

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Northern Local Schools Board of Education  
Budget Hearing, Organizational Meeting, and Regular Meeting – January 15, 2026

The Northern Local Schools Board of Education met in regular session in the District Office Board Room.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

### **Budget Hearing**

The 2026-27 budget hearing began at 6:15 p.m. Treasurer Jennie Clifton presented to the Board of Education the Tax Budget, as required by the Perry County Budget Commission. The presentation included the following:

- Legal requirements of the tax budget, including deadlines;
- Purpose of the tax budget;
- How the tax budget differs from the Financial Forecast;
- What specifically is included in the tax budget (breakdown of taxes levied; statements of fund activity, which project the revenues and expenditures of each fund; and a schedule of outstanding debt); and
- Overview of the Ohio Revised Code budgetary process.

### **Organizational & Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order** - President Pro-Tempore Patrick Hogan called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

**Roll Call** – Treasurer Jennie Clifton called the roll:

Members Present:

Dale DeRolph

Levi Dupler

Patrick Hogan

Steve Lemon

David Weals

Members Absent:

**Recognition of Visitors and Public Participation** – The Board of Education recognized and welcomed Mrs. Weals and Mrs. Heidenreich as visitors in attendance.

**Oath of Office** – Mrs. Clifton performed the Oath of Office to Mr. Hogan, Mr. Lemon and Mr. Weals.

**Election of Board President** – Mr. Dupler moved to elect Dale DeRolph as President of the Northern Local Schools Board of Education.

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, abstain.

Motion carried 4-0.

President DeRolph presided over the remainder of the meeting.

**Election of Board Vice President** – Mr. Dupler moved to elect Patrick Hogan as Vice President of the Northern Local Schools Board of Education.

Mr. Weals seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Hogan, abstain; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 4-0.

### **2026 Board of Education Meetings**

Whereas, Ohio Revised Code, Section 3313.15 requires that at the time of the organizational meeting each Board of Education shall fix the time for holding its regular meeting, such meetings to be held a minimum of once every two months;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District shall meet on the following dates during 2026 at 6:30 p.m.:

Regular meetings: Thursday, February 19 at Sheridan High School; Wednesday, March 18 at the District Office; Wednesday, April 15 at Somerset Elementary; Wednesday, May 20 at the District Office; Wednesday, June 17 at the District Office; Wednesday, July 15 at the District Office; Wednesday, August 19 at the District Office; Wednesday, September 16 at Sheridan Middle School; Wednesday, October 21 at Glenford Elementary; Wednesday, November 18 at Thornville Elementary; Wednesday, December 16 at the District Office.

Now, therefore, be it further resolved that special meetings may be called at the direction of the Board of Education.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.  
Motion carried 5-0.

**OSBA Legislative Liaison** – Mr. Lemon volunteered to be the OSBA Legislative Liaison.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Lemon, abstain; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.  
Motion carried 4-0.

**OSBA Student Achievement Liaison** – Mr. Dupler volunteered to be the OSBA Student Achievement Liaison.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, abstain; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.  
Motion carried 4-0.

**Organizational Meeting Standing Resolutions** – Mr. Dupler moved to approve the following:

Whereas, Ohio Revised Code, Section 3315.15 provides for the setting aside from the General Fund a sum not to exceed two dollars for each child enrolled in the district, or twenty thousand dollars, (\$20,000), whichever is greater, as the “service fund”; and

Whereas, this money is used for the payment of expenses of the members of the Board of Education or of their official representatives actually incurred in the performance of their duties and in attendance at meetings and conferences as delegates of the Board of Education;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District acknowledges account number 001-2310-841-0000-000000-000-00-000, “Service Fund”, within the 2026-27 appropriations in the amount of \$11,000, subject to modification by the Board of Education.

***Resolution to Authorize Payment of Bills***

Be it resolved by the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District that the Treasurer is hereby authorized to pay all bills, as they are duly presented, provided funds are available, and to report monthly those bills which have been paid.

