WATERFORD UNION HIGH SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Monday, October 26, 2026

The regular meeting was called to order by President Schwartz at 6:45 p.m. Board members present at the meeting were: Ashley Bzdawka, Kelly Datka, Noah Wishau, Dennis Purtell and Doug Schwartz.

Due to ongoing construction and the unavailability of the regular large group meeting space (LGI), board meetings are relocated to Room A115, adjacent to the WUHS Library Media Center Room. Official notice of the meeting was made by way of publication in the *Waterford Post* on Thursday, October 22; by posting in the District Office (Door #7) and at Entrance #19; and by posting on the District's website. Minutes from the regular board meeting of August 24, 2026, were posted on the District's website.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was a motion by Wishau, seconded by Purtell, to approve the following items presented under the Consent Agenda, with the exception of the minutes from the following meetings: July 27, 2026 Executive Session; August 3, 2026 Special Meeting; and the October 5, 2026 and October 13, 2026 Policy and Curriculum Committee Meeting minutes. A roll call vote was recorded. All ayes; motion carried.

A. Approval of Bills Paid

B. Meeting Minutes
   1. Minutes of the Special Board Meeting - October 13, 2026
   2. Minutes of the Monthly Board Meeting of September 21, 2026
   3. Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting - September 21, 2026

C. Staffing Updates
   1. New Hire - Chad Carriveau, Groundskeeper

D. Overnight Field Trip Request - Wrestling Tournament (late request)

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Karen Alexander was present and posed the question if the WUHS School Board was a member of the WI Association of School Boards. President Schwartz confirmed that the Board is a member of the WASB.

INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Energage Survey Results

Superintendent Francois provided results from the district's annual Energage employee engagement survey. Important takeaways:

- The staff survey received a 79% response rate (approx. 100 out of 126 employees).
- The overall workplace experience score was 81% (up 8 points from 2025), with gains across all measures.
- Based on these results, the District can be named a Top Workplace for Culture Excellence winner in four categories: Purpose & Values, Professional Development, Employee Appreciation, and Education.
- Significant improvements were noted in staff well-being (+18 points) and motivation (+17 points).
- Next Steps**:** Administration will craft an action plan starting in November, focusing specifically on paraprofessional and tenured staff groups that didn't rate as high. Pulse surveys will be conducted in April and May to measure progress and drive improvements in those areas.

B. Building Construction Update

Superintendent Francois provided an update on the 2025 referendum project construction work. Updates and discussion was held regarding site work, accessibility, interior work, building systems, budget, athletics, and looking ahead to next school year. The work has shifted from the summer's full-

building push to targeted fall work scheduled around the school day. This fall, three Owner Construction Progress Meetings have been held with Nexus Solutions covering schedule, open pricing, and budget tracking. The meetings now are moving to a biweekly Thursday morning schedule.

- Exterior: The southwest parking lot and loading dock concrete have been poured. Fence removal and sidewalk installation are next. The staff parking lot and doors at Entrance 19 are expected to open on November 2. Not related to the referendum construction project, work has commenced on the softball and baseball diamonds to get those back up to playable surfaces to be ready for spring play.
- Interior: The wheelchair lift is fully installed (awaiting delayed doors) and working with the vendor to complete this project. B-wing (the Math/Social Studies hallway) flooring replacement was underway until it was discovered there was an additional layer of flooring which will need to be tested for asbestos. The project is on hold pending test results. The woodshop dust collector is operational as of September 25. The PA paging system in the renovated D-wing is being re-engineered due to bundled speaker issues.
- Looking ahead: Next summer is a shorter construction window, and the team is confirming the 2027 summer schedule by area, including the technology education wing, so departments can plan course sequencing well in advance. More than 60% of the work is complete on the referendum project at this time, with approximately 40% of the project remaining. It is anticipated that all rooms will be fully functional and operational by the time the doors open in September of 2027.
- Village Board Meeting Update: The Village Board took action with rezoning the property the District purchased at 128 S. Center Street, which is immediately adjacent to the residence at 132 S. Center Street. The property was successfully rezoned to "government institutional agency" and is now a public space. A 0-foot variance on the property line was approved, allowing construction to build directly up to the adjacent owner's property line, preserving the current loading dock layout. The District in good faith will work with the owner of the adjacent residence to put up a buffer zone.

