

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF  
SENECA TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL, DISTRICT 160, SENECA, IL

A regular meeting of the Seneca Township High School Board of Education was held on December 18, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in the Board of Education Room at Seneca High School. Secretary Rich Hamilton called the meeting to order with roll call.

1. ROLL CALL Present: Johnson, Hamilton, Eltrevoog, Yandell, Biros  
Absent: Frye, Olson

Others present: Superintendent Dan Stecken, Principal Mike Coughlin, Dean of Students Mark Giertz, Recording Secretary Nadine Maierhofer, Treasurer Rob Maierhofer, CSBO Stacey Gould, Band/Choral Director, SHS Teacher Mr. Windham, and his Piano Class.

2. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS AND VISITORS

Brandon Lomeli was introduced to the Board as he started approximately 6 weeks ago as our new IT Systems Administrator working with IT Director Marty Harig. Dr. Stecken mentioned that Brandon has an IVCC background in IT with a wealth of credentials and certifications; we are fortunate to have him with us here at SHS.

3. SUCCESS AT SHS

Dr. Stecken recognized our Special Education Department, their IEP/504 Caseload is up to about 60 students. Under the direction of Jill Rockrohr and Mark Giertz, all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are certified and continuing to grow professionally. The team is doing an outstanding job helping our students get the assistance and supports they need in the classrooms.

4. INVESTMENT REPORT

Dr. Stecken reviewed the Investment Report. Secretary Hamilton stated that the Investment Report would stand approved as presented, subject to audit.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Dr. Stecken reviewed the Financial Dashboards.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Rob Maierhofer presented the Treasurer's Report. Secretary Hamilton stated that the Treasurer's Report would stand approved subject to audit.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Regular Minutes - November 20, 2024
- B. Building, Grounds, Transportation Committee Minutes-November 27, 2024
- C. Finance/Personnel Committee Minutes-November 27, 2024

Dr. Stecken stated he received no additions or corrections to the minutes.  
President Frye stated minutes would stand approved as presented.

8. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Dr. Stecken reviewed the accounts payable. Secretary Hamilton asked for a motion to approve the Accounts Payable as presented.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded by Cory Hamilton to approve the Accounts Payables as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Johnson, Yandell, Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton  
Nays:  
Motion Carried

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests for public comment were received.

10. EDUCATIONAL ITEM

Mr. Windham and his Piano Class performed several Christmas carols for the Board at the start of Board Meeting. He stated that his students just learned/started taking piano lessons here at the beginning of 1<sup>st</sup> Semester and he was very proud of their progress.

He continued stating that he was excited with the concerts they were hosting here at SHS this school year, which included our feeder schools. Getting the band/choir students from SGS, MVK, and Milton Pope into the school gives them an idea of some of the things they could be involved in when it's their time to graduate and move into the land of the Irish.

Mr. Windham thanked the Board for letting him advance professionally take extra classes to improve his teaching techniques and expand the dual credit opportunities in the classes he teaches in our music program. He is overall excited about what they are all doing in the classroom and for the community.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Members from the Building, Grounds & Transportation Committee and Finance/Personnel Committee gave reports from their recent meetings.

12. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Finance Report

1. Adopt 2025-2026 Budget

Dr. Stecken stated the Budget Hearing was held prior to the meeting. This budget is a Big Picture budget, and a more refined amended budget will be adopted in September, 2025.

A motion was made by Jason Eltrevoog and seconded by Cory Yandell to adopt the 2025-2026 Budget Resolution as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Eltrevoog, Hamilton, Johnson, Yandell, Biros

Nays:

Motion Carried

2. Adopt 2024 Levy

Dr. Stecken stated that the Levy that was previously reviewed, follows a similar timeline and we have been discussing the levy and associated property tax rates since October. Last year we lowered the district tax rate to \$1.70838, already two cents below the abated 5-year agreement. This would now make a 4-cent surplus. Last year we did fully anticipate continuing our set rate at \$1.72838. This year we are going to ask for less than 5% (4.9%) which would keep us out of the "black box" newspaper territory. For the second consecutive year, Constellation LaSalle's EAV increase from \$460 to \$530 Million and significant increase in property tax assessed values in LaSalle County, as well as an increase in assessment in Grundy County have us getting below our 5% in the "ask for" category of our levy.

Dr. Stecken mentioned that in the Board packet there was a sheet with 3 levy scenarios side-by-side. The left column represents what we will "ask for." We will adopt this levy here in December. The middle two columns are the levy to which we believe we could abate to \$1.70838. The column on the far right is the actual amount received with LAST YEAR's levy. Because the December 2024 levy will represent a 4.9% ask for increase based on last year's actual collections, we did not need to hold a "Truth in Taxation" hearing this year. Without the need for a black box, there will be no need to advertise it in the paper using the

infamous "Black Box." Keeping in mind our "ask for" will be abated down to the agreed upon rate. Dr. Stecken affirmed that in the last 9 years, the property tax rate of Seneca Township High School District 160 has continued to decrease from almost \$1.80 now down to roughly \$1.70. Again, while property assessments have risen locally, especially in Manlius Township, the tax rate by SHS District 160 has been stable and even decreased.

