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 February 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. President Frye called the meeting to order with roll call.

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

 Absent:

Others present: Superintendent Dan Stecken, Principal Mike Coughlin, Dean of Students Mark Giertz, Recording Secretary Nadine Maierhofer, Treasurer Rob Maierhofer, and student award winners and their guests.

2. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS AND VISITORS

The student award winners were recognized.

3. SUCCESS AT SHS

Dr. Stecken stated we had 5 state-bound wrestlers with a cake for breakfast send off and RISE had their donut and hot chocolate breakfast all happening this morning. He stated at the last home basketball game Mr. Witte recognized a “superfan” of ours, Gloria Myers. Gloria has been coming to the games for over 20 years. The team signed a jersey and presented it to her at the game.

4. INVESTMENT REPORT

Dr. Stecken reviewed the Investment Report. President Frye 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 to the Board. President Frye stated that the Treasurer’s Report would stand approved subject to audit.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting Minutes, January 15, 2025
2. Building, Grounds, & Transportation Committee Minutes, February 10, 2025
3. Finance/Personnel Committee Minutes, February 10, 2025

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.

President Frye asked for a motion to approve the accounts payable as presented.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded by Rich Hamilton to approve the accounts payable as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

No requests for public comment were received.

10. EDUCATIONAL ITEM

Dr. Stecken went over a new event that has been worked on over the last year and a half. His Superintendent Advisory Committee is a group of 20+ students nominated by SHS teachers that are lending their voice on different subjects; one of their biggest is Seneca High School branding murals that are popping up around the campus. They have been working on showcasing different students in different areas along with their teachers and other staff members. Where Irish Pride is celebrated throughout the school in our athletics; they are wanting to recognize all that are doing great in the art, music, and vocational departments too! **Irish Fest** will be held on Wednesday April 16th during the day with our staff and students and into the evening, welcoming the community for tours and a fun night of professional and amateur performances. The day will start with students attending their hourly B Day teacher and travel to different activities to observe, ask questions, and see our students and staff on display in vocational lab areas and fine arts areas too. There will be two food trucks here for lunch and Seneca FFA pork chops, a motivational speaker, Jonelle Carter (former SHS graduate), Shark Tank Pitch from Mrs. Foster’s class; a professional Magician/Mentalist performance; and an SHS Talent Show. Later in the evening the community will be invited to participate and hear Hero’s End Band – 3 song act (lead guitarist SHS alumni Daniel Doloski); judge the winners of the SHS Student Talent Show; and see the Magician/Mentalist Mr. Mike O’Donnell. They will also get to tour the facility, all led by the Superintendent student advisory committee.

11. COMMITEE REPORTS

Joe Johnson gave a brief but detailed report from the Building Grounds and Transportation Committee Meeting that was held on February 10, 2025.

Jason Eltrevoog gave a brief but detailed report from the Finance/Personnel Committee Meeting that was held on February 10, 2025.

12. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

1. Finance Report

1. Preliminary EBC Renewal Rate

Dr. Stecken informed the Board that we received our preliminary rate renewal for medical insurance. While the Co-op’s overall PPO cost increase is 7.0% for this next year, we came in right at the average (8.3% last year and 9:4% increase two years ago.) He continued stating that there are several key reasons for the increase, including the impacts of overall inflationary times. Again, where this is our preliminary rate, he does expect this to be our number, which is still lower than our previous agent’s rate.

 2. Turf Project Pay App #5

Dr. Stecken briefed the Board on the breakdown of this Pay App
mentioning that we are almost 87% paid to date. The softball turf and fencing are both completed. The fencing at baseball is underway. At our 6th Pay App next month that will put us at about 98% paid.

A motion was made by Jason Eltrevoog and seconded by Rich Hamilton to approve the 5th Pay App to ATG Ram Turf for the Turf Project as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

 3. Soda Contract Out for Bid

Dr. Stecken mentioned that our current Pepsi contract is done this June. In the Board packet this month are the bidding documents that will go out after this meeting. Bids are due on March 11th at 11:00 AM. We have just about completed our 3rd year contract with Pepsi; we have had a better experience, overall, than Coke in prior years. We are seeking a 5-year contract for budgeting purposes. We will also weigh competitive bids for incentives. We hope to have a recommendation for you at the March Board meeting.

A motion was made by Tiffany Biros and seconded by Cory Yandell to approve the Soda Contract Bid documents as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

 4. Land Acquisition Purchase

Dr. Stecken stated there were several documents in their board packet for the Land Acquisition of Graves Farm Property. First off, all parties, SHS, SGS, Sellers agreed to the terms of the purchase of the property on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. It was a busy three months to get everything done, to have the PSA at your place here on-board meeting day and get the escrow check to The Cantlin Law Firm Real Estate Escrow Account. Once the contract is signed, and the escrow check is paid, we will have a deal in place. Our next few steps include working with BCA Architects, Chamlin Engineering for Due Diligence investigations including surveying, topography and environmental studies, soil borings, etc. and getting the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village in place for this project, which aligns with the District’s Strategic Goals. There will be a hearing held with all parties to discuss the project at future dates.