ITEMS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Neola Policy Update

Superintendent Francois presented the updated Neola policies for a second reading and Board action. Policies have been updated to adhere to State policy and recent actions in our legislation.

There was a motion by Wishau, seconded by Bzdawka to approve the Neola policy updates. Discussion was held for changes and corrections:

- Policy 2430 is to be amended to remove "including students in elementary and middle school grades"
- Policy 8510 corrected to remove staff name(s) and list title only, and exclude adoption of the
- Reject adoption of Policy 7440.02 Artificial Intelligence as the District does not currently utilize AI monitoring technology.

Wishau amended his motion, seconded by Bzdawka to approve the Neola policy updates as corrected, with the exclusion of Policy 7440.02 Artificial Intelligence. All ayes; motion carried.

B. Certification of the 2026-2027 School District Tax Levy

Superintendent Francois presented members a review of District enrollment trends and the DPI 2026-27 Revenue Limit Worksheet. District enrollment in the 2017-18 school year was at its highest with a student enrollment of 1,103. In the 2023-24 school year, the District was at its lowest enrollment of 886 and has remained relatively flat with a little fluctuation. Current enrollment is at 877 students for

2026-27. The number of students enrolled is directly related to State-funding that the District receives. There was a notable increase in the number of students who open enroll in to the WUHS District, which is at its highest count at 100 for 2026-27. The number of students who enroll out of the WUHS District is also at an all-time low.

Student enrollment is what drives the Revenue Limit Calculation Worksheet. Dr. Francois further reviewed the data in the revenue limit calculations, noting summer school counts increased from 17 FTE in 2024 to 96 FTE in 2026. The 96 is directly related to summer school and Ehren Klebenow's work in growing our summer school program. Full-time equivalency (FTE) for summer school is calculated at 40% of the attendance since those students do not attend all day, every day. In 2025, the FTE was 8 compared to 38 FTE in 2026, which is a significant increase of 30 FTE to the enrollment. Dr. Francois further explained the three-year average of pupil counts for third Friday, which calculates 864 student count and the number used to drive the revenue for our District.

Following the August 26, 2026 annual meeting, the District received the data required to finalize the tax levy: the October 15, 2026 certification of general equalization aid (3,508,154,043). Using these figures, the administration has completed the Department of Public Instruction 2026-27 Revenue Limit Worksheet. The resulting levy is within the District's revenue limit under subchapter VII of chapter 121, Wis. Stats.

Wisconsin law directs the School Board to determine and certify the final levy after these fall figures are known. Section 120.12(3) authorizes the Board to determine the amount necessary to operate and maintain the schools and requires that the levy not exceed the revenue limit; section 120.12(4) governs the levy for debt service (Fund 39); and section 120.13(19) authorizes the Community Service Fund levy (Fund 80), which is outside the revenue limit. Because the October 15 aid certification and final valuation were received after the annual meeting, the certified amounts reflect those actual figures rather than the August estimates, as permitted under s. 120.12(3).

The recommended levy by fund:

Fund	Purpose	Amount
Fund 20	General operations (Src 211)	$8,987,639
Fund 39	Referendum-approved debt service (Src 211)	$4,807,962
Fund 80	Community service (Src 211)	$ 779,014
Total	All-fund tax levy (Line 16, P1-401)	$14,574,615

Dr. Francois explained the Referendum Approved Debt is set at $4,807,962 to pay down debt which is in excess of about $1.5 million more than the actual debt payment, which creates a debt defeasance. By paying down debt early, the District reduces the debt principal, which saves interest and will save taxpayers money. The total reported for all 2026 funds is $14,574,615, computing the total Levy Rate of $4.15, which is a rate the District has held for 8 of the last 10 years, and this is what the Board will be approving tonight.

