

Sounding Board

A publication of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center Charter School Division



Board Meeting Minutes: Clear, Useful, and Transparent

January 2026

Charter school boards must keep minutes for all regular, special, annual, and emergency meetings. Recent minutes must be posted on the school's website for at least one calendar year to be accessible to the public.

In accordance with MN Open Meeting Law (MN Stat. 13D.01), any time the board gathers for the purpose of board business (whether it plans to vote or not) the board must post the meeting date, time, and place and document the proceedings in minutes that are published and publicly available. This includes workshops, strategic planning, work sessions, retreats and other meetings where the board does not plan to vote but is together for a school-related purpose.

While taking minutes can feel like a simple task, the quality of board meeting minutes has a big impact on your school. Poor quality minutes can lead to confusion, mistrust in the board, and compliance issues. However, quality minutes help the board communicate its vision and work to staff, families, community, authorizer, and state. Clear and useful minutes are a valuable tool to support strong, transparent governance.

The requirement to keep and publish meeting minutes stems from statute:

[MN Stat. §124E.07 Subd. 8.](#) Meetings and information. (b) A charter school shall publish and maintain on the school's official website: the meeting minutes of the board of directors and of members and committees having board-delegated authority, within 30 days following the earlier of the date of board approval or the next regularly scheduled meeting, and for at least 365 days from the date of publication;

And the charter contract adds these requirements:

Section 6.20 Board Data. ...the School agrees to furnish OW with finalized minutes of the Board's meetings at such time as the minutes are approved by the School Board.

What Boards Should Aim For

Boards should create minutes that clearly “tell the story” of the meeting. This means:

- Including enough information for someone who was not there to understand what happened
- Keeping the minutes clear and readable without adding unnecessary detail
- Showing **how** the board discussed issues and made decisions

Good minutes strike a balance. They give concise and also complete information about the discussion and decisions made at the meeting. The goal is to show what the board decided and, even more importantly, the key points that led to those decisions.

Minutes that show how a board discussed issues and made decisions is key in helping the school move toward its strategic vision, especially when there is turnover of board members and staff.

Why This Matters

Board meeting minutes are the legal record of the charter school board. Clear, well-written minutes can build trust with the school community, help new board members understand past decisions and processes, and support the board to track progress toward goals over time. Quality minutes also help the authorizer, MDE, and other stakeholders understand how the board governs the school.

In addition, OW uses school board minutes as data for the school’s performance evaluations. Boards should ensure that its minutes include all the necessary information (more on that below) and provide a clear picture of the Board’s deliberations and actions.

Board Practices That Strengthen Minutes

Agree on the level of detail. Boards should discuss what information they need and want included in minutes. There is no law that sets a required level of detail, so boards should compare a few examples of charter school board minutes and decide what works best for their school community. Minutes should always give a clear picture of the board’s discussions and actions, again, because they are the legal record of those actions. Once the board agrees on the level of detail, document the expectations for future iterations of the board.

Designate a recorder. The board secretary is generally responsible for taking the minutes, but the board can assign or hire a non-board member to write the minutes. Be clear who is responsible for taking minutes at each meeting, including having a system in place if that person is absent. An effective practice is that the secretary or chair review and edit the draft minutes before they are shared with the full board.

Use a clear approval process. Minutes remain in draft form until the board takes action to approve them at the next meeting. The board can make changes to correct errors or fill in missing information before voting to approve the minutes.

Provide training for recorders. Whoever takes minutes should understand what the board expects and why minutes matter. They can learn from experienced board members, examples from other schools, and online resources. Take a proactive approach to train recorders so that expectations are clear for everyone.

What Strong Minutes Should Include

As required by the charter contract, meeting minutes must include, at a minimum, the following:

- Board member attendance, including both members present and member absent;
 - Use full names or last names. It is also helpful to include board member affiliations (parent member, community member, ex-officio, etc.).
- Actions taken by the board, including specifics on any amendments;
 - Include the specific language of the motion so it is clear what action the board is voting on.
- Who made a motion and second; and
 - Include any discussion or detail that would help a future reader understand the board's decision-making.
- The result of the vote, including number of votes for and against if other than unanimous.

