WINOOSKI SCHOOLS
We are the future.

Winooski School Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 6:00 pm
WSD Library Learning Commons or via Google Meet
Google Meet Link: meet.google.com/szx-gwkh-oee

Policy Title 1.0 Ends Statement: All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.

Attendees: Wilmer Chavarria, Nicole Mace, Elom Essiba, Kaite Livermore, Erik Johnson, Joann Davidman, Robert Millar, Emily Bowers, Sarah Haven, Isaiah Donaldson, Jacie Barber, Allyssa Ravelin and Kathleen Walsh.

1. **Call to Order** (5 Minutes)
   a. Robert Millar calls the meeting to order @ 6:01pm.

2. **Agenda Review and Adjustments:** (5 Minutes)
   a. ***None Provided.***

3. **Announcements and Recognition**
   a. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
      i. Robert Millar acknowledges that Monday is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. It is important now more than ever to remember the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.
   b. Other Announcements and Recognitions
      i. ***None Provided.***

4. **Public Comments:** This item is reserved for comments and questions on topics that are not included on this agenda. Time for public comment is included by default for each item below.
   a. ***None Provided.***

5. **Consent Agenda:** (5 Minutes)
   a. Minutes of Meetings
      i. Special Board Meeting: January 7, 2026
   b. Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
      i. Approval of Bills:
   c. Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
      i. Announcement of Tuition
   d. Policy Title: 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
   e. Robert Millar looks for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
      i. Katie Livermore - "So Moved."
      ii. ***Passed Unanimously.***

6. **Executive Limitations (Policy Section II):** (20 minutes)
    a. Policy Title 2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities
        i. Discussion: Real Estate Update
            1. Wilmer Chavarria states that we are moving forward with purchasing contingent on voter approval.
            2. Isaiah Donaldson shares that we had the building inspection, waiting for the report. Personal opinion, it wasn't overwhelming surprising things that got red flagged. If we continue with the process, that's when we get lawyers, etc. Also, waiting to hear that we can change the use of the building from private residence. Zoning/Permitting would be the ones to make the decision on if we can change use.
            3. Nicole Mace clarifies use of property would be determined when?
            4. Isaiah Donaldson- Once we get lawyers, we continue with title search, change of use, due diligence, that's when we weigh if this is a possibility. This is when we decide if we continue or back out.
            5. Robert Millar asks about the board approving language for the ballot, what happens if we back out and this is on the ballot.
            6. Wilmer Chavarria shares that we would have a special meeting to rescind but Isaiah shares that we should have the report soon.
            7. Nicole Mace shares that warnings shouldn't be due until petitions are due, January 26th.
            8. Kathleen Walsh asks about the voter's approval and going forward with the program with the property selected.
                a. Nicole Mace shares that programming is something we are moving forward with. This property just happened to come up, we don't need voter approval to start a new programming.
    b. Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
        i. Presentation/Discussion: Budget Final Version
            1. Wilmer Chavarria shares FY '27 Budget Presentation- Final.
            2. The CLA we received is higher, which means taxes will still go down but not as much as we had hoped or projected.
                a. The per pupil spending is going down, Homestead Tax Rate along with Property Tax Rate also is decreasing.
            3. Budgets across the region: Winooski School District is towards the bottom of the list then our surrounding schools based on self reported information. No one has approved a budget just yet.
                a. Winooski- +4.6%
            4. Our projections have not changed. Final Recommended Operational Budget $34,818,909
            5. If things continue the same, we will have a rough year next year. We can't promise to lower taxes, the weighted per pupil spending, etc.
            6. Nicole Mace Was there any relevant feedback from the Senior Center today?
                a. Katie Livermore there wasn't any pushback.

b. Robert Millar shares that the question that came up the most was in regards to real estate. Confusion from the governor that there would be a 12% increase, which is incorrect.