Discussion was held that Fund 39 and 80 have no bearing on any athletic upgrade, only on defeasing our existing debt. Further discussion about summer school teaching staff and some of the ways they are capturing opportunities minutes through clubs, athletics, camps, and the Unite program. Further point was made that $100.000 allocated to our District is going out of District to support private school vouchers/school choice.

There was a motion by Purtell, seconded by Wishau that the Board of Education certify the 2026-27 property tax levy in the total amount of $14,574,615, apportioned as $8,987,639 for Fund 10 general operations, $4,807,962 for Fund 39 referendum-approved debt service, and $779,014 for the Fund 80 Community Service Fund; that the Board find the Fund 10 levy to be within the District's revenue limit

under subchapter VII of chapter 121 of the Wisconsin Statutes; that the levy be determined and certified in accordance with ss. 120.12(3), 120.12(4), and 120.13(19), Wis. Stats.; and that the District Clerk be directed to certify the apportioned amounts to the appropriate municipal clerks and to file the required reports with the Department of Public Instruction by the statutory deadlines. A roll call vote was recorded. All ayes; motion carried.

C. Responsible Investment in the Stadium Complex: Meeting ADA and Safety Requirements While Expanding Community Use

Tabled briefly until after the closed session as Mr. McClowry and the coaches are still holding the code signing meeting with students and parents.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Gateway Technical College Transcripted Credit Program

Superintendent Francois shared Gateway's update on the 2025-2026 Transcripted Credit partnership, highlighting 666 student course enrollments at Waterford Union High School and total tuition savings of $368,978.76 for local families. The letter also recognizes the WUHS staff members who facilitated these dual-credit opportunities. Thank you Principal Foster for attending and receiving an award on the District's behalf. This partnership continues to provide an exceptional opportunity for students to simultaneously earn both high school and Gateway credit, while establishing their career plan.

Dr. Francois further updated the Board on the search for the District's Admin. Assistant, Connie Newton's replacement. There were 265 applicants, 62 met the qualifications for further consideration, 12 were vetted in virtual 30 minute interviews which left 4 for in-person interviews which are in process today and tomorrow. Member Doug Schwartz is on that team and after background checks and reference checks could potentially have someone in place by the next Board meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Schwartz reminded members of the annual Veteran's Day assembly scheduled for November 11, 2026 with the assembly held at 10:00-11:00 a.m. and a luncheon to follow for our Veterans and their guests.

ADJOURN FROM OPEN MEETING

The Board may convene in closed session to consider this item under two provisions of the Open Meetings Law: Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(e) (deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public property and the investing of public funds, where competitive or bargaining reasons require closed session), and Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(g) (conferring with legal counsel concerning strategy for litigation in which the District is involved).

ADJOURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENUE IN OPEN SESSION

C. Responsible Investment in the Stadium Complex: Meeting ADA and Safety Requirements While Expanding Community Use

Superintendent Francois introduced the recommendation to complete the athletic master plan in all three phases: stadium, baseball, parking and softball, an estimated $11.4M. The mill rate stays at 4.15 whether the Board builds or not. The only question is whether the levy room goes to paying down existing debt early or to fixing facilities the community uses every week. The plan uses $2M the district already holds and a note repaid by the community service (Fund 80) levy. The note is paid off by March 2032 with no referendum. Superintendent Francois expressed for the Board to not lose sight that this really is largely an ADA compliance and safety issue as well. We have now done everything we can in the school building interior itself to make sure we are ADA safe and compliant and we need to focus on the athletic fields.

