

The Board of Education of LaHarpe Community School District #347 held a regular School Board meeting on 21 October 2025 in the Board room. President Dustin Detherage called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll call was answered by Blythe, Dowell, Deitrich, Burt, Detherage, Gebhardt, and Walker. Superintendent Janet Gladu, Board Secretary Liz McCarter, and Principal Ryan Hopper were also in attendance.

Visitor in attendance was Tim King.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

Public Comment: none

Business Items:

The Consent Agenda included the approval of the agenda, Open Meeting Minutes of the 16 September 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the LaHarpe CSD 347 School, Financial Reports, Individual Fund Balances, Payment of Bills, action to delete the verbatim closed session meeting records that were 18 months and older, FOIA requests, FY 2025 Annual Financial Report, Annual Fund Balance Review.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>
Education	\$2,725,301.61
Building	\$457,320.77
Debt Services	\$300,437.65
Transportation	\$157,087.82
IMRF	\$186,081.72
Capital Projects	\$100,000
Working Cash	\$47,254.95
TORT Immunity	\$180,084.31
Fire Prevention & Safety	\$229,008.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,382,577.70</b>
<b>Difference from prior year</b>	<b>1.432% decrease</b>
<b>Comparison Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
FY 2025	\$4,446,278.44
FY 2024	\$3,989,710.38
FY 2023	\$3,255,648.28
FY 2022	\$3,124,559.86
FY 2021	\$2,498,538.23
FY 2020	\$1,358,522.62

A copy of the Annual Financial Report was provided by Superintendent Gladu. There were no findings from the audit. Superintendent Gladu stated our goal last year was to spend down some of our cash-on-hand. Last year we purchased with cash a used bus and van, new desks and chairs for each teacher and paraprofessional, floor mats, window film, the camera system and one payment on the new bus. Superintendent Gladu stated that as of June 30, 2025 our overall fund balance was \$2,685,326.

A motion was made by Gebhardt with a second by Blythe to approve the items on the Consent Agenda: Open Meeting Minutes of the 16 September 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the LaHarpe CSD 347 School. Financial Reports, Individual Fund Balances, Payment of Bills, action to delete the verbatim closed

session meeting records that were 18 months and older, FOIA requests, and FY 2025 Annual Financial Report, Annual Fund Balance Review. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

#### Bond Issuance/Refunding Update:

Tim King presented and discussed the status of our bond issuance. The amount on the resolution exceeds the referendum amount that was approved in April 2025 because we are planning on refinancing/refunding some of the existing bonds. Tim reported that Fortress has agreed to buy \$2.5 million, he is searching for a buyer for the other \$2 million. The plan is to close in December.

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Gebhardt to approve the resolution providing for the issuance of approximately \$4,350,000 General Obligation School Bonds, Series 2025, for the purposes of paying certain costs of those capital projects approved by referendum at the April 1, 2025, consolidated election, and refunding certain outstanding obligations of the District, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the proposed sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

#### Addition Project -Bid Authorization:

Superintendent Gladu stated the architects anticipate having the bids ready to present to the board at the December board meeting. Superintendent Gladu gave the board a copy of the most recent cost projections and schematic design plans. The pre-bid meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2025.

A motion was made by Gebhardt with a second by Deitrich to permit Architechnics to complete the bidding documents and proceed with public and competitive bidding the Addition to LaHarpe Elementary School with the project bids tentatively due on December 8, 2025. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- no; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – no; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 5 – yay, 0 – abstain, 2 – nay, Motion Carried: 5-2.

#### 2025 Tax Levy:

Superintendent Gladu presented two potential 2025 Tax Levy documents. One was the maximum levy allowed, with a 15.32% property tax increase, and a recommended levy of 4.99% tax increase. After board discussion, the recommended levy of 4.99% increase will be presented in November for Board approval.

#### Operational Fund Balance Reduction Plan:

Superintendent Gladu presented the district's 2.5 Years Average Expenditure to Combined Cash Reserves Balance document. The current ratio is .780 which is well below the 2.5% threshold, so we will not need to submit a Cash Balance Reduction Plan to ISBE.

