

**OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Board of Education**  
**Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
**December 11, 2024**  
**Report 24-74**

Present: Adam Easlick, Nick Henne, Ty Krauss, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicky, Olga Quick, Marlene Webster (arrived at 6:06 p.m.)

Absent:

President Mowen called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Administration Building, 645 Alger St, Owosso, MI 48867.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Amend Agenda**

President Mowen informed the Board of a requested agenda amendment to remove Celebrate Kids! – Owosso High School, Carrie Warning, and SkillsUSA State Officers and to update the Student Representative Report presenter from Paige Davis to Madelyn Usher. Moved by Krauss, supported by Henne, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

**Building Reports**

Superintendent Brooks began by recognizing Board of Education Secretary Ty Krauss's remarkable dedication and service. Over the past eight years, Ty has been a steadfast advocate for education, completing two terms on the Board of Education after being sworn in on January 23, 2017.

Throughout his tenure, Ty attended approximately 96 Board Meetings, diligently reviewing around 6,240 pages of Board packet information. His commitment extended to 92 Committee of the Whole meetings, where he reviewed an additional 1,932 pages. Ty contributed to 188 meetings, carefully analyzing more than 8,172 pages of detailed information to support informed decision-making for the district.

Ty's commitment extended beyond meetings. He consistently engaged with the community and Board members through ongoing communications. Over his tenure, it is estimated that Ty reviewed approximately 14,560 pages of information shared with the Board, demonstrating his dedication to informed decision-making and transparency.

During Ty's time on the Board, the district made significant strides, including hiring 117 teachers, with a retention rate of 64%. Seventy-five educators remain, making up 42% of the district's teaching staff. Beyond teachers, Ty played a role in hiring countless support staff and administrators, helping to strengthen the district's foundation.

Ty worked alongside two superintendents and collaborated with nine different Board members, showcasing the community's stability and unity. Notably, under his leadership, the district achieved a historic milestone on November 7, 2017, with the passage of a \$45 million bond project that continues to positively impact the community.

Superintendent Brooks recognized Board Secretary Ty Krauss for his unwavering dedication and contributions to the district. As Ty transitions from this role, we reflect on his impact with gratitude. As he's always shown through his actions, this is not a goodbye but a "see you later." President Mowen presented Ty with a plaque as a token of appreciation.

Madelyn Usher, Student Government Vice President, presented this month's student representative report, highlighting several ongoing initiatives. The student government is currently raising funds for Toys for Tots through various events, and some teachers are offering credit to encourage participation.

A recent success was the Mr. Wonderful pageant and talent show, where senior boys competed for the title of Mr. Wonderful. The event was a major hit and well-received. Looking ahead, the student government is planning another talent show, Miss Magnificent, scheduled for either January or February.

In addition to supporting Toys for Tots, the student body celebrated the conclusion of the fall sports season with "clap-out" ceremonies for the Equestrian Team and the Girls' Varsity Swim Team, which the athletes greatly appreciated. Winter sports are now in full swing and progressing smoothly.

### **Board Correspondence**

Superintendent Brooks shared that Owosso Public Schools has been bustling with holiday cheer and remarkable achievements across the district. On Friday, the Owosso High School Madrigals will visit all three elementary schools, spreading joy with festive music for students and staff.

At the high school, the Varsity Football Team earned All-State Academic honors, highlighting their exceptional performance in the classroom. Additionally, the team celebrated an All-State Running Back named to the First Team All-State—a significant achievement and the first time in many years Owosso has had an All-State player on the roster.

The district is also proud to recognize Mallory Irelan, an OHS alum and current OMS teacher named Zone 8 Coach of the Year, for her outstanding leadership with the swim team. In other sports news, OHS student-athlete Camden Caswell, a standout in baseball and bowling, recently earned his 300 Club jacket after bowling a perfect game earlier this year—a rare and impressive feat.

Owosso High School recently hosted its annual Senior Citizen Holiday Celebration, welcoming 150 guests who enjoyed performances by the jazz and symphony bands and the Madrigals. Guests also enjoyed festive treats, refreshments, and photo opportunities with students, making it a memorable event.

The OPS Foundation met last week to select the Teacher and Support Staff Member of the Year. The recipients will be announced at the State of the District event on January 20, 2025, at 2 p.m.

Academically, the High School Quiz Bowl team celebrated advancing to the playoffs, and OHS student centers hosted a well-attended informational session on CTE, early college, and dual enrollment opportunities, providing valuable insights for parents and students.

In the arts, students and staff are participating in the beloved Lebowsky Center holiday show, a cherished community tradition. Winter band and choir concerts also showcased student talent, with a standout moment being the performance of *Snow Drift*, an original composition by band director Jordan Sterk.