Asset	Condition on record
Home bleachers (1,466 seats)	Fail ICC 300-2012: guardrail gaps over 4", guardrails below 42", wheelchair spaces used for garbage cans (J&D inspection, Aug. 22, 2025)
Track	Last resurfaced in 2014; one surface layer left and due for a recoat
Stadium lights	Installed about 1968; replacement parts no longer made; repairs in 2022 and 2026 costing tens of thousands each repair.
Parking, entrances and walks	Pavement failing; north entrance must be regraded for ADA; culverts need replacing; no accessible sidewalk to ADA stalls
Playing field	One grass field carries football, soccer, band and community use; worn to soil by late October

Point of Beginning (POB) delivered final estimates and plans for three options:

Option	Scope	Estimated cost	Note needed	Paid off
1. Mill and overlay	Mill and overlay the track asphalt with a new rubber surface; resurface jump runways; aerate, topdress and overseed the grass field; overlay plaza walks and the existing parking lot	$964,924	None; paid from existing capital, and levy room goes to debt payoff	—
2. Stadium improvements	Turf field, 8-lane track, field events, 2,000-seat bleacher with veterans deck, press box, LED lights, scoreboard, new entries with ADA ramp, practice field, expanded west lot and new stadium lot	$9,136,230	$7,136,230	March 2031
3. Full master plan (recommended)	Option 2 plus baseball and softball	**$11,412,193**	**$9,412,193**	**March 2032**

Option 1 spends nearly $1M and still leaves the home bleachers failing code, lights that cannot be repaired, entrances that are not accessible, and parking that is too small for stadium events. **Option 2** fixes the stadium and parking. **Option 3** finishes the athletic master plan in one program, at the same tax rate as doing nothing.

Recommended Option 3:

Option 3 by component (POB, Oct. 23, 2026)	Cost
Stadium improvements and parking (Option 2)	$9,136,230
Baseball: fencing, bullpens, double batting cage, fan space	$457,375
Softball: new field, dugouts, concession/press box, scoreboard, ADA walkways	$1,818,588
Total	**$11,412,193**

The north entrance now includes an ADA ramp and stair and a retaining wall. All figures include 25% for contingency, design, general conditions, bonds and construction administration. Turf and lighting for baseball and softball are optional add-ons and are not included.

Recommended Funding Strategy:
Building everything at the 4.15 rate, borrow only after bids are in, and let sponsors shrink the note.

Source	Amount
Fund 46 capital improvement trust	$1,000,000
Unspent bond proceeds and construction contingency	$1,000,000
G.O. promissory note (Fund 38), repaid by the Fund 80 levy	$9,412,193 maximum
Total	**$11,412,193**

Jim McClowry (Athletics & Activities Director) and Coaches Matt Read, Joe Vogt, Michele Sittig and Maddie Bartol appeared for presentation and discussion.

Financial & Project Overview (Presented by Jim McClowry)
Jim McClowry, Athletic and Activities Director appeared to discuss with the Board immediate updates and repairs required due to safety codes, accessibility and end of service life for areas throughout the outdoor athletic fields, track, bleachers, walkways and parking lots. He also discussed what we can do as a District to improve the athletic facilities for our students and community.

- The proposed physical education, community access, and athletic complex project includes comprehensive upgrades to parking, lights, seating, track, playing fields and ADA accessibility code updates.
- The total estimated cost of the project is $11.4M.

- The funding strategy keeps the mill rate unchanged at $4.15, utilizing the previously certified levy.
- The project will not require any operating or referendum dollars and the note is projected to be paid off by 2032 (within approximately six years).
- The current stadium facility is severely underutilized, hosting only about 12 events per year (2-3 track events and 9-10 football games).
- The proposed upgrades will positively impact 14+ high school programs, physical education programs, and community programs (including park and recreation) and go from being used for 12 events a year for 285 days a year.

Athletics Impact & Field Conditions, Track & Field Impact (Presented by the Coaches)