7. Isaiah Donaldson asks about the Deferred Maintenance
    a. Sarah Haven shares the Old Gym floor, the soccer field that was built intended for use, the boilers, the lights outside on the soccer field were taken down and need to be replaced.
8. Isaiah Donaldson asks about reduction of staff. Are they through attrition, or firing people?
    a. Katie Livermore shares that most of them are through attrition and only 1 position will be eliminated.

ii. Action: Adopt Budget and Warnings

1. Robert Millar asks if there are any edits on the warnings? Robert wonders about Article 4. The way we phrased one unexpired year. In years past we have said serve the remainder of a three year term.
    a. Erik Johnson shares that he has confirms that Jenny Willingham, she wants it how it is written currently.
2. Robert Millar clarifies that Article 6 is straight from legal. He wants to add “at an amount not to exceed”
3. Isaiah Donaldson shares that Article 6, the language is written very legal, you won’t see the addition you are requesting, although it is clearer but as a voter plain language is likely a better choice.
4. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the warning as presented with the edit, contingent on legal sign off.
5. Nicole Mace - “So Moved.”
6. Erik Johnson reads the clarifying verbiage of Article 6. “Shall the voters of the Winooski School District authorize the school board to use existing funds from prior years surplus to purchase the property adjacent to the school district at 2 Normand Street, for school purposes, to an amount not to exceed $380,000?”
7. ***Passes Unanimously.***
8. ***Budget Adopted by School Board.***

iii. Discussion: Board Budget Outreach

1. Robert Millar shares that the board had their morning meeting with the seniors, but more to come.
2. Katie Livermore shares that Nicole Mace will be at the school concert, Robert Millar and Nicole will be doing the presentation at CCTV, a joint city event.
3. Wilmer Chavarria clarifies that we are responsible for advertising and food. The board needs to decide how we interact and share with the public regarding the budget.
4. Katie Livermore I think it works well if people are sitting down eating while sharing the presentation, less threatening for people. It is easier to engage if they have questions rather than a presentation format.
5. Nicole Mace questions about having a board member for each table?
6. Robert Millar/Katie Livermore discuss collaboration with the city to ensure it has a flow, rather than two long lectures, more of a less luxury vibe. Robert likes the idea of dispersing board members.

7. Katie Livermore- Packets will be shared with information in front of you. Short intro and just go from there for understanding and clarifying.
8. Nicole Mace shares that something identifying them as ambassadors could be helpful. The mailer will also be available.
9. Joann Davidman- Could you have a large screen with a revolving presentation?
10. Isaiah Donaldson- Likes the idea of having the slideshow, small groups, having a lecture that is short and sweet. Budget buddies could be ambassadors, board members walking around. The public may feel more comfortable with someone who is not a board member.
11. Kathleen Walsh asks about keeping track of questions from events the board is at to have the information.
12. Robert Millar shares that the biggest questions were regarding the real estate purchase. Already speaking with Wilmer to ensure key points are on the flyer, especially since it isn't something on the ballot every year.
13. Winooski School Board Discussion regarding Board Outreach.

c. Policy Title 2.5 Emergency Superintendent Succession
   i. Discussion/Action: Internal Monitoring Report
      1. Wilmer Chavarria It is the same thing every year. The only requirement is that relevant people are made aware of these periodically. Erik Johnson is new and was made aware of this responsibility along with reading the procedure. THere are no changes to definitions or protocols. I recommend that you accept it.
      2. Katie Livermore It seemed like this was more focused on running the school, makes sense, and it would be temporary. There isn't anything in the interpretation that would assume the person interacting with the board would have knowledge of policy governance. It may be a little challenging to come into–just a thought, no issues with the report
      3. Robert Millar clarifies that this is more about Operations. This is for Wilmer, but on the board level, we would continue as we do. Important question to keep in mind if we do have to hire a new superintendent.
      4. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept Wilmer's Report.
      5. Emily Bowers- "So Moved."
      6. ***Passed Unanimously.***