A motion was made by Tiffay Biros and seconded by Joe Johnson to adopt the 2024 Levy as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton, Johnson, Yandell

Nays:

Motion Carried

3. Turf Project Pay App 3

Dr. Stecken mentioned the project is progressing well with our partnerships between Vissering and ATG Ram Turf. The pay applications for ATG Ram Turf are a little shorter than compared to the previous Pay Apps that SMC generated in the past with the gymnasium project. This pay application is \$293,203.02. Through this pay app we are at 48% completion and paid to date. Including retainage, we have roughly \$1.45 million

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded by Jason Eltrevoog to approve the Pay App 3 to ATG Ram Turf for the turf project as presented.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Johnson, Yandell, Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton

Nays:

Motion Carried

4. District Communications-Apptegy, Journeys 12

Dr. Stecken explained we are moving forward to update our website hosting contract, shifting from SOCS and moving to Apptegy. This transition has been very smooth, where we will have a newly designed website, capable of much better inside and outside district communications, naturally merging our social media platforms within the website as well. They did give us a sizeable implementation discount of 80% to do this during the school year. From our IT Department to those that push our communications, we are very excited about this change. So far, the Apptegy team has been great to work with.

Dr. Stecken explained that Journeys 12 is a new company we would like to possibly work with in regard to producing our newsletter. He mentioned that they send in a communications specialist to conduct on-site interviews of staff and students, take professional pictures, and write articles on the topics that we would

like portrayed in the newsletter. He also stated that they will mail one to every family in the Seneca High School mailing "district." We would like to do. This with the 2025 Spring Newsletter as a trial run to see not only what we would receive in a final product, but to get feedback from the families that receive them. Within that first edition will be a QR code survey for feedback from the community members.

B. Personnel Report

1. FMLA Request - Mrs. Taylor Neurohr

Dr. Stecken stated that our Nurse, Taylor Neurohr, has requested FMLA leave for the birth of her first child.

2. District Communications- Communications Director

Dr. Stecken stated he wanted to provide an up-to-date job description of what a Communications Director would look like here at Seneca High School. "Senecaizing" our personnel to meet our needs, he would like to have Matt Houchin use his skills to his fullest extent; a full-time communications specialist, sports marketing, SHS branding initiatives, and communications under one umbrella. He would like Matt to continue being a part-time sub; however if Matt does go into this new position we could need to hire a flex teacher/part-time substitute or an additional full-time substitute teacher to replace him. Dr. Stecken reminded the BOE that we no longer have the local substitutes that we used to have in place. Matt currently substitutes roughly 97% of his days at SHS.

C. Building, Grounds & Transportation

1. Building Update

Dr. Stecken reviewed various building-related projects that Mr. Harsted and his crew were working on.

2. Turf Project Update

Dr. Stecken mentioned there is a new updated schedule in the Board packet. He continued saying that due to the sub-freezing weather we are about 2 weeks behind schedule from the updated schedule provided by Don Bolinger on 11/25/24 for our Building Grounds Committee meeting. The softball field turf install is complete, with fencing to begin after the Holiday Break. There is a softball completion date of 1/20/25, and he is hoping to have baseball completed by mid-February. The only other addition to the project are the purchase and installation of stadium seating

form Carroll Seating. We have an early estimate of mid-February for delivery and installation of those seats.

3. Facility Plan Update

Dr. Stecken mentioned that the most recent facility plan update is included in the Board Packet. The sections are color coded, green is completed, and yellow is in progress. The next section is long-range plans that are 1+ years out to our facility plan, which is part of The Seneca Way Strategic Plan.

D. The Seneca Way Strategic Plan

Dr. Stecken stated that over the last four years the Administrative Team has worked hard to build our brands, including *The Seneca Way*, into all that we do here at Seneca High School. Each month going forward he plans on highlighting some of the internal work we are doing to inform the Board of Education of the District Mission, Vision, and Goals and the efforts to achieve those goals.

E. Joint Annual Conference Review

Dr. Stecken shared with the Board his review of the 2024 Joint Annual Convention as well as a short narrative from Jill Rockrohr and Mark Giertz.

F. New Courses 2025-26

Dr. Stecken mentioned that we were going to unveil a new dual credit course, Sociology, last year but were worried about enrollments declining. He stated we decided to move forward and offer the dual credit for Sociology for the 2025-26 school year. We are also going to open it up to the Juniors to enroll in the dual credit sociology and psychology so that a student can have the ability to take psychology and sociology in consecutive years if they choose.

G. Executive Session

Dr. Stecken stated that he would ask for an Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

13. PRINCIPAL/DEAN OF STUDENTS REPORT

A. Final Exam Schedule & Exemptions

Mr. Coughlin reviewed the Final Exam Schedule stating that it is the same schedule as last year with 3 finals on the first two days and 2 final exams on the last day. He did state that they has some technical difficulties with the auto response that the students were to get, this will be tweaked and corrected for our spring finals.

B. Dean of Student Report

Mr. Giertz briefly mentioned his section would be covered in the Executive Session.

14. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION AND FOIA REPORT

Dr. Stecken stated there were several Newsletters from the Superintendent dated November 13, 2024 - December 3, 2024.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded by Cory Yandell, to adjourn to Executive Session, to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employee, student discipline and pending litigation.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Johnson, Yandell, Biros, Eltrevoog, Hamilton  
Nays:  
Motion Carried

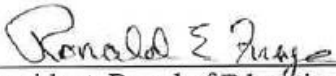
15. ACTION ITEMS AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were no action items.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Secretary, Board of Education

  
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President, Board of Education

1-15-25  
Date

  
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Secretary, Board of Education

1-15-25  
Date