***Resolution to Authorize Tax Advances from County Auditor***

Whereas, Ohio Revised Code, Section 321.34 provides for the release of tax advances to a Board of Education; and

Whereas, the County Auditor requires receipt of an authorizing resolutions passed by a majority vote of the members of the Board of Education requesting tax advances; and

Whereas, it is deemed financially advantageous for the Northern Local School District to promptly receive the 2026 tax monies;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District that the Superintendent and Treasurer be authorized to request tax advances for the year 2026.

***Resolution to Authorize Investments of Interim Funds***

Whereas, Ohio Revised Code, Section 135.14 permits its Board of Education to make investments in certificates of deposit of banks, bonds, notes or other obligations to the United States; and

Whereas, it is the intent of the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District to invest funds not currently needed to meet operating costs in order to earn interest on these funds;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District that the policy for investment of cash not currently needed to meet obligations for short periods of time (less than two years) shall be one in which the cash balance remaining on active deposit as low as is consistent with good business practice and the investment of cash can be made according to the following principles: 1) Safety of principal; 2) Liquidity; and 3) Interest earnings.

Now, therefore, be it further resolved that the Treasurer is hereby authorized to determine the amounts of cash not needed to meet current obligations and to invest in certificates of deposit with interest rates most advantageous to the Board of Education and other such investments under section 135.14 and 135.142 of the Ohio Revised Code.

***Resolution Authorizing Application for Local, State and Federal Funds***

Whereas, Local, State and Federal Funds are made available to Northern Local School District through the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP), etc.;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Superintendent is authorized and duly directed to make application for Local, State and Federal Grants and create funds as necessary.

***Authorize Signature on Checks***

The Treasurer is hereby authorized to sign all checks drawn on bank accounts of the school district as provided for in Section 3313.08, Ohio Revised Code.

***Resolution for Waiver of Reading Minutes***

Each board member receives a copy of the previous meeting's minutes prior to voting on their acceptance. Accordingly, it is not necessary for the Treasurer to read the minutes of the previous meetings prior to approval by the board. It is recommended that the Board of Education, in accordance with Section 3313.26, Ohio Revised Code, waive the reading of minutes from previous meetings.

***Resolution to Appoint Superintendent of Schools as Purchasing Agent***

Be it resolved that the Superintendent of Schools or Superintendent's designee be appointed to serve as purchasing agent for the Board of Education on behalf of the school district.

***Resolution Listing Legal Counsel***

Whereas, Ohio Revised Code, Section 3313.35 outlines authority for boards of education to hire legal counsel; and

Whereas, from time to time it is necessary for boards of education to engage legal counsel to represent the school system;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the firm of Scott Scriven LLP be names as legal counsel;

Now, therefore it be further resolved that the Superintendent, Treasurer and School Board President are authorized to obtain legal counsel.

***Resolution Authorizing Superintendent to Make Offers of Employment Pending Board Ratification***

Whereas, on occasion it becomes necessary for the Superintendent to make employment decisions during periods when this Board is not in session;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the board authorizes the Superintendent to make offers of employment directly to candidates for either teaching or nonteaching positions on behalf of this Board, and to acknowledge acceptable of such offers on behalf of this Board, subject to successful background checks and receipt of necessary documentation, and a subsequent vote of ratification by this Board; provided however, that upon ratification by this Board, the employment shall be deemed effective as of the date and time of the employee's acceptance of the Superintendent's offer. Nothing in this resolution shall require the Board to employ or continue to employ an individual who has not provided a criminal record check satisfactory to the Board or who has not satisfied any other prerequisite to employment created by law of Board policy.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the authorization provided by this resolution shall remain in effect until withdrawn by formal action of the Board.

***Resolution Authorizing Superintendent to Accept Resignations***

Whereas, on occasion it becomes necessary for the Superintendent, on behalf of the Board, to accept resignations that have been submitted by employees during times when this Board is not in session;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the board authorizes the Superintendent to accept resignations that have been submitted subject to ratification by the Board. Upon ratification by the Board, such resignations shall be deemed effective as of the date and time of the Superintendent's acceptance.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the authorization provided by this resolution shall remain in effect until withdrawn by formal action of the Board.

***Resolution to Continue Audit Committee***

Be it resolved that all duly elected members of the Board of Education shall continue to serve as the School District's Audit Committee.