It is an effective practice to also list:

- The school name
- The meeting date, location, and start time. If applicable, the minutes should include if interactive technology was used for the meeting.
 - MN Open Meeting Law requires that if interactive technology is used to conduct a regular, special, or emergency meeting, the minutes must reflect the names of any members appearing by interactive technology and state the reason or reasons for the appearance by interactive technology.
- The names of visitors who attended.
- All agenda items, noting if any items were tabled or added to the agenda.
- Clear summaries of the agenda item discussions and reports.
- Any next steps or follow-up actions the board requested.
- Identify agenda items related to monitoring progress or performance of contractual obligations.

At least four times per year, the board is required by its charter contract to do the following. For the purpose of tracking and accountability, it is helpful to both the board and the authorizer if the minutes clearly articulate these items:

- Monitor the school's progress toward the goals in Exhibit G (academic goals);
- Monitor the school's progress toward the goals in Exhibit H (environmental education goals);
- Monitor progress on the outstanding obligations from the previous contract in Exhibit S;

- Participate in board training or have meaningful discussion or reflection on recent training attended by one or more board members;
- Engage in school leader evaluation activities.

Before finalizing draft minutes, the recorder should read them as if they were not at the meeting and ask:

“Do these minutes clearly show what happened and what the board decided?”

If not, take time to provide complete information and additional context as needed. Finally, consider asking some stakeholders who are not board members to provide feedback on the clarity of the minutes. Once you are confident that the minutes are clear enough for a visitor to understand, make sure that a process is in place to maintain the practices you used to create quality minutes.

Sample charter school board meeting minutes are provided on the following pages.

SAMPLE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

OW created fictional charter school board meeting minutes, provided below. These minutes are presented to provide an example of clear and complete documentation of board minutes, inclusive of many agenda items included in regular board meetings. OW does not intend these sample board minutes to be an exact guide for what boards should include at every meeting; rather, we tried to include many common agenda items in one sample document for your reference. Review the minutes for effective practices that your board might use or adapt for its purposes.

Please note, the public comment and consent agenda items are optional effective practices a board may use; these are not required for board meetings by statute or the contract.

Osprey Academy—District #4321
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2025
Time: 4:00pm
High School Room #202; 54165 Audubon Dr, Sandstone, MN 55072

I. Welcome and Call to Order

A. Call to order at 4:04pm

B. Attendance

1. Present:

- Brandon Franke, Parent Member, Chairperson
- Tou Yang, Community Member, Vice-Chair
- Idris Omar, Teacher Member, Secretary
- Thao Vang, Teacher Member, Treasurer
- Mike Johnson, Parent Member
- Leo Moreno, Community Member
- Jed Tillson, ex-officio, Executive Director

2. Absent:

- Constance Vaques, Teacher Member

3. Visitors: Joe Peterson, Abdul Mohammed, Marwa Yusef, Jen Howington, Maria Zazuata, Claire Vue, Shane Anderson, Maggie Lucknik

II. Reading of the Mission and Vision

Mission: To deliver an outstanding education that takes place outdoors as much as indoors, blending academic excellence with real-world ecological stewardship so our students become informed, empowered guardians of the Earth.

Vision: To cultivate curious, courageous, and compassionate stewards of the Earth who create a just and sustainable future for all living systems.

III. Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

- A. None at this time.

IV. Public Comment:

- A. None at this time.

