

Tawas Area Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
December 8, 2025

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Tawas Area Schools Board of Education was called to order by President Ulman at 7:00 p.m. in the administration board room.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Bruning.

B. Roll Call

Present: Edmonds, Miller, Butzin, Malewska, Bruning, Jenkins, Ulman

Absent: None

Tardy: None

Motion by Jenkins, supported by Bruning, to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Positive Highlight

Mrs. Danek introduced members of the Tawas Area High School Band to perform some Christmas songs for the board.

D. Public Comments – Information and Proposals

Mrs. Ulman asked if there was any public comments. There were no comments.

II. Action Items

A. Consent Agenda

Motion by Edmonds, supported by Butzin, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

1. **Approval of Minutes** –November 10, 2025 regular meeting minutes and November 24, 2025 special meeting and closed session minutes.
2. **Approval of Payment of Bills** –
 - o Monthly contractual and prepaid expenses:
 - General Fund: \$1,043,755.20
 - Sinking Fund: \$0.00
 - Lunch Fund: \$71,274.35
 - o Presented monthly bills:
 - General Fund: \$15,709.78
 - Sinking Fund: \$0.00
 - Lunch Fund: \$0.00
3. **Receipt of Written Communications** – Letters of resignation from the following athletic coaches were received, all effective immediately.
 - 8th Grade Volleyball Coach – Mrs. Tricia Briggs
 - Girls’ Varsity Track Coach – Mrs. Brianna Nelson
 - 7th Grade Volleyball Coach – Ms. Barbara Frieden
 - JV Volleyball Coach – Mrs. Erica Carson

Additionally, Mrs. Cassandra Thoryk has submitted her resignation as middle school cheer coach, effective at the conclusion of the current basketball cheer season.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Routine Matters

1. Recommendations & Reports from Administration

a. Hire Fall Coaches

- Motion by Malewska, supported by Bruning, to hire the fall 2026 coaches as recommended, excluding Varsity Boys' Soccer Assistant Coach, which they will wait to hire until a Head Soccer Coach is hired.
 - Varsity Football Head Coach – Will Luzar
 - Varsity Football Assistant – Nick Frees
 - Varsity Football Assistant – Patrick Ryan
 - JV Football Head Coach – Dustin Falls
 - JV Football Assistant – Shane Plank
 - 7/8 Football Head Coach – Brad Hatcher
 - 7/8 Football Assistant Coach – Brian Pelton
 - Varsity Volleyball – Carol Elowsky
 - 9th Grade Volleyball – Stephanie Loew
 - Cross Country – Brianna Nelson
 - Junior High Cross Country – William Redman
 - Cheerleading Coach – Melissa Kendall
 - Girls' Varsity Golf – Paul Vainer

A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Old Business

1. Committee Reports

a. Student Achievement Committee

The committee met prior to the board meeting. Mrs. Danek said that she shared the newly arrived LinkIt! analytics outlining five-year trends in student achievement. She also informed board members that the printed data book will be available for committee members to review as they wish. The committee discussed the possibility of utilizing the February 9, 2026 Professional Development day for some focused training on Oppositional Defiance Disorder. The committee also discussed the potential to create positions to support behavior intervention needs in each building as well as academic intervention needs.

2. Legislative Report

Superintendent Danek shared that we are still waiting on a decision regarding the Section 31AA Funding and the lawsuits that had been filed.

D. New Business

1. Summer Tax Resolution

Mrs. Danek said we need to pass a resolution every year prior to January 1st so that we may levy and collect taxes during the summer months. This provides funds so we don't need to borrow money to meet our expenses. Motion by Jenkins, support by Malewska to

adopt the annual summer tax resolution as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Superintendent Evaluation

Mrs. Ulman said that the board met in a closed session on November 24th with Mrs. Danek to collectively go over the data in the Superintendent Evaluation and ask Mrs. Danek any questions they may have before agreeing on a consensus rating for her evaluation. Mrs. Ulman said that Mrs. Danek had a 90% overall score, which is effective. She also stated that Mrs. Danek got a 2.7 out of 3 for professional practice. Mrs. Ulman said that the Board appreciates Mrs. Danek's effective leadership throughout her first full year and the progress she has made district-wide. She highlighted some of Mrs. Danek's notable accomplishments, including implementing meaningful professional development for staff, identifying necessary facility updates, strengthening curriculum, promptly bringing matters to the Board's attention, and initiating CAHC. She also expressed that the Board is confident in her leadership.