d. Policy Title: 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
   i. Discussion/Action: January Superintendent's Report to the Board
      1. Wilmer Chavarria There are updates to the updates, things are changing by the day. No updates with class sizes. We are still waiting, being told we have to comply, but not sure with what yet.
      2. Nicole Mace clarifies that Act 73 does have some numbers in it although it is not clear what the definitions are for the types of classes.
      3. Wilmer Chavarria update on the second grader who was detained. Legal was able to get GoFund Me to release the funds. We will be able to refund the district whatever funds have been used for legal support for the family. The rest of the funds will go to discretionary funds for emergencies when our families or our students are facing significant challenges that don't fall neatly within the educational realm. We don't really have a budget for but the community wants to support our families, we have a fund for that where we accept donations. In

the update, we share that we have spent a month fighting with GoFund Me and it was not working out. Thursday night, lawyers reached out and said they managed to get the money.

4. Robert Millar shares that it is important to share how problematic GoFund Me was about this. This is not an unusual thing for that company. People relying on it need to be aware that it can be problematic.
5. Wilmer Chavarria shares that if it wasn't for the talented lawyers, we wouldn't have gotten the money. We were very transparent from the start. The donors here in Winooski and the state knew that the fund was for the family and also for the fund that we keep here in the district. There was nothing shady about this. We were transparent in the description from the beginning, that's what the donors wanted and GoFund Me continued to deny that.
6. Wilmer Chavarria shares that our lawyers gave us an update as we haven't heard from the family in days, even though we try to communicate with them a lot. The update today, they are in Ecuador with our student's grandmother. It is sad that was the best case scenario, but we were just hoping they could make it home because everyday their rights were being violated and going through unspeakable abuses by the government. Mental and physical health was deteriorating according to themselves and the people working with them. They spent almost seven weeks in detention. The district will be sending a small donation on behalf of the school and community so he can start school again, trying to find a way to connect.
7. Robert Millar appreciates Wilmer keeping the board and community updated as much as can be. Not what we hoped for but they are out of detention at least.
8. Nicole Mace is proud to live in a community that fights for its members no matter where they are.
9. Katie Livermore asks on Page 7, what does MTSS stand for?
    a. Wilmer Chavarria- It stands for Multi Tiered System of Supports. How do we help students whose general instruction didn't work the first time around? Those that need additional help. If that doesn't work, then what happens, and so on. This is where you end up with intensive support systems, like the one we are trying to build with the building we are trying to buy. We try to support the student like we would everyone else first, study whether that is working. If not, we try something else. This is the hardest work of a school system.
    b. Wilmer clarifies also that UDL stands for Universal Design for Learning, meaning strong goals, firm goals and flexible means. EST means Education Support Teams, part of MTSS, a team that comes together and figures out what these students need. SAP, substance abuse prevention.
    c. Elom Essiba Asks about the Safety Team Update
        i. WIlmer Chavarria shares that we haven't had an update since at least a month ago. Lots of things have happened. We have our new position Director of District Safety, which was a position created by this board, he is able to put together a summary of the efforts going on.

ii. The board requests a high level update, not necessary for the details of students talking during a drill, for example.

10. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept Wilmer's January Superintendent Report.
11. Nicole Mace- "So Moved."
12. ***Passed Unanimously.***

