

Board of Education
Worth School District 127
Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
December 10, 2025
Dr. Rosemary Lucas Administration Building
11218 S. Ridgeland Ave. Worth, Illinois

Administrators:

Dr. Mark Fleming, Superintendent
Cindy Dykas, Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager/CSBO
Dr. Sinead Chambers, Director of Student Services
Dr. Lisa Lyke, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Robert Jeffers, Director of Technology
David Dvorchak, Director of Facilities and Grounds
Jason Tooth, Principal, Worth Junior High
Brittan Russell, Assistant Principal, Worth Junior High
Ashley Toms Bonnstetter, Principal, Worthwoods Elementary
Alyse Koehler, Assistant Principal, Worth Elementary & Worthwoods Elementary

Board Recording Secretary

Jill Moore

Others Present

Jeff Pagano, WW
Mary Zirngibl, WE
Tiffany Alexander-Harris, WE

1. MEETING OPENING

A. CALL TO ORDER

President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Michelle Egan entered public session at 6:09 p.m.

Absent: Danette Keeler, David Blanks

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President, Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. WORTH LIONS CLUB "TON OF FOOD" DRIVE

Dr. Fleming stated that the Worth Lions Club "Ton of Food" Drive that took place on November 22, 2025, at Worth Junior High. Mr. Bill Nilles worked with staff and the event was a huge success.

B. WORTH PARK DISTRICT "DECORATE A TREE"

Dr. Fleming stated that Worth Elementary and Worthwoods students made ornaments for the Worth Park District "Decorate a Tree" program. Officer Cozzi and Linda Esposito delivered ornaments on behalf of Worth School District.

C. FOIA REQUESTS

Dr. Fleming stated that the district received one (1) FOIA request since the last board meeting and it has been responded to in a timely manner.

3. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

A. FY2026 SCHOOL MAINTENANCE PROJECT GRANT

1. FY 2026 School Maintenance Project Grant

- \$40 million appropriated for this year's grants
- Dollar for Dollar state matching grant program that provides awards up to \$50,000 exclusively for the maintenance or upkeep of buildings for educational purposes.
- Timeline is two years to complete from grant award date, so sometime in FY2028
- Worth 127 proposal is for a section of roof replacement at Worth Elementary in Summer 2026 for a total estimated cost of \$180,000, of which \$50,000 will be grant funded
- This project will be completed in tandem with the SMPG from 2025 for another section of roof at Worth Elementary
- If you want to move forward with this, the next step is to approve the motion item C.

B. RECAP 2025 TAX LEVY PRESENTATION

1. 2025 Tax Levy

Asking for the 2025 Tax Levy to be approved at this meeting. All the figures are the same that was presented in November. Just a few things to highlight:

Slide 2 - Review basic terms of the tax levy process

- With the CPI at 2.9%, the lowest since the 2021 levy, this year's levy ask is 4.5% greater than last year's extension. In following the Truth in Taxation act, it is under 5% so there is no need to hold a public hearing today.
- Speaking of the Truth in Taxation Act, there is a new legal requirement. For at least 30 consecutive days, the Truth in Taxation Notice must be posted on or near the top of the homepage or link on the homepage of the district website. It is currently there, thus we are in compliance.

Slide 3 - P.A. 102-0895

- New section of the School Code, effective May 23, 2022
- Each School District now must publicly disclose the cash reserve balance of all funds held by the school district related to its operational levy
- Disclosures must occur at the public hearing at which the district certifies its budget and levy for the taxable year
- Worth School District 127 has complied with this by posting this information in Board Docs each month
- As of June 30, 2025, the Operational Cash Reserve Balances (all funds except Debt Service) was \$17,840,522

Slide 4 - P.A. 103-0394

- New section of the School Code, effective August 2023, requires school districts to annual calculate their Operational Fund cash reserves
- If the combined balance of these funds exceeds 250% over the average annual expenditures over the prior three years, then the Board must adopt and file an "Operational funds reserve reduction plan" with ISBE
- As of June 30, 2025, Worth 127 was at 43%; far below the threshold requiring the reduction plan

Slide 11 - CPI (Inflation)

- 2024 CPI which affects the 2025 Levy was down to 2.9% (year prior was 3.4%)
- CPI in December 2025 is expected to continue to decline (announcement in January 2026). This will affect next year's levy.

Slide 12 - Tax Levy vs. Tax Extension

- Doesn't matter what is levied, the district only receives CPI increase plus extra for new property growth.
- The middle row of data shows large levy increases over prior year extension, for 2015-2018, but since receiving the PTRG in 2019, these figures have significantly come down
- Row above is a year over year extension increase, which is roughly CPI and very minimal increases
- 2019 was a sharp decline because it was the first opportunity for the Property Tax Relief Grant
- 2020 and 2021 were low increases due to low CPI and continuing to receive PTRG
- 2022 was up as a result of CPI being at 7.0% (again, capped at 5.0%)
- 2023 was low, far below the CPI 5% cap.
- 2024 was negative, due to receiving a double PTRG in one tax year.
- We are anticipating 2025 actual extension to be closer to 3% or less, matching CPI.

