

**ORION COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #223
1002 11TH AVENUE
ORION, ILLINOIS 61273**

**Board of Education Minutes of
Wednesday, August 19, 2026**

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. **PLEDGE**

Board President Hoftender announced that the Board had met in executive session at 6:04 p.m. – 6:38 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 Stockton to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda included approval of minutes of the July 15, 2026, 6:00 p.m., regular meeting; July 15, 2026, 6:02 p.m., executive meeting; July 15, 2026, 7:00 p.m., regular meeting, July 23, 2026, 6:00 p.m., special meeting; approval of prepaid bills: \$292,073.40; approval of July, 2026 Payroll Benefits: \$27,148.87; and approval of August, 2026 bills: \$366,783.58, totaling \$686,005.85; approval of July 30, 2026, payroll: \$183,277.85; approval of July 31, 2026, payroll: \$75,670.35; approval of August 14, 2026, payroll: \$183,279.12; approval of August 15, 2026, payroll: \$115,263.92; 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 Morgan Schroeder, as the High School Assistant Cross Country Coach effective immediately; accepted the resignation from Rachel Reynolds as a Part-time Paraprofessional effective immediately; accepted the resignation from Harlie Dusenberry as Middle School Part-time Cook; approved the following Middle School Volunteer Coaches for the 2026-2027 school year: softball ~ Cammie Heald and Brandon Mrazek; approved the following High School Volunteer Coaches for the 2026-2027 school year: football ~ Jordan Bell and Chad Cox. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.** **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

Continued

Superintendent Bahnks recognized the maintenance staff for their extra efforts in addressing district needs. Principal Lowe thanked all of the school staff for helping provide a successful start to the school year and recognized Head Cook Michele Weston for going above and beyond to assist with a student's dietary needs. Principal Thomsen thanked the custodial staff for their proactive efforts at OMS, as well as the building principals and her team for their support during the transition and start of the school year.

**STUDENT
AND STAFF
RECOGNITION**

Tara Miller, OEA President, thanked staff for their support and thanked Superintendent Bahnks for his leadership in navigating recent issues. She also expressed appreciation for the efforts and meetings that helped finalize the contracts.

**PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

Superintendent Bahnks reviewed the tentative budget, Health/Life Safety updates, the recent new staff orientation, and the updated Bullying Policy. He also discussed cell phone policy compliance, upcoming Board elections, the CRH STEM Lab ribbon cutting scheduled for September 1, and messages shared with staff during Teachers' Institute.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT**

CR Hanna Principal Lowe reported on new student registration and current enrollment. He also provided a recap of Backpack Night, recognized Mrs. McConaghy for her efforts in preparing for the STEM Lab, and shared this year's Spirit Day theme.

**CRH PRINCIPAL'S
REPORT**

High School Principal DeBaillie was absent; however, his report and the Athletic Reports were shared with the Board.

**HS PRINCIPAL'S
REPORT**

Middle School Principal Thomsen reported on current enrollment and provided a recap of Backpack Night. She also provided updates on fall athletics, noting that each sport now has its own athletic team page on the middle school website with information and schedules.

**MS PRINCIPAL'S
REPORT**

Motion by Stockton, second by Abbott to hire Kara Reed as a Part-time Paraprofessional at CR Hanna for the 2026-2027 school year. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**HIRE PART-TIME
PARA**

Motion by Stockton, second by Abbott to hire Hollie Nelson as a Special Education Teacher at the high school for the 2026-2027 school year. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**HIRE SPECIAL
EDUCATION TEACHER**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Stockton to hire Elena Bell as the middle school Lego Robotics Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**HIRE MS
SPONSOR**

Motion by Nightingale second by Abbott to hire Rachel Hamilton as the high school Freshmen Class Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year.

Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftener, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**HIRE HS
SPONSOR**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Stockton to hire Allie Bersell as the high school Assistant Cross Country Coach for the 2026-2027 school year. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**HIRE HS
COACH**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Abbott to hire Brian Arnold as a half-stipend Assistant Football Coach at the high school for the 2026-2027 school year. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**HIRE HS
COACH**

Motion by Stockton, second by Nightingale to hire Adam Bakener as a half-stipend Assistant Football Coach at the high school for the 2026-2027 school year. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**HIRE HS
COACH**

The Board reviewed the tentative annual budget for year, beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.

**REVIEW
FY27 BUDGET**

Motion by Stockton, second by Abbott to place the annual budget on 30 day display and hold a public hearing on September 23, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the District Office, to adopt the final budget. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**PLACE FY27
BUDGET ON
DISPLAY/SET
PUBLIC HEARING**

Motion by Stockton, second by Abbott to adopt the Orion School District's Risk Management Plan. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**ADOPT
RISK MANAGEMENT**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Abbott to approve the reviewed and updated Orion School District's Bully Prevention Policy. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVE
BULLY PREVENTION
POLICY**

Motion by Nightingale, second by Stockton to approve the increase of admission fees for home athletic events starting the 2026-2027 school year in accordance with the rates set by the Three Rivers Athletic Conference. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVE HS
ADMISSION FEE
INCREASE**

Motion by Stockton, second by Abbott to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the 2026-2029 school years. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton.

MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVE
2026-2029
CBA**

Motion by Stockton, second by Abbott to adopt the policy updates as presented. Ayes: Abbott, Drish, Hoftender, Nightingale, and Stockton. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**ADOPT
POLICY UPDATES**

The Board reviewed the e-Learning Program Verification.

REVIEWED
e-LEARNING PROGRAM

Board President Hoftender discussed the upcoming Board Election. Board Secretary Abbott read three thank you notes.

BOARD NEWS

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

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.
Wednesday, August 19, 2026.