- Spring sports (baseball, softball, and soccer) face significant competitive disadvantages and scheduling challenges due to poor field conditions.
- Current grass fields hold water and flood easily, frequently forcing practices to be moved indoors, off-site or pushed to late hours (7:00 PM to 9:00 PM) and younger teams can't practice.
- The lack of a turf field requires teams to travel to off-site facilities (such as those in Burlington or Franklin) just to practice or play games.
- Adding a turf field would drastically expand usable practice time for over 40 athletes per program, eliminating the need to practice in gymnasiums for the first weeks of the season.
- Without a playable outdoor surface, athletes are currently entering their first competitive games of the season without having practiced on a full-size field.
- The current track is well beyond its usable life, posing active safety risks to athletes and requiring immediate resurfacing.
- The high school is currently limited to hosting only one track meet per year because opposing conference schools refuse to compete on the degraded surface.
- Student-athletes are unable to practice block starts in their assigned lanes due to severe track damage, such as patched areas from burst pipes.
- The stadium's current bleachers are not ADA-compliant, and the track layout lacks a proper designated "home side" for spectators.
- Throwing events (shot put and discus) currently lack safe, dedicated areas and need to be integrated properly into the facility to protect athletes and spectators.
- Upgrading the track and field facilities is critical for ensuring student safety, maintaining competitive equity, and supporting Division 1 state-level athletes.

Board members thanked the coaches and Jim McClowry for their presentation. Bzdawka commented that in order for this to move forward, it needs to be addressed how community use will be incorporated. Wishau agrees and is concerned that the community needs to know that these funds are not coming from the current referendum funds. After the current referendum passed, the Board had agreed that we need to prioritize building back the trust of the community. Datka is concerned that the timing is poor and if we were to move through with this when we haven't finished the current referendum we are compromising when we want something bigger. Purtell discussed the importance of community use and the availability. McClowry discussed how in one of his previous districts, they found many ways to expand the facility to various community uses. Collectively as a group the Board recognizes these improvements as genuine needs, but as a group they need to be realistic about the voice of the community and acknowledge the previous sentiment that they have had as it relates to athletic improvements. Further discussion was held regarding being fiscally responsible to the community. Discussions with McClowry regarding breaking the project up into

phases and possible fundraising. Further discussion was held regarding the repairs and updates that are absolutely necessary for safety. Schwartz explained that if we can show the community that the current referendum is being delivered on time and under budget the community will engage positively.

Superintendent Francois assured that the compliance issue has been completely vetted with DPI, our auditor and bond counsel, legal counsel and all have agreed that this is acceptable practice by DPI. Our auditor will attest that the use is compliant with Fund 80. This is a legal way for the District to pay itself back without going to referendum, and is completely segregated from any referendum funds. Additionally, the community service use will be required to show the auditors for compliance purposes. Francois stated that this is the answer to the questions that the community challenged the District with, that if the District wants to fix our athletic fields then find a way to pay for it that is not a referendum and that is what is presented tonight. The District will not have to raise taxes, there is no referendum, we have found the money inside of a mechanism that we pay ourselves back. We are going to deliver on our promise to fix the infrastructure first through the referendum and that is what we are doing and this is a plan to keep moving forward and upgrade a large amount of the athletic fields and its infrastructures.Francois further broke down the three options again with further detail and cautioned Option 1 at $965k will buy a couple of years and is temporary. The track will need to be resurfaced again in 2 years, parking lots and walkways will last 2 years, bleachers would not hold all the students and band, lights are still in disrepair and ADA problems are not resolved. Option 2 would be at $9.1M with a $7.1M note paid off by 2031 and would address all the stadium, track, field, bleacher, ADA compliant issues properly. But it would not include the baseball/softball fields. The concern with the softball fields is the unpermitted drainage that the DNR could come in and shut down at any time. Wishau expressed that the $965k is seems like throwing money away but tonight we are not going to approve $11.4M or $9.1M because we need to have public buy-in. The Board discussed that we need to have this presented to the public, the timing and transparency. Francois stated that time is of the essence and a decision by November's meeting. There was a motion by Bzdawka, seconded by Purtell to table the discussion and decision regarding the stadium complex until the November meeting. All ayes; motion carried. Purtell discussed with members how many school districts across Wisconsin have utilized Fund 80 and the communities are thrilled with what they have. Bzdawka agreed that she wants the community to see and understand how they will be impacted in a positive way. McClowry agreed that our school is the center of our community and he wants our kids and the community at large to understand and feel that.

ADJOURN FROM OPEN MEETING

There was a motion by Wishau, seconded by Bzdawka to adjourn. All ayes; motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dennis Purtell, Clerk