Motion by Ulman, supported by Jenkins, to accept the Superintendent evaluation as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously. A second motion was made by Ulman, supported by Jenkins, to extend Mrs. Danek's contract for an additional year. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Board Member Reprimand/Censure

Mrs. Ulman began by stating that there have been concerns about the statement Mike Butzin made at the November 24th meeting directed toward Superintendent Danek. She then asked the board members individually if they recall hearing the statement made at the meeting and if what is in the minutes is correct, based on what they remember. Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Bruning and Mrs. Edmonds said they agreed with the minutes. Mr. Miller said he does not believe what is in the minutes is what was actually said verbatim. When asked to elaborate, he said he could not remember exactly what was said. Mrs. Malewska abstain from giving her input on this, as she was not present at the meeting in question.

Mrs. Ulman indicated that Board Policy/Bylaw 0145 specifically prohibits Board members from engaging in discriminatory harassment of any staff member, and provides that any member who is found to have sexually harassed a member of the state will be subject to discipline by the Board.

Mrs. Ulman reminded all Board members of the District's commitment to non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity, as reflected in the Board policies listed on pages 3-4 of the letter to you, which was included in the background information sent to the Board.

Ulman then advised that Board Policy/Bylaw 0144.2 – Board Member Ethics lists the following potential consequences for Board member misconduct. Consequences for Board member misconduct are as follows:

- A. Private meeting with the offending member and the Board President and Vice President.
- B. Multiple infractions will be followed up with an email to the offending member and/or full Board.
- C. Possible removal by the Board President from any leadership or committee positions.

D. Public reprimand/censure as a means of separating the Board's focus and intent from those of the offending member.

Ulman said that given the nature of the misconduct and that failing to address the misconduct could expose the District to potential liability for violations of state and federal law, as well as Board policies, legal counsel has recommended the Board consider a public reprimand/censure as a means of separating the Board's position from the statement made by Mike at the November 24 meeting.

Mrs. Ulman made a motion, supported by Butzin, to reprimand and censure Mike Butzin for making an inappropriate statement at the November 24 meeting, which statement could be construed as a form of discriminatory harassment on the basis of sex. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Ulman then addressed whether the Board would want to impose a communication plan moving forward. Ulman made a motion, supported by Bruning, to have any official school communication between Mike Butzin and the Superintendent directed through the Board President, Mrs. Julie Ulman. Mrs. Ulman said she had made a motion and asked if there was support. She said if there was a motion and support then they would vote on the motion. Mrs. Bruning reiterated that she supported the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Initially, given her absence at the November 24th meeting, Malewska stated that she would abstain from voting. Mrs. Ulman said that she could not abstain and clarified that an abstention can only be utilized when there is a conflict of interest. Yes: Edmonds, Malewska, Bruning, Jenkins, Ulman. No: Miller, Butzin. Motion carried.

III. Information and Proposals

A. Superintendent Report – Mrs. Danek congratulated Teresa Dalman, who earned a spot on the State Honors Choir. She also spoke briefly about a “sense of belonging” survey that was sent out to students to identify if students feel that have a strong bond with staff members in the district. She said she received a lot of positive community feedback regarding this and the next step will be identifying students who do not feel that they have a strong bond with any staff member and trying to foster that relationship.

B. Student Representatives –

- Senior Representative: Miss Abby Kloska – Ms. Kloska talked about the Christmas Philanthropy Tree, initiated by the student council, which allows students to purchase gifts for kids who may not get any.
- Junior Representative: Miss Eryn Hayes – Student Council planned Christmas Spirit Days for students. She also spoke about a “pledge initiative” in the middle and high school, which entails the Pledge of Allegiance being recited after morning announcements each day.