A motion was made by Rich Hamilton and seconded by Cory Yandell to approve the Land Acquisition Purchase as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

1. Personnel Report

1. Hire Math Teacher, Mr. Brent Smith

 2. Hire Science Teacher, Mrs. Albana Smith

Dr. Stecken mentioned we are extremely lucky to have both Brent and Albana joining our team. Mr. Smith was our finalist in the interviewing process as he performed to such a high level that it was quite clear in the interview that he is a special educator. He brings great character and an even stronger work ethic to the position.

He continued quoting a former colleague of Mrs. Smith’s “if there were a blue ribbon for best teacher in the state she would have won it multiple times; describing her passion as an educator and impact with her students.” She is a varsity volleyball coach, qualified to teach Dual Credit Biology and has developed course work to benefit health science majors in college, such as a microbiology class at her current school.

We are quite blessed to welcome both Mr. & Mrs. Smith here to our team.

 3. Accept Letter of Resignation from Paraprofessional Chelsea O’Neal

Dr. Stecken mentioned it was with a heavy heart we regrettably accept Mrs. Chelsea O’Neal’s letter of resignation. She is a key member of our Life Skills classroom and supports Mrs. Ugolini and Mrs. Rockrohr’s staff.

 4. Hire Communications Director Mr. Mathew Houchin

Dr. Stecken stated there were three highly qualified candidates for this position, with all three commenting that more school districts need this role. Mr. Houchin emerged as our final candidate of selection.

 5. Summer Workers

Dr. Stecken stated in their packet was the calendar and application for this year’s summer crew. Each year in February the Board approves the practice of hiring student summer workers. One change this year is that due to minimum wage laws we are advocating for all employees to be paid at the minimum wage $15/hour or more if experienced. The students will work from June 2, 2025, to August 1, 2025.

 6. Summer School Teachers

Dr. Stecken stated that this list of teachers was vetted through our Finance & Personnel Committee. Many of these teachers have experience doing this. While staffing availability issues will remove Dual Credit Speech, he is excited to welcome Extended School Year (ESY) to our Life Skills program. Each year we send students to an alternate placement for this and offering it to in-house will be better for our SHS students.

4. Vacancies Update

Dr. Stecken stated we have several anticipated vacancies due to retirement, including but not limited to:

1) – Math Instructor (hired at tonight’s meeting)

2) – Science Instructor (hired at tonight's meeting)

3) – Communications Director (hired at tonight's meeting)
4) – Full Time Substitute

5) – West Campus Custodian

6) – Life Skills Paraprofessional(s)

A motion was made by Sara Olson and seconded Jason Eltrevoog to approve the Personnel Report presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

1. Building, Grounds & Transportation
	1. Building Update

Dr. Stecken briefly went over some top items that Jim and his crew have been working on. First off, it seemed that the biggest snow mess to clean up was always between 4:30-5:30am. He stated that Joe, Bob, and Chris were always able to stay on top of it all getting everything plowed and salted. They continue to work on our HVAC system, helping some with the turf, working on setting up items in the IRISH Care Closet; stating that it is just about ready to be opened up to the students.

* 1. Turf Project Update

Dr. Stecken stated they had had several weeks of uninterrupted work which allowed the softball fencing to be completed, the wall pads installed on the fields, and all the turf to be installed on the baseball field. There are a few things still remaining for softball.

The baseball field would have the fencing completed within the next week. The netting, foul poles, dugout handrails, and netting tie in work will be begin this next week and take about a week to complete. Everything is still on task for project completion at the end of February with windscreen installation at the beginning of March. We hope to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 18th.

* 1. West Campus Usage Update

Dr. Stecken quickly went over the listing of the different kinds of events that have been held over at the West Campus. He continued saying that this facility is used daily and is pretty constant. Cleaning, maintaining, and supervising the gym has become an issue that we need to find solutions for. It truly, if not already without name only, is becoming a Community Center.

* 1. Hot Water Heater Project Bid Package

Dr. Stecken briefed the Board on the documents found in their board packet referencing the Hot Water Heater Project Bid Package, courtesy of Mr. Matt Lamps, from BCA Architects. On the summary page you will find the estimated cost of the project as well as a timeline.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded Tiffany Biros to approve the Hot Water Heater Project Bid Package as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

* 1. Land Lab Project Bid Package

Dr. Stecken stated that there were several documents on the Land Lab Project Bid Package in their packet courtesy of Mr. Matt Lamps, from BCA Architects. Here you will again find the estimated cost and the timeline for the project.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded Rich Hamilton to approve the Land Lab Project Bid Package as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

* 1. Health, Life, Safety Project Update

Dr. Stecken stated that this summer we will be performing some small health, life, and safety project work, including tuckpointing phases on the main campus through Otto Baum. The main campus, being mostly brick, needs some attention. We will plan to do a little piece of the project each summer moving forward.