#### 2025-2026 Maintenance Grant:

Superintendent Gladu reported that ISBE has released the School Maintenance Grant. It provides matching funds. We have \$50,000 allocated in the budget for the districts portion of this grant. Last year the grant was awarded to remodel one of the bathrooms in the front lobby. Superintendent Gladu recommended submitting the grant for remodeling the second bathroom in the lobby under the Health Life Safety project to make the second bathroom ADA compliant.

A motion was made by Blythe with a second by Dowell to approve the submission of the 2025-2026 School Maintenance Grant to ISBE for remodeling the second lobby bathroom, making it ADA compliant, with a total project cost of \$100,000 (\$50,000 district match and \$50,000 state grant). Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – yes; Motion Carried 7 – yay, 0 – abstain, 0 – nay, Motion Carried: 7-0.

#### Pledge of Allegiance at Board Meetings:

The board discussed including the Pledge of Allegiance in the monthly meetings. Walker stated that he wants to come to the meetings to take care of business and that is it. Burt stated that there is a lot happening in our country and adding this to our meetings is the right thing to do.

A motion was made by Burt with a second by Dowell that the Board of Education include the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of each regular and special Board of Education meeting, to be recited immediately following roll call or the moment of silence. Participation in the Pledge is voluntary for all attendees. Roll Call: Deitrich – yes; Burt- yes; Blythe – yes; Detherage – yes; Dowell – yes; Gebhardt – yes; Walker – no; Motion Carried 6 – yay, 0 – abstain, 1 – nay, Motion Carried: 6-1.

#### Auditor Change to Retirement:

Superintendent Gladu stated that our current auditor informed us that he is retiring. Gladu stated that the school is not required to solicit a Request for Proposals, or a Request for Qualifications. Blythe asked if our former auditor had any recommendations. Gladu stated the person who handles Warsaw and Hamilton had space for us but she would need to check. Dowell stated there is no point in wasting money doing an RFQ when we could just call 3 or 4 in the area and get credentials. Burt asked if we are required to sign a contract, he said he would not want to do more than 4 years. Gladu said she would get a list of people with qualifications.

#### Reports:

##### Board Committee:

Gladu stated there was an Athletic Co-Op Meeting. Gladu stated that Dallas City had moved Cross Country from a parent-run sport to a school-run sport. There was no discussion or approval of this by the LaHarpe Board or the Co-Op Committee. Detherage stated it is was on the DC agenda to be discussed in October. Walker stated that in the meeting they didn't have a reason for why it was changed, they just thought it was the best choice. Blythe asked what the outcome of the meeting was. Detherage said they were going to discuss with their board and we discuss with ours and bring it back to the committee to vote on it together. Dowell asked if they can do it without communicating with us. Detherage stated they can but we have to agree to it. Dowell mentioned that will be a problem and only affects the kids if we don't agree and they don't communicate. She said maybe kids aren't participating and numbers are low because it is a parent sponsored activity. Blythe stated that if there are kids interested in it then we need to offer it as a school sponsored sport. Hopper stated with the low numbers for Cross Country we were able to transport with a van instead of the bus. Burt replied that we just need to work together. Gebhardt asked where the committee ended up with moving up girls from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade basketball team. Detherage responded it is happening and it is working. There are no parent complaints. They have moved up two additional 6<sup>th</sup> graders to play on days when they don't have their own games. Detherage said the two athletic directors are able to work well together and both are working towards what is best for the students. Gladu asked if we need to address golf being a school sponsored sport as well. It was decided to add golf to the agenda because it will be a paid staff member. Currently we do not have a coach for that. Gebhardt

mentioned that we need to send out an interest questionnaire to students to see what interest there is in what sports.