The Owosso High School Swim and Dive Team celebrated junior Lillian Pumford's remarkable achievement of earning All-State honors and breaking a school record in the 100-meter butterfly at the state finals. Additionally, senior Madelyn Usher signed her letter of intent to swim at Ashland University, marking an exciting milestone in her athletic career.

At the middle school level, reading interventions through Lexia PowerUp and Number Worlds are in progress, supporting students' academic growth. Meanwhile, students are eagerly anticipating the ever-popular dodgeball tournament. Lincoln High School introduced Morgan, their new therapy dog, who has already positively impacted students and staff. Mrs. Meter's critical thinking and writing students also broadened their learning experiences with a field trip to the Flint Institute of Arts.

Fourth-grade students district-wide attended an Internet safety presentation by Trooper Amy of the Michigan State Police. Known for her expertise in social media safety, she provided valuable insights on the dangers of social media to students, staff, and parents. At Bryant, students enjoyed an enriching field trip to the Michigan State Capitol and a lively PBIS assembly featuring a festive dance performance by Mrs. Spielman and Mr. Pepin, dressed as elves—a moment that became a viral sensation on Facebook. Thanks to community partnerships, the school also provided 16 Thanksgiving meals to needy families, and several classrooms participated in the Festival of Trees.

At Central, the Gumdrop Shop is spreading holiday cheer alongside plans for upcoming holiday parties. Emerson's PTO organized a holiday shop where students could purchase gifts for loved ones, and the school celebrated the IB Learner Profile. With support from the First Church of Christ and Walmart regional managers, Emerson assisted 16 students adopted for Christmas. The Emerson Student Council also showcased meaningful community involvement by ringing bells for the Salvation Army near the post office.

Superintendent Brooks concluded his report with updates from Bentley Bright Beginnings, where students created their own Macy's Day Parade by crafting balloons and marching around the school—a fun and creative activity. Bentley students also participated in the Festival of Trees and are preparing for their first annual holiday concert. The event, featuring preschoolers singing holiday favorites, is scheduled for December 19 at 5 p.m. at the PAC and promises to be a heartwarming occasion.

## **Public Participation**

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on education issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

The following participants addressed the Board:

None

## **For Action**

- Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to approve the November 20, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, November 20, 2024, Closed Session Minutes 1, November 20, 2024, Closed Session Minutes 2, Current Bills, and Financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss, to authorize the Superintendent to sign the service agreement with Technical Building Automation. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky, to table the action item of approving the Accelerate Education courses for the 2024-25 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

## **For Future Action**

- The Board will be asked to approve the Michigan Merit Curriculum waivers for state-approved CTE programs for the 2024-25 school year. Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to move to For Action at the January 22, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- The Board will be asked to adopt the resolutions that revise the appropriations for the General and School Service for the 2024-25 fiscal year to be presented to the Board for adoption at the January 22, 2025, regularly scheduled Board meeting. Allowing for the formal budget to be presented on January 22nd will provide the most current information to be incorporated into the proposed Revision. Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to move to For Action at the January 22, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- The Board will be asked to approve the addition of an Amazon Credit Card for District use. Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to move to For Action at the January 22, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- The Board will be asked to approve the use of the Huntington Bank Liquidity Portal to manage excess cash in our organizational accounts. This initiative will ensure that we effectively optimize cash management and liquidity and maximize returns on idle funds.

Utilizing this tool can streamline our cash management process, enhance financial flexibility, and ensure we are making the most of available resources. Moved by Easlick, supported by Quick, to move to For Action at the January 22, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

### **For Information**

Superintendent Brooks announced the following personnel changes:

#### **Accepted Positions**

Michael Flagg has accepted the Custodian position at OMS/OHS.

Stacy Wilson has accepted the Paraprofessional position at OHS.

Marie Schautz has accepted the Sub Bus Driver position.

#### **Resignations**

Deann Floria, Custodian has resigned effective November 20, 2024.

Vickie Purdy, Paraprofessional at OHS has resigned effective December 2, 2024.

Eric Arendt, Paraprofessional at LHS has resigned effective December 6, 2024.

Hannah Poyner, Teacher at OHS has resigned effective December 31, 2024.

Josh Ramirez-Roberts, Teacher at LHS has resigned effective December 6, 2024.

Kristina Crandell, Teacher at Emerson has resigned effective January 3, 2025.

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The following participants addressed the Board:  
Brena Ireland

#### **Board Comments**

Trustee Easlick took a moment to express his gratitude to Ty for his many years of dedicated service, humorously noting that when Ty graduated, he himself was just three years old! He also

thanked Madelyn for her informative student representative report and congratulated Mallory Irelan on her outstanding accomplishments. Trustee Easlick praised CFO Dame for streamlining the business office and making it more efficient. Additionally, he shared his enjoyment of the Festival of Trees, commending the choirs for their excellent performances and describing the decorated trees as truly impressive.