***Resolution to Appoint the Board Designee as Public Records Training Designee***

Be it resolved that Jennie Clifton, Treasurer, be authorized to represent the Board of Education as their public records training attendee for the 2026 year as required by House Bill 9.

***Resolution to Appoint the District's Title IX Coordinator***

The Board of Education appoints and affirms that the Curriculum Director, Amy VanBalén, shall serve as the School District's Title IX Coordinator.

***Designation of Official Newspaper***

Be it resolved that the Perry County Tribune will be the official newspaper for the Northern Local School District, for the publication of those notices required by law to be made in a newspaper.

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

**Recommendation for Approval** – Mr. Hogan moved to approve the following meeting minutes:

1. December 16, 2025

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

**Mid-East Vocational School Report** – Mr. Hogan stated that he attended his first Board meeting as the Northern Local Schools representative to Mid-East. He was the only new Board member and the Board President remains the same as last year. He noted a point of interest being the new Fire & EMS training center

received additional funding of \$4.83 million. Mid-East also approved the purchase of 4 semis for the adult education program and that he was able to tour the CDL program simulators which have received some additional programming capabilities for heavy equipment operators.

**Superintendent's Report** – Mrs. Gussler recognized the Board in honor of School Board Appreciation Month. A certificate was presented to each board member to thank them for their service to the Northern Local School District.

Mrs. Gussler outlined several upcoming dates of importance. The Groundhog Day breakfast will be held at Sheridan High School on January 30<sup>th</sup>. Sheridan graduate and former St. Louis Cardinals player, Duane Theiss will be the presenter. Softball and baseball players from all Perry County schools have been invited to attend and we have tables reserved for Board members and administrators.

The Sheridan High School window replacement project is ongoing. Once the current phase is complete, the remaining replacement windows in the courtyard and library will finish out the project. The courtyard replacement windows have an estimated cost of \$285,000, which we have earmarked in our 5-year Capital Plan for 2026-27. This will need to be completed during the summer months due to weather and so not to disrupt daily activities.

Sheridan Middle School has three HVAC units in the multi-purpose room that need to be replaced ASAP. One is currently out of service. All three units were installed in 1998 as part of the building renovation. Dale Factor is securing three quotes and based on information received thus far, we are looking at approximately \$90,000 to replace all three.

We have welcomed therapy dog, Stormy, to Sheridan High School. Stormy is owned by our Guidance Counselor, Ms. Winters, and has met all of the training and temperament requirements to become a certified therapy dog. Stormy completed her training through Triple Threat K-9. There was no cost to the District for her training as it was paid for by Ms. Winters, who also applied for a grant and solicited donations. Mrs. Gussler is excited for the positive impact to the mental health of both students and staff. Mr. Hogan asked about the potential risk and liability the District may have by having Stormy. Mrs. Gussler stated that since she is a certified therapy dog that the District does not have any liability. Mrs. Clifton stated she would double check with our liability insurance company to ensure everything is in place.

Mrs. Gussler informed the Board that she met with Mr. Dan Riggs, a high school science teacher, prior to Christmas break about the possibility of being approved as a retire-rehire for next school year. Mrs. Gussler stated that the conversation was informal and no Board action is required at this time. Mr. Weals asked about the reasons to, or not to, consider a retire-hire. Mrs. Gussler stated that retire-rehire is only considered for hard to fill positions, such as high school science, and provides a significant cost savings to the District when a veteran teacher is rehired at a lesser salary. She stated that it does not make sense to consider a retire-rehire for positions that typically have a large candidate pool or if there is a current staff member interested in the position being vacated.

Mrs. Gussler presented the Board with a proposal to reintroduce presentations from various departments and/or student groups at each monthly meeting beginning in March or April. The Board agreed that this would be welcomed. Mr. Lemon stated that he would appreciate hearing presentations from the athletic department including the athletic boosters, as well as the nutrition and curriculum departments, to educate him on the various programs. Mr. Hogan stated that he would enjoy hearing from the transportation department as well as from student groups such as the FFA. Mrs. Gussler stated that she would put together a schedule of presentations.

