

ORION COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #223
1002 11TH AVENUE
ORION, ILLINOIS 61273
Board of Education Minutes of
Wednesday, July 16, 2025

The meeting was called to order at the District Office, 1002 11th Avenue, Orion, Illinois, at 7:00 p.m., by Vice-President Stockton. Present were members Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton. Absent were members Abbott and Hoftender.

ROLL CALL

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PLEDGE

Vice-President Stockton announced that the Board had met in executive session at 6:01 p.m. – 6:47 p.m. to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act; and discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION
SUMMARY**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Berg to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda included approval of minutes of the June 18, 2025, 6:00 p.m., regular meeting; June 18, 2025, 6:03 p.m., executive meeting; June 18, 2025, 7:17 p.m., regular meeting; approval of prepaid bills: \$280,551.79; approval of June, 2025 Payroll Benefits: \$36,488.63; and approval of July, 2025 bills: \$1,391,658.75, totaling \$1,708,699.17; approval of June 27, 2025, payroll: \$637.00; approval of June 30, 2025, payroll: 261,456.13; approval of July 14, 2025, payroll: \$80,601.51; approval of July 15, 2025, payroll: \$181,687.62; approval of activity fund financial statements from CR Hanna Elementary School, Orion Middle School, and Orion High School; approval of district financial reports; accepted the resignation from Jose Burgos, as a High School Spanish Teacher, effective immediately; accepted the resignation from Sara Gunn as a Fall Spirit Squad Sponsor, effective immediately; and approved the following High School Volunteer Coaches: Cross Country ~ Nick Juenger and Aaron Kayser; Football ~ Brian Arnold and Ben Dunlap; Golf ~ Larry Comer and Ben Vanderheiden; and Volleyball ~ Sarah Jacobsen and Samantha Jankowski. Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**APPROVE
CONSENT
AGENDA**

Continued

Superintendent Blessman thanked the custodial staff for their work this summer.

**STUDENT AND STAFF
RECOGNITION**

Superintendent Blessman reported on the end of the 2025 fiscal year and summer maintenance projects.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT**

Middle School Principal Bahnks reported on STEM Lab, MAP testing results and recognized custodial staff for their work at OMS.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
PRINCIPAL'S
REPORT**

Motion by Berg, second by Hepner to hire Beverly Garner as a part-time cook at Middle School for the 2025-2026 school year.

Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**HIRE
COOK (part-time)**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Hepner to hire Kati DeBacker as an Assistant Volleyball Coach for the 2025-2026 school year. Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**HIRE
COACH**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Berg to approve Kevin Roling as the Middle School Boys Basketball Coach School for the 2025-2026 school year. Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**HIRE
COACH**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Berg to approve a Memo of Understanding which establishes the ability to pay a specific tuition reimbursement as presented. Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**MEMO OF
UNDERSTANDING**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Berg to approve executive session Meeting minutes to be opened for public display (July 2024 through December 2024). Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**EX SESSION
MINUTES OPEN
FOR PUBLIC
DISPLAY**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Berg to approve destruction of closed meeting audio recordings of September 20, 2023; October 18, 2023, November 15, 2023; December 13, 2023. Ayes: Berg, Drish, Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**DESTRUCTION
OF CLOSED
MEETING AUDIO
RECORDINGS**

The Board discussed the upcoming Board Orientation Meeting on September 4th. Member Stockton read three thank you notes to the Board.

**BOARD
REPORT**

Motion by Berg, second by Nightingale to adjourn. Ayes: Berg, Drish Hepner, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.
Wednesday, July 16, 2025