Treasurer Quick expressed her heartfelt thanks to Ty for his years of service. She also extended congratulations to all the award winners. Treasurer Quick voiced some concern regarding the staff initiative at Lincoln High School, emphasizing that as Board members, they need to closely monitor the situation, particularly in the interest of stability for the highest-risk students. She highlighted the importance of giving this issue the attention it deserves. On a positive note, Treasurer Quick shared her enjoyment of the Festival of Trees, praising the beauty of the trees and the incredible performances.

Trustee Henne congratulated Ty, acknowledging the significant amount of paperwork passed through him. He also commended the football team for their academic all-state achievement, highlighting the rare accomplishment of having an individual named all-state, which he noted places them in an elite group. He added, it's great to see the program improving.

Trustee Ochodnický began by addressing the K-5 online student situation. She expressed interest in a presentation from the RESD to better understand the process of enrolling a student. She noted that if any advocacy is needed, the Board members are eager to represent the student and work toward improving services. She also inquired about any updates on the hard cap change, asking if there would be an amendment to consider at the next meeting regarding the budget.

Ochodnický shared that all of the district's service dogs had been in the "doggy shop" this week, and it has been wonderful to see them coming and going, with pictures shared by the girls. She mentioned that only one more dog needs to be brought on at Bentley, and the new dog from Lincoln was introduced this week. She expressed her appreciation for seeing the dogs doing well.

Ochodnický congratulated Ty and thanked him for his service, noting how much she valued his input. She wished him well and looks forward to seeing him in the community.

Vice President Webster shared that this should be the last time she arrives so late due to her commitments as a county commissioner. She recently finished her final Board of Commissioners meeting and still has a couple of committees to attend next week. She expressed looking forward to returning with her full attention, without overlapping meetings.

Webster also mentioned that she missed the congratulations to Ty and joked that if he graduated in 2011, she likely did as well, making her and Shelly among the oldest members on the Board, except for Rick. She concluded by acknowledging Ty as a consummate professional, thanking him for his service to the district, and wishing him the best in his future endeavors, noting that they will likely see him around.

President Mowen wanted to congratulate Ty, his great friend and a valued Board member.

Secretary Krauss expressed that serving the district has been a pleasure and thanked his constituents for electing him to two terms. He acknowledged the administration, staff, and everyone involved in the schools, noting their dedication and commitment to the students, which is evident daily. He encouraged them to be proud of their work and continue the tradition of excellence, which means a great deal to the community.

He also thanked the Board members he has worked with over the years, commending their commitment to excellence and to the district, and expressed that their efforts have made a lasting impact. He concluded by thanking everyone for their support.

### **Upcoming Board Meeting Dates**

- January 8: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112
- January 22: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- February 12: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112

### **Important Upcoming Dates**

- December 19: Bentley Bright Beginnings Holiday Concert, 5:15 PM, PAC
- December 20: Half Day for All Students: Teacher Work Day & End of 1<sup>st</sup> Semester
- December 23-January 3: No School, Holiday Recess
- January 8: LHS Evening PT Conferences, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus
- January 20: No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Day & Professional Development

Moved by Easlick, supported by Ochodnicky, to move into closed session at 6:19 p.m. to conduct the Superintendent's Evaluation and address matters protected by attorney-client privilege. Secretary Krauss conducted a roll call vote: Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnicky, Quick, and Webster Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky, to move back into open session at 8:07 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to accept the completed year-end evaluation and contract extension for Superintendent Steve Brooks. President Mowen reported that the Board of Education met in closed session to complete the year-end consensus-based evaluation for Superintendent Steve Brooks. The Board completed the summative evaluation after reviewing Superintendent Brook's performance in seven domain areas. The areas evaluated were Governance & Board Relations, Community Relations, Staff Relations, Business and Finance, Instructional Leadership, Student Growth, and Progress Toward District-Wide Goals. Based on the summative evaluation, Superintendent Brooks earned an overall effective evaluation. The Board of Education agreed to extend Superintendent Brook's employment contract through June 30, 2028. President Mowen commented that Superintendent Brooks has demonstrated exceptional leadership and a strong focus on academic achievement. He has worked diligently to build a sense of pride within the school district, despite the challenges of losing long-time

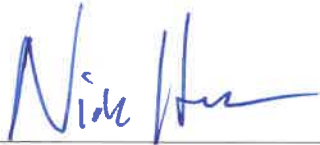
members of our community. His unwavering dedication to our students and staff is evident, and the Board of Education members have confidence in his leadership. Under his guidance, our district will continue to provide opportunities for greater success and growth. Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Ochodnický, Webster, and Mowen. Nays: Quick. Motion carried 5 to 1.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick, to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Goetzing.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Henne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Nick Henne, Secretary