7. **Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):** (45 Minutes)
    a. Policy Title: 4.1.8 Governing Style
        i. Discussion/Action: Potential Student Member of the Board Policy Drafting
            1. Robert Millar confirms that Wilmer Chavarria wrote the draft previously. This is not a first read. We are following up on last week's discussion.
            2. Nicole Mace It was a great conversation with the students. Interested in student government before coming to the board. It would be great to have 1 or 2 board members to work with one or two students who expressed interest in coming to the board, and talk through some of the issues with them. Start with a collaborative community and unpack some of the issues that were discussed. Continue conversation and have students be part of the details.
            3. Katie Livermore Do we have a goal when we are going to have a first read of something?
                a. Nicole Mace shares waiting until after elections before forming a committee to work on, 3 positions are up for election.
                b. Emily Bowers shares perhaps the April meeting?
                c. Katie Livermore shares that we should interact while school is in session, May the latest.
            4. Nicole Mace shares that when her and Elom present to the students regarding the board scholarship, this could be shared then. Open to a committee forming tonight, work towards a policy for April. Nicole shares she will take the lead on this.
                a. Katie Livermore shares that she is willing to participate but understands if someone is a better candidate.
                b. Decided that Emily Bowers would be a good fit, Katie is doing Outreach for Budget, Nicole Mace is part of negotiations.
            5. Robert Millar appoints Nicole Mace and Elom Ebissa to the committee.
            6. Robert Millar asks for a 5 minute recess @ 7:25am
                a. ***Meeting returns @ 7:29am***
    b. Policy Title: 4.2 Board Job Description
        i. Discussion: Legislative Updates
        ii. Robert Millar This will be a standing item the next few months. There hasn't been a lot of motion on anything just yet.
        iii. Nicole Mace There is the S220, which has to do with its caps. I listened to the Senate finance committee's conversation today. It doesn't sound like there is a whole lot of enthusiasm in that room for that approach. They are grasping at straws trying to go from the 12% increase so something less than that. There doesn't seem to be a lot of disagreement about if we are heading into the foundation formula, maybe there needs to be a transition mechanism, to have a little bit of a glide path from spending this to

that. To do that as their first order of business before they really figured out what's going to happen with Act 73 is premature and misguided. The governor doubled down on Act 73.

iv. Katie Livermore shares that Daisy Berbeco offered if the board wants the state reps back again, they would be willing to.

c. Policy Title: 4.2.1 Community Engagement
   i. Discussion: Recent Community Activities by Board
      1. Nicole Mace DRB hearing happened. Four students came and they were incredible. Appreciative, they came to tell their stories and friends' experiences, how crowded they are. Patrice Lumumba came, thanks to him. This is on family housing on Lafountain Street. The more students we have in the district, tax rates go down. It wasn't received well by some. A decision should be made soon, they have 45 days since the hearing has been closed. The Department of Public works has last minute concerns, which could affect things.

d. Policy Title: 4.2.2 Create Written Governing Policies
   i. Action: Public Hearing and Adoption of Policies
      1. PG.2.2 Treatment of Staff
      2. Robert Millar opens to hearing to the public.
         a. Public hearing closed.
      3. Robert Millar opens the hearing to the board.
         a. Board hearing closed.
      4. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept Policy.2.2 Treatment of Staff for final adoption.
      5. Katie Livermore - "So Moved."
      6. ***Passed Unanimously.***
   ii. Discussion/Action: Policy Second Read and Approval for Adoption
      1. PG.2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities
         a. Robert Millar asks if there is anything from the board.
         b. Nicole Mace shares that maybe next time we can share the model policy versus what Winooski does.
         c. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept Policy.2.3 Financial Conditions and Activities for second read and approval for adoption.
         d. Nicole Mace- "So Moved."
         e. ***Passed Unanimously.***
      2. B3 Alcohol & Drug Free Workplace
         a. Robert Millar This is not a policy governance one, it is from the state, (Nicole Mace) maybe even a Federal Law.
         b. Wilmer Chavarria shares that we still didn't quite understand what the VSBA meant by changes in terms of names of programs, etc. Hard time finding the exact changes. Regardless, it is not substantially different from what is already in the books. We should be good to adopt.
         c. Wilmer Chavarria shares this week in the VSBA, they shared a lot of policies this week, so we are going to be seeing a lot of first reads- a few of them are time sensitive policies. Clarification: this policy is included with the policies shared.

d. Robert Millar- The only thing that seemed to change was marijuana to cannabis, which is in line with modern laws. Suggests bringing this back for a new second read next month. ***Tabling until next month at the next regular meeting.***

iii. Discussion: Policy First Read

1. PG.2.5 Emergency Superintendent Succession
    a. Robert Millar shares that ours is a little broader and more inclusive than the one in the book. The whole team should know, rather than just two people.
    b. Emily Bowers shares that in the procedure they all had different roles.
    c. Wilmer Chavarria There are two different tracks, board actions and administrative actions going for the same thing to keep the system running.

