heard but there are some issues that are outside the scope of their position. She also welcomed any feedback from board members on how to do things differently to make sure each board member feels like their voice matters.

ADVANCE PLANNING

No advance planning.

BOARD WORKSHOP – SINKING FUND AND SUPERINTENDENT MERIT GOALS

Mrs. Ulman said that they would discuss Superintendent merit goals first. Mrs. Danek provided a list of 4 potential merit goals that she came up with and welcomed any other ideas that the Board may have. Ultimately, the Board decided to approve 2 merit goals for Mrs. Danek but stated that they would like to be updated on all of her proposed goals. The two merit goals that the Board approved for Mrs. Danek were to develop and lead a district-wide strategic framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration, including facilitating the work of the newly formed AI Implementation Committee, conducting a staff needs assessment, piloting at least two AI tools in classrooms or operations, and providing professional learning opportunities for staff. Findings and recommendations will be reported to the Board of Education by June 2026 (\$250). They also approved the goal of developing and implementing targeted strategies to improve student achievement, focusing on identified areas of need based on data analysis. Progress will be monitored through regular assessments, data reviews and updated to the Board of Education, with an emphasis on reducing achievement gaps and promoting growth for all student groups (\$250). Motion by Ulman, with support by Jenkins to approve the two merit goals listed above as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board moved into the sinking fund discussion next. Mrs. Danek said that typically the Board approves a sinking fund budget of approximately \$300,00 per year. She said this year the Board approved up to \$400,000 as a buffer due to the unknown cost to the district of replacing the glass block in the new gym. She took a moment to update board members on the status of this issue, stating that Mr. Lichota and herself recently met with Chip Hendrix, Shannon Jacoby from McMath and Greg Bator, an independent assessor. Mr. Bator found that the issue with the glass block is due to a design and installation flaw. We are now moving forward to file a claim against the design company, who has been unresponsive up to this point.

Mrs. Danek also reviewed a document sent by previous superintendent John Klinger to the community explaining what sinking fund money can be used for.

Board members were provided with a list of projects to review. They requested that Mrs. Danek recommend the top 5 projects from that list and then meet with the sinking fund committee to review that list. Mrs. Danek asked board members if there was anything they would like to see added to the list and there was nothing suggested. Mrs. Ulman stated that she would also like to have a survey set to students to see if there is anything that they would like to see added to this list.

Motion by Jenkins, support by Butzin to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.