Next Steps

- Again, the board will not have to conduct a public hearing during this meeting because the levy is less than a 5% increase over last year's extension, per the Truth in Taxation requirement.
- The board will vote on the 2025 Tax Levy resolutions (Motions, Item B) which will be filed with the Cook County Clerk's office, prior to the last Tuesday in December.
- In 2021, PA 102-0519 passed, providing taxing districts that annual lose thousands of tax dollars in taxpayer refunds, the opportunity to receive their full extensions without concern that large refunds will interfere with planned expenditures. See the attached memo from January 2022 explaining the following:
- This Public Act gives Worth School District three options:
 - Keep all of the Recapture Levy – this passes the refunds given in the recent tax year to the rest of the taxing body, resulting in additional taxes to every tax payer;
 - Abate all of the Recapture Levy – consider the tax objections/credits from the recent tax year a loss to the district as budgeted and not charge it back to the taxpayers of Worth;
 - Keep a portion of the Recapture Levy and Abate a portion of the Recapture Levy – a mix of both options above.
- For Tax Years 2000-2023, the Board of Education abated all the Recapture Levy in each of those four years, and over those four years, totaling \$763,000
- The reason the abatement option was selected was because of the many years of the district receiving the property tax relief grant, which provided the local taxpayers with relief from the property tax burden. Abating the Recapture Levy gave further relief to the community. Both these property tax relief opportunities complemented each other, rather than contradict.
- In January, you will decide on what Recapture Levy option you will select. The total amount of refunds from the 2024 tax year is \$283,676.

FINANCE REPORTS

November 2025 reports are attached for review.

4. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

No Report

5. DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

No Report

6. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No Citizens' Remarks

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Action (Consent): A. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): B. BOARD BILLS PAYABLE

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Accounts Payable for \$458,404.14 (EDUCATIONAL); \$46,401.24 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); \$117,498.33 (TRANSPORTATION); \$2,662.50 (CAPITAL PROJECTS); and \$1,725.71 (TORT IMMUNITY) for a total of \$626,691.92."

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): C. PAYROLL SUMMARY

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Payroll Summary for the Education Fund in the amount of \$846,824.95, the Building Fund in the amount of \$60,240.08, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of \$53,641.08."

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): D. APPROVAL OF TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR ATTENDANCE AT THE TRI-CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO, IL ON NOVEMBER 20-23, 2025 AS OUTLINED IN BOARD BILLS PAYABLE

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): E. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - SUSANA GOMEZ - LUNCH SUPERVISOR - EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 3, 2025

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): F. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - AMY SANCHEZ - LUNCH SUPERVISOR - EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 20, 2025

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): G. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - SARAH BUXTON - LUNCH SUPERVISOR - EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 20, 2025

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): H. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - BRENDA ACOSTA - PARAPROFESSIONAL - EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 2025

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): I. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - RETIREMENT - CHRISTINE GAWEL - 6TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER - EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2028-2029 SCHOOL YEAR

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): J. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - RETIREMENT - LESLIE ZATOR - READING INTERVENTIONIST - EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2029-2030 SCHOOL YEAR

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): K. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - RETIREMENT - COLLEEN DEGONIA - 8TH GRADE ELA TEACHER - EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2029-2030 SCHOOL YEAR

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): L. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - RETIREMENT - KELLY KORDAS - 1ST GRADE TEACHER - EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2029-2030 SCHOOL YEAR

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

8. MOTIONS

Action: A. REGULAR BOARD MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the November 12, 2025 regular meeting."

Motion by Missy Sinclair, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action: B. 2025 TAX LEVY

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution providing for the Tax Levy for the Year 2025, adopt the Resolution providing for 2025 Tax Levy for Working Cash; adopt the Resolution providing for 2025 Tax Levy for Special Education Purposes; authorize the President to sign the Certificate of Compliance with the Truth in Taxation Law; adopt the Resolution Authorizing Reduction of Certain Fund Levies for the 2025 Levy Year, as recommended by the Assistant Superintendent for Business Services/CSBO and the Superintendent."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action: C. APPROVAL OF FY2026 SCHOOL MAINTENANCE PROJECT GRANT

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the application to proceed with applying for a \$50,000 School Maintenance Project Grant for Fiscal Year 2026."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

9. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION AND/OR REPORTS/REQUESTS

Board Members took time to discuss and share their experiences at the Joint Annual Conference on November 21-23, 2025 and how beneficial and informative the sessions were that they attended.

10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS

No Citizens' Remarks

11. CLOSED SESSION

No Closed Session

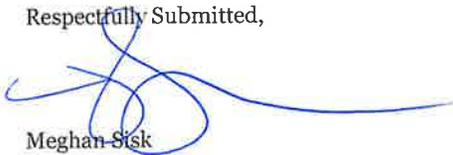
12. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m."

Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,



Meghan Sisk
Secretary, Board of Education



Drew Sernus
President, Board of Education