V. Action Item: Accepting the Current Agenda

- A. **ACTION:** Member Moreno motioned to add the Pledge of Allegiance Policy #511 to the agenda as Action Item VIII. Secretary Omar seconded the motion.
- B. **Motion carried unanimously.**

VI. Action Item: Reviewing and accepting September Board Minutes

- A. **ACTION:** Treasurer Vang motioned to accept the September Board Minutes as-is. Member Johnson seconded the motion.
- B. **Motion carried unanimously.**

VII. Action Item: Review and accept consent agenda materials:

- A. **Reports:** Executive Director Report, K-8 Principal report, 9-12 Principal Report, Operations report, Compliance report
- B. **Minutes:** September Finance Committee minutes, September Policy Committee minutes, September Executive Committee minutes, September Governance Committee minutes, September Executive Director Support & Evaluation Committee minutes
- C. **HR Transactions:** New hires, resignations, and terminations
- D. **ACTION:** Member Moreno motioned to accept the consent agenda. Vice Chair Yange seconded the motion.
- E. **Motion carried unanimously.**

VIII. Action Item: Reviewing September Financial Report and Approving Expenditures.

Business Manager Clair Vue reported to the board.

- A. The school is a quarter through the fiscal year.
- B. In September, the school's cash balance was \$1.8 million as noted in the first line item.
- C. The school has funds due from the debt proceeds of the affiliated building company (ABC) to the school and anticipates \$75K reimbursed soon
- D. The ADSIS intervention program reimburses one year after expenses. So the school carries the weight of those programs until the next fiscal year. ADSIS is currently reimbursing at 51%.
- E. The income statement summary looks good. Revenue is at 48% and federal aid for food service is starting to come in.

- F. Cash is healthy. We monitor our days cash on hand (DCOH) and are projecting about 80 days on hand conservatively.
- G. The Board reviewed the check register

Discussion: Member Yang asked about the check made out to Thambke Towing LLC. Executive Director (ED) Tillson said the towing fee was due to the broken school van being towed to the mechanic.

- A. **ACTION:** Member Moreno motioned to approve the expenditures¹ listed in the September Financial Report. Secretary Omar seconded the motion.
- B. **Motion carried unanimously.**
- C. **ACTION:** Member Moreno motioned to accept² the September Financial Reports. Secretary Omar seconded the motion.
- D. **Motion carried unanimously.**

IX. School Leadership Reports (Exhibits G, H and S)

- A. Executive Director's Report:
 - 1. Exhibit G. Fall testing results are in and Fastbridge data shows we are making progress toward our contractual growth goals in math and reading. Executive Director Tillson provided a detailed overview of each measure in those indicator areas (Exhibit G provided in the board packet).
 - 2. Environmental Education: Our students did well at the Environmental Day Exhibition at the Minneapolis Convention Center. They were proud to represent our school and our environmental work. This was part of a learning measure in Indicator 5 of the school's Environmental Literacy Plan (more in the EE Coordinator presentation).
 - 3. Exhibit S. Have been working with the policy committee for revisions to the Executive Director Evaluation Policy #224. More later in the agenda.
- B. Elementary Principal Report from Principal Shane Anderson
 - 1. **Academic:** Collaborative planning done, focusing on new initiatives (Tech Time & Wonder Wednesdays) as well as Tiger Pride standards.
 - 2. **Community/Culture:** Staff have launched a "Challenge Accepted" initiative by creating teacher challenges for each week designed to enforce our Positive Behavioral

¹ MN Stat. §13D.01 subd. 4(b) requires, "The vote of each member must be recorded on each appropriation of money, except for payments of judgments, claims, and amounts fixed by statute." That means charter school boards are required to review and approve expenditures (such as check registers and disbursements) in accordance with statute.

² Monthly financials are management reports, typically prepared by the school's business office or financial service provider. They reflect current estimates, accruals, and timing differences that may change month to month. By accepting the statements, the board is indicating that it received and reviewed the report, and it understands the school's current financial position. The board is not certifying that every figure is perfectly accurate.

Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. Working to declutter and spruce up our staff lounge as a treat for our teachers.

3. **Enrollment:** 215 enrolled at elementary
4. **Other:** a 4th grade teacher is on family leave, we were able to fill the position with an Education Assistant (EA) with a Tier I license for the time being.

C. Middle School Principal report from Maggie Lucknik

1. **Academic:** The MS turned its advisory class into PRIDE. This has the same structure but made more time for it in schedules. Focus on Respect, Responsibility and Self-Control.
2. **Community/Culture:** We created a space called The Studio to help students that need additional support. It is staffed by our student success coach (Ms. Townsend).
3. **Mission:** All of our Environmental Awareness Day participants presented their projects at the state capitol. We have one student who qualified as an alternate at Nationals.
4. **Enrollment:** 253 for middle school enrollment
5. **Other:** still looking for another EA to provide educational support in Special Education (SpEd).