Mr. Hogan asked if there was an update on the partnership with Mid-East and our Vo-Ag program. Mrs. Gussler stated that she met with the Ag teachers and Mid-East yesterday. Mid-East is scheduled to meet with ODEW and that everyone is making sure that all the t's are crossed and i's are dotted before making a final recommendation. The goal is that the students and community do not notice any negative changes in programming or impact to the FFA.

## **Business and Finance**

**Treasurer's Report** – Mrs. Clifton presented the Board with the monthly financial reports noting that we should begin receiving first half tax collections within the first few weeks of February. Because of the recent legislation changes, County Auditors are calculating refunds for second half tax payments and are encouraging taxpayers to only pay the first half of taxes at this time. This will likely lead to a lower collection of tax revenue in the first half settlement, and because of the refunds in the second half, those revenues are also expected to be lower than usual.

Mrs. Clifton noted that while 50% of the fiscal year is completed, our current general fund expenditures are slightly under estimated at 48.6%.

The unencumbered permanent improvement fund balance is \$544,024.69 of which \$3,464.50 are earmarked donations for the football turf replacement and \$40,000 is earmarked for other athletic facility improvements.

Mrs. Clifton pointed out that she has made slight revisions to the food service, athletic, self-insurance and PI fund reports that shows a percentage of year-to-date (YTD) revenues and expenses compared to the estimated and another column indicating current YTD amounts as compared to the prior YTD amounts. She thinks this may provide some more useful and relevant data for the Board.

Mrs. Clifton informed the Board that the FY25 audit is expected to be completed in late March or early April. Once the report is received, she will schedule a post-audit meeting to review the results with the auditors and Board.

Mrs. Clifton stated that she is looking to restart the valuation and asset inventory process and is looking at two companies to provide quotes for their services. We had previously contracted with Valuation Engineers, a company that many Ohio school districts had used, but they unexpectedly shut down after the owner was in an accident. Mrs. Clifton also stated that she is beginning to look at software vendors for check writing capabilities, to reduce paper usage within the Treasurer's Office, and improve workflow efficiencies. The current vendor we use for check printing is outdated and will eventually need to be upgraded.

**Recommendation for Approval** – Mr. Dupler moved to approve the following:

1. December Financial Reports Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the December 2025 financial reports, as presented.

2. Resolution to Approve Tax Budget Attachment

Whereas, Section 5705.28(e) of the Ohio Revised Code provides for the adoption of the tax budget on or before January 15<sup>th</sup>; and

Whereas, the Treasurer has prepared the tax budget according to the guidelines from the State and County Auditors and the Ohio Department of Education; and

Whereas, the Board of Education has conducted a public hearing on the proposed budget in accordance with Ohio Revised Code, Sections 5705.28, 5705.29 and 5705.30;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Education of the Northern Local School District adopt the 2026-27 tax budget and direct the Treasurer to submit the tax budget document to the County Auditor by January 20, 2026.

3. Then and Now Certificates

Recommend the Board approve the following Then and Now Certificates:

- a.) PO #133628, Dush Graphix & Custom T's, Boys Basketball Apparel
- b.) PO #133631, G&J Pepsi, MH Classroom Sales
- c.) PO #133609, Johnson Controls, HVAC Parts & Supplies
- d.) PO #133601, Ohio FFA Association, FFA Membership Dues
- e.) PO #133611, Perry County Chamber of Commerce, 2026 Membership Dues

- f.) PO #133657, Nate's Lock & Key, Lock Service
- g.) PO #133630, Infinity Fundraising, Fundraiser Prizes

4. Budget Adjustments

Recommend the Board approve the following adjustments:

*Appropriations:*

Boys Basketball (300-950L)	\$2,059.00
FY26 Title I-A (572-9227)	\$62,027.72
FY26 IDEA-B (516-9226)	\$55,242.26
FY26 Title II-A (590-9226)	\$1,805.55
FY26 Title IV-A (584-9226)	\$217.01