#### Board Members:

Dowell asked about the solar panels or lack thereof and what is happening. Detherage stated that Michael had received an email from the company saying they are missing the brackets because they are on backorder. They stated when they receive the brackets they will be able to install them. The brackets have arrived but there is no other update. Gladu stated that Michael has been in contact with them. The last update there were production issues. Michael emailed the day before the meeting for an update. Burt stated he attended OMA training and mentioned a comment Gladu made in her email to the board about what can be discussed in a meeting that he believed to be wrong. Gladu stated that email was strictly talking about closed session and what was allowable in closed session. Burt stated that he learned one board member has to take the training each year. Gladu stated that she believed she has to take the training every year and the board members just have to take the training once. Dowell asked about FOIA requests and if we could make it so they have to go through the website to prove humanity. She asked if that infringed on rules.

#### Principal:

Hopper stated that they have started a peer tutor group that is going well. There are 7-8 kids right now who are peer tutors. They had to complete an application and go through a training with Mrs. Pratt. Hopper stated these students must keep their grades up and can not get a detention. Hopper stated the program has been a huge hit and they are thinking about extending it to upper elementary. Hopper let the board know the staff just completed an in service on trauma on Oct 10<sup>th</sup>. A member of the ROE came and talked to the staff about how they can better reach and educate students who may be going through trauma, and about the signs of trauma. All of the staff seemed to gain a lot from this training. Hopper talked about Fire Safety Day that was on October 10<sup>th</sup> with our Fire Department. Everything went smoothly. Hopper stated we had Special Person's Day on Oct 10<sup>th</sup>. Grades K-4 were able to invite 2 special people for a craft and games in the gym. They were also invited to our book fair. Kayla Martin did a great job leading this. Gladu stated that it is always great to see staff ask about something new and then take the initiation to make it happen. Hopper talked about Parent Teach conferences coming up, there will be a business parade on Halloween that the PTO is in charge of, and Red Ribbon Week.

#### Athletic Director:

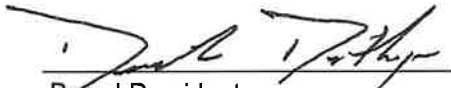
Hopper stated that Girls' Basketball is off to a great start. 8<sup>th</sup> grade is 6-1 and 7<sup>th</sup> grade is 7-0. He stated that Boys' Basketball is set to start on Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. He stated that numbers are good for the boys. There are 7 boys in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 9-10 in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Detherage stated that he was asked if the board would like to have a float in the Country Christmas Parade. Hopper stated that he has talked to them every year about this because there is always a Regional game that day. We are hosting Regionals and the busses and cars for visiting teams will have to be rerouted because of the road being shut down. There was some discussion about the parade float, Detherage said they would discuss and decide later.

#### Superintendent:

Gladu stated the Team Member of the Month was Lorrie Harl. Gladu stated the Health Life Safety Inspection went really well. They were looking for things to cite us for. There were a few minimal things they found. Gladu stated one of them was a deficiency in the sprinkler system. She also said someone will be here on the 20<sup>th</sup> to fix the issue. Gladu stated that Michael already had these corrections scheduled. In the Johnson Building there were adjustments made to the storage room door by Michael to bring it up to code.

There were minor issues in the cafeteria because a door wasn't latching correctly, Michael fixed it. Gladu stated that all cited issues have been addressed or are scheduled for correction. Gladu stated that we will have our annual Veteran's Day program and that staff are really excited about it. She stated we did get an invite from the Principal at IW to bring our whole school over in the morning to attend their program but our staff did not want to do that. They wanted to keep our program. Hopper said he told IW we would send our band and choir over to perform with theirs but have heard nothing back. Hopper said Mr. Draws reached out as well and hasn't heard anything either. Gladu stated that she offered for their FFA to come to present colors. Gladu stated Kevin Mershon will be our guest speaker for this year. The board was asked to do cookies and punch again by the PTO for this event and they board decided they would do that again. Gladu stated there will be a lockdown drill on Thursday. The Pre-K will not be participating in this.

A motion was made by Detherage with a second by Deitrich to adjourn the 15 October 2025 board meeting at 7:15pm (voice).

  
Board President

  
Board Secretary

11-18-25  
Date Approved