X. Action Item: Reviewing the Pledge of Allegiance Policy #511

Discussion: Chairperson Franke reminded the board that we reviewed this policy for changes last month and the final edits require approval.

- A. **ACTION:** Chairperson Franke motioned to accept Policy #511 as-is. Treasurer Vang seconded the motion.
- B. **Motion carried unanimously.**

XI. Action Item: FY26 Budget Amendment

- A. FY26 budget amendment needed because enrollment did not meet projections
- B. Must spend less than originally budgeted, ADM was budgeted for 475 and is currently at 468.
- C. Cuts have been made to supplies, lunch para support, and teacher training. Lunch supervision will move to rotating teacher duties, and teacher training will be led in-house.
- D. Capital expenditures like new technology and the playground addition will be on hold.
- E. Need to be proactive so we do not end up in a worse financial position.
- F. The new budget reduces spending by \$182,000. This leaves us at a 7% fund balance and a 0.85 debt coverage service ratio. It meets the bond covenant of DCOH with 35 days.

Discussion: Member Yang wondered how teachers feel about these changes. Executive Director (ED) Tillson said teachers aren't happy but are used to wearing different hats. The board should remember this request of teachers when looking at pay increases next year. Member Omar asked how we are going to get better at enrollment projections. ED Tillson said the projects each year are getting more accurate, but an admin priority is to meet and look at trends. Chair Franke requested to have that

meeting and report back to the board in two months' time. Secretary Omar made an agenda note for the December board meeting.

- A. **ACTION:** Director Moreno motioned to approve the amended budget. Director Vang seconded the motion.
- B. **Motion passed unanimously.**

XII. **Board Training: Legislative Financial Update**

Provided by Joe Peterson of School Financials LLC.

Required by MN Stat. §124E.07 Subd.7 and by the charter contract to monitor Exhibit S.

- A. Overview on legislative updates.
 1. State Revenue
 - 2.4% increase in state revenue; Osprey Academy will receive \$200,000. For Fiscal Year 2026-27, the state anticipates 2% increases.
- B. Legislative changes to funding:
 1. State uses FRL (Free and Reduced Lunch) numbers to measure the income/poverty levels. State no longer requiring families to fill out FRL forms, new metric has had disproportionate effects on some schools. As a result, we are losing money with this new formula.
 - Currently a one-year reprieve while state works on disparities
 - We are asking all families to complete the FRL form to back claim of inadequate funding.
- C. Library aid has decreased \$10,000.
- D. 4% cuts made to Special Education for tuition reimbursement.

Discussion: Possible cuts to funding need to be addressed via budget monitoring, accurate enrollment projections, and looking for grants. The board and leadership should put some thought into how to meet upcoming budget cuts without lowering DCOH. The Board Chair requested it be put on the agenda next month for further discussion and directed the Finance Committee to have recommendations at the next meeting.

XIII. **Academic Monitoring (Exhibit G) Special Education Monitoring and Progress**

The Special Education (SpEd) team provided training.

- A. Abdul Mohammed, Marwa Yusef, and Jen Howington presented the services and progress of the SpEd department to the Board.
 1. Explanation: How students are identified for SpEd.
 2. Evaluations: Students undergo a re-evaluation every 3 years. The school has exited five SpEd students from the program this year and most are from the high school level.
 - Speech and Language Disability (SLD) is the highest area of need.
 3. Student counts: 45% of elementary students; 55% are secondary students

4. Goals: schoolwide goal is for 50% of SpEd students to meet their learning growth end-of-year goal.
5. Progress:
 - Mid-year data shows that about 65% of students are meeting their reading and math goals on target to meet contractual SpEd goals.
 - Review of action plan and continuing steps to achieve goals

Discussion: Vice-Chair Yang asked about funding for SpEd, how it is calculated and if it is sufficient. Executive Director Tillson explained funding resources and MOE (Maintenance of Effort) restrictions on SpEd.

