



MEETING MINUTES

Attendees

Voting Members

Astor Williams, Board President
Lyle Schmitt, Board Vice President
Jonathan Cox, Board Member
Janelle Ewing, Board Member
Jesse Knight, Board Member
Krystal Madlock, Board Member
Stacie Mills, Board Member

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Jared Smith, Superintendent
Amy Schmidt, Executive Director of Teaching & Learning
J.T. Anderson, Chief Financial Officer / Board Treasurer
Sam Kreassig, Interim Director of Human Resources
Pam Arndorfer, Assistant to the Superintendent / Board Secretary

I. Call to Order

President Williams called the meeting to order at 5:09pm.

Vice President Lyle Schmitt read a prepared statement thanking those who took the time to voice their comments to board members via email and phone, and to those taking the time to attend tonight's meeting. He also shared his thoughts on the proposed maximum tax levy and stated that the Board and District's plan is to revise the proposed tax rate from \$17.84 to \$16.75.

II. Public Hearing for the 2025-2026 Budget Certification

The Public Hearing for the 2025-2026 Budget Certification was declared open by President Williams at 5:18pm.

- Randy Ducharme, 148 Moyer, Waterloo - as an owner of rental properties, stated he is not able to afford tax increases, nor are his disabled tenants; with increased inflation, utility cost increases, etc., he stated that Iowa is pushing away the poor, disabled, and elderly.
- Theo Tepaske, 302 Sunnyside Ave, Waterloo - stated that his property taxes have

gone up along with the cost of everything else; he also referenced the tariffs on imports, and stated that it's hard enough to pay for current taxes, let alone for any increase.

- Susan Rollinger, 215 Prospect Blvd, Waterloo - stated that she is excited about the new high school, but believes more clarity is needed about the increase in property taxes especially after the recent high school vote.
- Glen Anderkay, 316 Prospect, Waterloo - questioned why not reduce taxes rather than raise them? He stated that transportation costs would go down if the high school was more centrally located and if there were sidewalks allowing kids to walk to school. He believes the District needs to get better participation out of students, reduce taxes, and increase performance,
- David Sullivan, 814 Randolph, Waterloo - stated his taxes are consistently going up, and this property tax asking is too high for the citizens of Waterloo.
- April Melton, 203 Westbourne Rd, Waterloo - stated that this tax rate increase would raise her retired dad's taxes to \$1800/year, which equates to one month of his entire income; she further stated it is not his problem that the District has mismanaged their money.
- Randi McDonald, 1291 Scott Ave, Waterloo - stated that his taxes have not gone down as was claimed earlier. He believes that the high school being located on the far side of town will increase transportation costs and students on the other side of the town will lose out.
- Harrison Cass, 191 Pershing Road, Waterloo - thanked the Board, Superintendent and staff for all the work they are doing trying to balance the budget while maintaining the quality of programming. As a former Superintendent, he recognizes this is not an easy time and can be a very emotional experience.
- Ken Tollman, 5293 Gilbertville Road, Waterloo - stated that the District does not need a new big high school, and believes property assessments and taxes are already too high.
- Evie Putz, 822 Kingsley Avenue, Waterloo - shared that many of the students taking part in the programs previously mentioned as the "heart" of Waterloo Schools (Cyber, robotics, band) have had to stop attending because they couldn't afford it and the tax increase will only accelerate that issue; she also spoke in support of school librarians.
- Andrew Kessler, 1000 Bishop Avenue, Waterloo - stated that 3/4 of students are in poverty, and if we keep raising taxes all of Waterloo will be in poverty and the middle class will go away.
- Todd Obadal, 124 Amity Drive, Waterloo - spoke about transparency. He believes that the distributed tax sheet is not transparent and is disinformation as it assumes no change in assessed valuation. He also believes the high school project is causing the tax increase.
- Bob Mervin, Waterloo resident - stated his property taxes will go up by approximately \$500, the highest increase ever. He believes this will cause people to move out to smaller communities with less taxes.
- Ted Lederman, 1758 Pinehurst Lane, Waterloo - referring to a statement in the Courier regarding the decrease in number of employees by about 100 staff, is wondering why the school board has not ensured fiscal responsibility for the past 2-3-4 years. He is hoping for better fiscal responsibility from this school board in the future.
- Monique Walters, 5404 Kimball Ave, Waterloo - stated that any business operating

like this would be out of business. She stated that assessment scores are below state average in ELA and math and questioned why staff deserve a pay raise when students are not performing. She also stated 28% is a lot to be expected of the citizens of this community.

- Mike Ambrose, 9011 Kimball Ave - stated that he lives in the county, not the city, and would not be able to live in the City with the high taxes. He also spoke about the tax form which is not easy to understand. He stated the Board should get rid of overpaid administrators and believes there are more administrators than teachers.
- LuAnne Woodward, 1520 East Ridgeway Ave, Waterloo - would like to see more transparency and detail about where the funding is going.
- Michael Chapman, 2761 Deere Road, Waterloo - thanked Board members for their work. He stated that the community was not involved in budgetary and tax discussions/decisions and asked if there is a way to get them involved in these decisions. He also stated that while SAVE funds are paying for the schools, the costs of operating the new high school will come out of the general budget. In addition, he stated that tax rates may not have increased, individual taxes certainly have.
- Sheryl Christensen, 1702 East Mitchell, Waterloo - read an article about the evil of property taxes and that the higher the taxes, the less productive and poor society becomes.
- Cassandra Creighton, 1213 Vine Street, Waterloo - stated that the tax hike is frustrating and deceiving. She asked how many board members and administrators have students that attend Waterloo Schools, and wondered if the Board holds town hall meetings to let people know what's going on in the community?
- Sam Schumaker, 406 North 3rd Street, Waterloo - shared that she is a single mother working 4 jobs to take care of her daughter. She stated that her property taxes will go up roughly \$500 a year, which she cannot afford.

The Superintendent's recommendation is to close the Public Hearing for the 2025-2026 Budget Certification.

Motion made by: Jesse Knight

Motion seconded by: Stacie Mills

Voting:

Astor Williams - Yes

Lyle Schmitt - Yes

Jonathan Cox - Yes

Janelle Ewing - Yes

Jesse Knight - Yes

Krystal Madlock - Yes

Stacie Mills - Yes

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:07pm.

III. Adjourn

The Superintendent's recommendation is that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by: Jesse Knight

Motion seconded by: Stacie Mills

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

The meeting adjourned at 6:07pm.

Pamela G. Arndorfer, Board Secretary