C. Administration – Mrs. Clouse highlighted the students of the month at Clara Bolen. She talked about the Santa Shop being up and running this week and already being more efficient than last year. The Christmas Program for CBE would take place in the new gym on December 18th at 1 p.m. She also spoke about attending the MEMSPA Conference in Traverse City with Mrs. Tiffany last week and thanked the Board for allowing them to attend such events. She said the content was great and there were many resources shared.

Mrs. Tiffany highlighted the student of the month in the middle school. She said they would be having their annual students vs. staff basketball game the day before Christmas Break. Middle school students would be doing NWEA testing this week. She also shared that the 5th grade students would be having their Christmas Play on December 18th.

Mr. Hazen talked about some new “boards” put up in the counseling office. The first is a volunteer board, which has resources regarding different trade schools, for students to consider. He also mentioned a volunteer board that was implemented in the counseling department to connect students with volunteer opportunities. Mr. Hazen shared that they are working through Navigate 360, which provides training/protocols for punitive punishment paired with a restorative piece to allow for reflection for students.

Mr. Livingston congratulated Teresa Dalman. He said 8th graders and 10th graders would be touring the tech. center this week. He talked about “positive postcards” being sent via US Mail to students as an encouragement for positive behavior. He also briefly talked about a medical emergency that occurred recently at the school, and the new security system giving them the ability to do a “hold in place” to prevent students from entering the hallway during a crisis.

D. From the Board – Mr. Butzin apologized to anyone he may have offended with the statement that was made at the November 24th meeting and anyone who he made think that he is sexist. Mrs. Edmonds said she liked the “hold in place” feature discussed by Mr. Livingston. She asked how the community can get something added to the new volunteer board. Mr. Livingston said that they can contact Mrs. Warner.

Mr. Miller asked Mrs. Danek if she was offended by the comment made by Mr. Butzin at the November 24th meeting. Mrs. Danek said she was not. Mr. Miller then asked how it got to this point. He said the document from the attorney listed several consequences, with the reprimand/censure being the last and final and he questioned why the other consequences were skipped over. Mrs. Ulman then outlined all of the events leading up to this. Mr. Butzin stated that he had already lived through all of this and didn’t need to hear it again and left the meeting at 7:43 p.m. Mrs. Ulman went on to say that it started when Mr. Butzin left the meeting on the 24th after making an offensive comment directed at Mrs. Danek. After this happened, Mrs. Danek decided to cut off communication with Mr. Butzin for about a week to let the dust settle. The Monday following Thanksgiving Break, Mr. Butzin contacted the Central Office and spoke to Mrs. Harvey making statements that appeared to threaten Mrs. Danek’s job. She said it was an intense conversation that was then relayed to Mrs. Danek, who notified Mrs. Ulman so she was aware of what was going on. Mrs. Ulman then scheduled a meeting with herself, Mr. Butzin and Mrs. Danek to try to sort things out, but Mr. Butzin did not show up for the meeting. When he did not show up for the meeting, Mrs. Ulman contacted legal counsel, because she did not know what else to do. Legal counsel advised her that the district will be held liable if there is no reprimand for this behavior. Mr. Miller thanked her for the recap.

Mrs. Malewska said she is excited to attend the band and choir concerts this week. She thanked Mrs. Danek for her leadership and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. She also stated that she loves being on the student achievement committee.

Mrs. Bruning wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mrs. Jenkins said she is excited that the Santa Shop is up and running smoothly at Clara Bolen. She also said the student achievement committee has been great.

Mrs. Ulman expressed appreciation for Mrs. Harvey and the work she does for the district. She thanked her and Mrs. Danek. Mrs. Ulman also thanked the Board for their support during such a difficult situation to navigate.

IV. Advance Planning

Mrs. Danek informed the Board that they would need to have a special meeting prior to

Christmas Break to have 2 (possibly 4) student discipline hearings. The board decided to have this meeting on Tuesday, December 16th at 4:30 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

Motion by Jenkins, supported by Edmonds, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.