*Revenues:*

Boys Basketball (300-950L)	\$2,059.00
FY26 Title I-A (572-9227)	\$62,027.72
FY26 IDEA-B (516-9226)	\$55,242.26
FY26 Title II-A (590-9226)	\$1,805.55
FY26 Title IV-A (584-9226)	\$217.01

5. Donations

Recommend the Board accept the following donations:

- a.) Bike Buckeye Lake Christmas Drive; 10 Bikes to SHS Students
- b.) Bike Buckeye Lake Christmas Drive; 8 Bikes to Glenford Students
- c.) Bike Buckeye Lake Christmas Drive; 8 Bikes to Somerset Students
- d.) Stephanie Aldridge-Moore; Toys, Food, and Turkeys for SHS Families in Need
- e.) Richland Township; Toys, Food, and Turkeys for SHS Families in Need
- f.) Rushville Marathon; Toys, Food, and Turkeys for SHS Families in Need
- g.) JuJu Tattoo; Food for SHS Families in Need
- h.) ReadyEddie; Food for SHS Families in Need
- i.) Jamie Gioffre; Food for SHS Families in Need
- j.) I Support the Girls Organization, Chuck Byers; Hygiene Kits, Socks and Underwear to SHS
- k.) B&K Drive Thru; 5 Turkeys for SHS Families in Need
- l.) Annie Clouse; Clothing and \$200 for the SHS Clothes Closet
- m.) Hopewell United Methodist Church; Hats, Gloves & Mittens to Glenford
- n.) Faith Fellowship Church; Clothing and Deodorant to Glenford

6. Establishment of Student Activity Account

Recommend the Board approve the establishment of a student activity account for Girls Golf (300-950F)

7. Student Activity Account Transfer

Recommend the Board approve a transfer of \$1,402.00 from the Boys Golf (300-950G) student activity account to the Girls Golf (300-950F) student activity account.

8. 2025-26 Statement of Intent & Purpose

Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the 2025-26 Student Activity Statement of Intent & Purpose, as presented

9. 2025-26 Title 1 Reading Intervention Services Agreement Attachment

Recommend the Board approve an agreement with the ESC for 2025-26 Reading Intervention Services at Holy Trinity, to be paid from the FY26 Non-Public Title 1 funding allocation, as presented.

Mr. Lemon seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

## Employment

**Recommendation for Approval** – Mr. Weals moved to approve the following:

1. Administrator Contract Expiration Notices

Recommend the Board authorize and direct the Treasurer to notify the following administrators in writing that his/her contract expires on the date indicated, and that he/she may request a meeting with the Board of Education to discuss the Board's reasons for renewal or non-renewal of his/her contract in accordance with State law":

- a) Angela Gussler, Superintendent; July 31, 2026
- b) Chris Hill, Technology Coordinator; July 31, 2026
- c) Lisa Householder, Principal; July 31, 2026
- d) Mike Rodich, Assistant Principal; July 31, 2026
- e) Lori Tussing, Principal; July 31, 2026

2. Certified Substitutes Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the following certified substitutes for the 2025-26 school year:

- a) MVESC substitutes, as presented

3. Classified Employee

Recommend the Board approve the following classified employee for the 2025-26 school year:

- a.) Gary Blevins, Vehicle Transporter, 5.75 hours per day, Step 0, effective January 5, 2026

4. Classified Substitutes

Recommend the Board approve the following classified substitutes for the 2025-26 school year:

- a.) Sarah Harper, Cook, pending successful background check results, January 16, 2026

5. Volunteers

Recommend the Board approve the following volunteers:

- a.) Terrence Talbot, Wrestling
- b.) Louis Goebel, Wrestling

Mr. Hogan seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

**Curriculum & Instruction**

**Recommendation for Approval** – Mr. Lemon moved to approve the following:

1. 2026-27 School Calendar – Final Reading Attachment

Recommend the Board approve the final reading of the 2026-27 School Calendar

Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

**Adjournment** – Mr. Hogan moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dupler seconded the motion.

Roll call: Mr. Hogan, aye; Mr. Dupler, aye; Mr. Lemon, aye; Mr. Weals, aye; Mr. DeRolph, aye.

President DeRolph declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

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President

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Treasurer