XIV. **EE Coordinator Report (Exhibit H)**

Led by Maria Zazuata, school EE Coordinator.

- A. Overview EE goals in our charter contract with Osprey Wilds (OW)
 1. Goals are in the areas of Awareness, Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, and Action for Environmental Education;
 2. 70% of students are expected to meet a learning target in each indicator area based on curriculum-based measures.
 - The school-wide recycling program is a goal we are making progress on in indicator area five, Action. Recycling program is ongoing, the senior class making infomercials for the program and posters are being made by 4th graders to remind students what can and can't be recycled.
 - Operational sustainability: The dishwasher purchase was approved, and dishwashers are in use to cut down on school waste. The can collection initiative has raised about \$50 which is half of a field trip scholarship.

Discussion: Member Johnson asked how the school is tracking data for these initiatives and what curriculum-based measures means. Maria explained curriculum-based measures are determined by the school and they can ask OW for guidance or suggestions as needed. Teachers design rubrics for the learning activity that measure student growth toward the goal area. The school has set a schedule for classes to be in charge of taking out and sorting the recycling so that every student has the opportunity to be part of the Action Indicator.

XV. **Board Evaluation Activities (Exhibit S, Operations Indicator 2.1)**

- A. Review results of board self-evaluation survey.
 1. Needs:
 - Want more training on goal-setting for board and school leader.
 - Want more involvement and understanding in the presentation of the financial report.
 - Unsure how to handle complaints that come to members directly.

2. Strengths:
 - Representing diversity of school.
 - Presence at school events.
 - Meeting agendas, minutes, and packets are timely and organized.
3. Three improvement goals:
 - Plan a spring training on school leader evaluation best practices. Secretary Omar will plan this.
 - Add a finance committee report into the regular meeting agenda. Treasurer Vang will provide these updates.
 - Create a flow chart for the complaint process. Chair Franke and Member Moreno will present a draft at the next meeting.

Discussion: Chair Franke asked how the board will be responsible for the goals the board set based on this feedback. Secretary Omar added Board Improvement Goals to the next board meeting agenda with the goal to create a timeline and expectations for this year. Training needs are reflected in the improvement goals listed above.

XVI. Director Evaluation Items (Exhibit S, Operations Indicator 2.3)

A. Policy 224: Director's Evaluation and Director's Evaluation Working Document

1. Timeframe changes are needed in the evaluation policy to better monitor the ED's performance throughout the year.
2. New policy changes the timing of the Board review of ED goals to February; review of survey results to March; finalization of the ED contract to April, and the Director presents goals for new school year in June.
 - This means family, student, and staff satisfaction surveys need to happen between January and the March board meeting to have accurate data.

Discussion: Informing the ED at the end of June doesn't make sense, there is no time to adjust if the contract is declined. Member Omar suggested using the satisfaction surveys to set goals for the following year. The policy committee will reword the Policy 224 for consideration at the next board meeting. Secretary Vang made a note to add an action item to next month's agenda to consider the amended policy.

B. Mid-Year Presentation of Director's Goals

1. Finished mid-year student benchmarks
2. Staffing has been inconsistent for SpEd paras;
3. FastBridge testing overall shows growth in reading and slower but slight increase in math
4. Making adjustments to WIN (What I Need) time for next year
5. Financial consultant has helped staff get comfortable with MARSS

Discussion: Chairperson Franke said progress has been made on all ED goals, culture feels welcoming and active. Member Yang asked how FastBridge math scores are going to change instruction going forward. ED Tillson indicated the need to bring data to the next staff meeting to discuss ideas and he could bring this to the board next month. Secretary Omar added this item to next month's agenda.

XVII. **Adjourn**

Chairperson Franke reminded the board the next meeting will be November 21, 2025.

- A. **ACTION:** Chairperson Franke motioned to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Vang seconded the motion.
- B. **Motion carried unanimously.**

XVIII. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.