We also have partnered with Chair Lifts of Illinois to install a new Chair Life upstairs to create redundancy in our school for those who need to use the elevator.

A motion was made by Jason Eltrevoog and seconded Sara Olson to approve the Health Life Safety Projects as presented.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

* 1. Accept 2026 Bus Bid

Dr. Stecken went over the Central State Bus Sales Bid from Mr. Jeff Martin for a 2026 84-passender diesel, non-air brake, yellow bus. Central States was the only bidder. He reminded the Board that the bus has been budgeted for the past couple of years. We can expect to receive the bus in June and pay for it on this fiscal year’s budget. We will be trading in our 2017 air brake bus in, getting a $30,000 trade in credit towards the $169,000 purchase of the new bus.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded Tiffany Biros to accept the bid from Central States Bus for the 2026 84-Passenger Bus Bid.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

* 1. PowerSchool Data Breach Update

Dr. Stecken mentioned that the PowerSchool data breach continues to be an ongoing item of discussion. He stated we have partnered with Wilson Elser legal group under the guidance of Klein, Thorpe, & Jenkins. According to Tom Melody, Wilson Elser specializes in this kind of work. Our PSIC deductible of $5,000 would cover any legal expenses we may have from this situation.

1. PRESS Policies – 2nd Reading

Dr. Stecken stated this would represent the second and final reading of the PRESS Policies. The policies in this month’s Board packet are a cleaned-up version from the January 15, 2025, Board Meeting. He also mentioned that the “Senecaized” policies were updated and included as well.

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded by Rich Hamilton to approve the PRESS Policy additions as presented in the second reading.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

1. Morris Seneca Co-op Programs

Dr. Stecken stated that inside their packet they would find the IHSA Co-op forms to renew the Morris-Seneca soccer and swimming co-op programs. Our numbers are not high in either sport, we do have 4 first-year male soccer players. Morris bills us based upon the number of SHS athletes we send over and this is typically an automatic renewal, but we would like to have the Board motion to approve.

A motion was made by Tiffany Biros and seconded by Cory Yandell to approve the continued Co-Op with Morris High School for boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls swimming and diving.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

1. School Calendars

Dr. Stecken presented the proposed amended 2024-25 school calendar, as we have only used 1 emergency day thus far this school year. He stated that we will wait until the March board meeting before officially approving the amended calendar.

The proposed 2025-26 school calendar is very similar to the 2023-24 school year because of the timing of Christmas break. Both calendars are on the agenda to be approved next month.

1. Executive Session

Dr. Stecken indicated he would ask for Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

12. PRINCIPAL/DEAN OF STUDENTS

1. Student Success Plan

Mr. Coughlin informed the Board he sees this program improving each year they have it. There were 129 meetings scheduled this year with students and parents. The SSP night with parents and students actually came in 3rd of our three nightly events hosted here at the school. One thing that is being tossed around is the idea of giving “free registration” to parents that are already on the “free and reduced” list. What is their incentive to entice them to attend all three meetings: 1) Parent/Teacher Conferences; 2) Curriculum Night; and 3) SSP (Student Success Plan) meetings to then receive “free” registration. He ended with 106 families had attended all three meetings and based on our current enrollment of 365 students, 29% attended all three meetings.

1. Summer School Brochure

Mr. Coughlin mentioned the Brochure was in the Board Member’s packet. The classes we will be offering will be World History and Driver’s Education. Classes are scheduled for June 2 – June 26, 2025, and the cost for Summer School has not increased.

1. Dean of Students Report

Mr. Giertz stated that his report would be given in the Executive Session.

13. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION AND FOIA REPORT

Dr. Stecken referred to a couple Thank You letters one from Youth Service Bureau, for our jean fundraiser for December; and one from Don Brown for his Christmas Gift Card he received. OSB Savings Bank sent a letter with their Donation to the school as part of their School Spirit Checking Program for 2024.

We had one FOIA from Sheila Norman, with Illinois Retired Teachers Association asking for information on our certified staff members retiring here in 2025, requesting names and emails of those retiring. He also mentioned there were several State Superintendent Weekly Newsletters that were included as supplemental readings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Joe Johnson and seconded by Rich Hamilton, to adjourn to Executive Session, including Administration, to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees, student discipline and pending litigation.

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

 Nays:

 Motion Carried

14. ACTION ITEMS AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

 There were no action items.

15 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

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President, Board of Education Date

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Secretary, Board of Education Date