e. Policy Title: 4.4 Board Linkage with Ownership

i. Action: 2026 Internal Monitoring Report

1. Katie Livermore The interpretations were updated, they were really short previously; It didn't cover everything being seen in the policy. We were out of compliance already the last time this report was done. Katie wasn't aware of anything that was done to make us compliant. One section said compliance, but Katie didn't feel we could say that. An aggressive suggestion to make a plan to at least start to discuss this was added. There may be some turn over, so looking at this after Town Meeting Day.
2. Robert Millar shares that the harsh evaluation brings up that this is something we have identified on being a little weak when it came up last time. Lots of turnover and things coming up in the last year, we haven't had the chance yet to work on that. Calling this out is appropriate.
3. Nicole Mace We had a plan that never got executed.
4. Winooski School Board Discussion regarding Internal Monitoring Report, how to move forward and work towards compliance.
5. Robert Millar looks for a motion to accept the Internal Monitoring Report for Policy 4.4
6. Emily Bowers- "So Moved."
7. ***Passed Unanimously.***

f. Policy Title: 4.8 Governance Investment

i. Discussion: Board Learning

1. Wilmer Chavarria It doesn't matter if you are policy governance or traditional governance. The best practice is to have designed, maybe in March, a reorganization meeting. There are some high level things to keep in mind and to commit might not be so obvious at times especially when we face situations where you are not sure. I wanted for you to not sign this tonight but be aware that this is sort of the recommendation by the VSBA for all boards to keep in mind as our code of ethics for all board members.
2. Nicole Mace It is controversial in some places, and that is worth the discussion. Does anyone have any questions about this? Reservations about asking board members to agree? Typically part of an annual reorganization meeting.

3. Robert Millar Most of this exists somewhere in our policy. Everything in here is in there in various board role policies. We have never had something laid out as something you had to sign.
4. Wilmer Chavarria shares this wouldn't make much of a difference in disciplinary actions. More of taking an oath, it is a ceremonial type of thing. This adds meaning to it and reminds of commitment to those principles.
5. Robert Millar shares the main thing he is concerned about is ensuring it doesn't conflict with any of our policies.
6. Nicole Mace having this for new board members or the start of a new year, having this in a single place is powerful.
7. Robert Millar shares when asked if anything surprised the board, agreeing to not higher someone who is already under contract somewhere else. Comfortable signing this in March.

8. **Upcoming Important Dates:**

   Friday, January 16: Veggie VanGo
   Monday, January 19: No School (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
   Friday, February 6: Veggie VanGo
   Thursday, February 12: WMHS Concert, PAC, 7:00 PM

9. **Proposed Executive Session:**
   a. Finding of Premature General Public Knowledge
      i. Side Agreement with the WEA Re: Employee Contract § 313(a)(1)(A).
      ii. Side Agreement with the WEA Re: Vacation Requirements § 313(a)(1)(B)
      iii. Superintendent Contract §313(a)(3)
   b. Robert Millar looks for a motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the superintendent and staff contracts clearly places the board at a substantial disadvantage because the board risks disclosing its negotiation strategies if it discusses these contracts in public.
   c. Nicole Mace - "So Moved."
   d. Passes Unanimously
   e. Robert Millar looks for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing two potential side agreements with the WEA under Title 1, Section 313(a)(1) and separately the superintendent's contract under Title 1 Section 313(a)(3) and to invite Superintendent Chavarria for the first two items.
   f. Emily Bowers- "So Moved."
   g. Passed Unanimously.
   h. Board enters Executive Session @ 8:09pm.
   i. Board returns from Executive Session @ 8:31pm

10. **Adjourn:**
    a. Robert Millar looks for a motion to adjourn.
    b. Emily Bowers- " So Moved."
    c. Passed unanimously.
    d. Meeting adjourned @ ~ 8:33pm.