

BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: November 20, 2024  
PLACE: Charles R. Parsons Administration Building

CONVENE: 11:30 a.m.  
ADJOURN: 12:35 p.m.

ATTENDEES: J. Batey, D. Beeman, K. Breitenbucher, K. Elsass, A. Hill, J. Lawrence,  
L. McDermitt, B. Neiser, B. Pinkerton, D. Slife, M. Wagar, L. Giermann

ABSENT: P. Alic, E. Allwood, A. Anderson, A. Barton, J. Bilek, D. Chase, J. Goff,  
T. Manion, G. Rutherford, M. White

1. Approval of October 16, 2024 BAC Meeting Minutes
  - a. The minutes were approved.
2. Presentation: Neighborhood Bridges Program by Sara Kopacko and Julie Batey
  - a. Sara Kopacko and Julie Batey provided information on the Neighborhood Bridges program; the presentation slides and handouts may be viewed [here](#).
  - b. Neighborhood Bridges is part of the Be Kind Wadsworth initiative and operates as a 501(c)(3) organization.
  - c. Data shows that poverty levels in suburban areas are growing at a faster rate than anywhere else, and more families are experiencing homelessness. Many of these families are “on the bubble” (income is just over the limit to qualify for assistance) when determining the amount of support they are able to receive.
  - d. Neighborhood Bridges is composed of advocates who work on behalf of families to fill needs (e.g., school supplies, clothing, household needs) and donors within the community who help to fill those needs.
  - e. Needs are posted online, by 10:00 a.m. each day, to current subscribers at <https://neighborhoodbridges.org/community/wadsworth-oh>. From this site, individuals can subscribe by providing their email address and receive notifications when new needs are posted. By clicking “I can help,” a subscriber is able to fill a posted need and will then receive instructions about taking the item(s) to a designated drop-off location in Wadsworth.
  - f. Neighborhood Bridges Wadsworth has partnered with Marian’s Closet to restock gently used boys and girls winter clothing. Additional information is available on the Neighborhood Bridges Wadsworth website (link provided above).

3. November 18 Board of Education Meeting

a. Doug Beeman presented information on the five-year financial forecast.

i. A deficit of \$1,533,074 is projected for FY 2025.

ii. Factors contributing to the projected deficit include the following:

1. Uncertainty of state aid (guarantee)

2. Lower interest income

3. Expiration of federal grants (ESSER funds used in previous years to fund some staffing positions has expired, and total costs for these staff members now comes from the General Fund.)

4. Statewide declining student enrollment - also affects staffing needs (Thus far, we have been able to handle staffing vacancies through attrition.)

5. Rising healthcare costs (Classified staff now have the ability to “stack” jobs, which means they can fill several positions as their schedules allow. It has helped fill vacancies which have gone unfilled by substitutes, but it has resulted in higher health care costs for the district because some of these employees with stacked jobs are now eligible for benefits.)

iii. The Grizzly Academy is projecting a net savings of \$75,792 for the district during the 2024-2025 school year. The savings will continue to grow as the program expands to include grades 6 through 12.

iv. We expect a positive cash balance through 2027, but we then expect a deficit beginning in FY 2028.

1. WEA and WESPA negotiated agreements expire June 30, 2026. We may only be able to certify a one-year contract due to the anticipated cash flow deficit beginning in 2028.

b. The state now requires all districts to adopt a policy governing the use of personal communication devices by students during school hours by July 1, 2025. We feel that our current BOE Policy 5136 is compliant, but discussions among the school board members continue. One item being addressed is the use of cell phones during extra-curricular activities.

Currently, students in grades K-8 are to keep their cell phones in their book bags,

which are kept in school lockers during the school day. Students in grades 9-12 are permitted to use their cell phones during lunch and in class, with teacher approval, for educational purposes. High school students also use their cell phones to access the VisitU app, rather than having to physically sign in or out of the building.

- c. Substitute rates of pay were approved at the November 18 board meeting.

#### 4. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.