

North Boone Community Unit School District #200

Minutes of the Facilities/Long Range Planning Committee Meeting

District Office
6248 North Boone School Road
Poplar Grove, IL 61065
Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mrs. Judy Hutchinson. Members present were Mrs. Hutchinson, Mr. O'Donnell, Mrs. Schilling, Dr. Cascio, Jim Nolen, Joe Mullikin, Marc Eckmann, Chris McKiggen, Jasen Chamberlain, Robert Dreyer, and Donnie Livdahl. Randy Porter was also present.

Members absent were Mrs. Meyer, Nick Augustine, and Chad Cunningham.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

(none)

HVAC/PLUMBING PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

The committee discussed the district's ongoing partnership with Ceroni Piping, the primary HVAC contractor currently being used more than any other vendor. Concerns were raised about billing transparency and the need to understand how Ceroni's internal processes and pricing work.

A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, 2025, with Ceroni's management team, not just field staff, to review their billing practices, cost structures, lead times, and change order processes. The goal is to "hear it from the source" and gain clarity on how the company handles invoicing and project tracking.

The issues identified included:

- Current invoices lack sufficient detail (e.g., no breakdowns in costs lead times, or change orders).
- The district wants a more transparent and detailed billing system.
- There is a concern about whether the district is being fairly charged without competitive pressure.

Next steps:

- Based on the meeting, the district will decide whether to:
 - Continue working with Ceroni,

- o Issue an RFP for HVAC/plumbing services, or
- o Explore annual service contracts with clear terms.
- Draft RFPs are already in progress as a contingency.
- The term “plumbing” in this context refers specifically to gas line systems, not water lines.

Strategic Content:

- With the district entering a 10-year health and life safety facilities plan, it’s an opportune time to secure favorable long-term contracts.
- Service agreements could improve responsiveness for emergency repairs while enabling competitive pricing for larger, forecasted projects.

The committee agreed that meeting with Ceroni is a good step toward transparency and potential negotiation. They also emphasized maintaining flexibility for urgent repair needs while improving oversight and cost control.

TENNIS COURTS DISCUSSION – UPDATE

The committee reviewed the status of the old tennis courts in front of the Middle School, which were built in the early 1970s by the Girls Athletic Association but have been underused for decades. Community feedback showed no strong attachment to keeping them. The courts are occasionally used for recess or batting cages, but not for tennis or PE classes.

Key discussion points included:

- There is no significant public opposition to removing the courts.
- The area is considered an eyesore and largely unused and deteriorated.
- Before removal, they must check for underground utilities (via “Julie” inspection) and avoid damaging the active leach field nearby.
- The batting cage area and the “Home of the Vikings” banner currently use part of the fencing; if removed, that section would need to be rebuilt or relocated to maintain the baseball field’s outfield fence.
- The group debated whether to keep the batting cage area temporarily or remove everything at once, ultimately leaning toward full removal for simplicity and better appearance.
- Future use of the space could include green space with topsoil and reseeding, or potentially additional parking later.

SOFTBALL FIELD DISCUSSION – GREATEST NEEDS

The Facilities and Athletic Teams consisting of Dr. Cascio, Jim Nolen, Isaiah Johnson, and Tim Fleming, met at the varsity softball field to assess its most urgent needs. The top priorities identified were:

- Fencing (safety and structure)

- o The current fencing is in poor condition; sections are residential-grade and not set in concrete.
- o The backstop fence is stronger and was added later, but most fencing needs replacement or major repairs.
- o A contractor inspected the field and will provide two estimates:
 - Full replacement
 - Partial repairs in phases (outfield first, then baselines) with new bottom rails.
 - Safety concerns: players have previously slid into unstable fencing, increasing urgency.
- Drainage (field usability)
 - o The field has chronic water drainage problems, causing cancellations and unusable conditions after rain.
 - o Several excavators and tiling contractors have been contacted for quotes.
 - o Concerns:
 - Installing drainage could damage the outfield and require expensive re-sodding.
 - Timing is tight; work must be completed by March to be ready for the season.
 - o Some experts suggested it may be cheaper to build a new field than fix the existing drainage issues.
 - o The committee agreed to pursue two cost estimates:
 - A short-term “band-aid” fix to improve playability now.
 - A long-term or relocation option for future planning.
- Scoreboard and Electrical Access (required for hosting regionals)
 - o A scoreboard is mandatory for hosting regional tournaments.
 - o There is no power currently at the field; running electrical would also enable future use for soccer.
 - o Plan: run conduit to serve both softball and soccer scoreboards (“plumb for future use”).
 - o Quotes for three scoreboards are being gathered; once received, costs will be submitted to the board.
- Dugouts
 - o The softball dugouts roofs are rotted and being replaced by Booster Club volunteer Juan’s company.
 - His business will roof one dugout for free if the district pays for the other.
 - Work expected this or next weekend.
 - The Booster Club is covering the costs.
 - In exchange for his donation, Juan has requested permission to place temporary business signs:
 - One under the football scoreboard for the last home game.
 - Yard signs near each project location.
 - The committee approved the idea emphasizing it should be temporary and consistent with future sponsorship guidelines.

- A broader discussion about creating a sponsorship or advertising program (e.g., banners, scoreboard ads, or digital app ads) to raise Booster Club revenue in the future was held.

VIDEO CAMERA

A brief update on the school's video camera and security system needs included:

- Immediate upgrades were necessary, and the group has identified a short-term solution using existing equipment.
- Long-term upgrades are being evaluated, and additional quotes are being gathered.

Cost outlook:

- Short-term fixes will be minimal in cost.
- Comprehensive, long-term upgrades are expected to be substantial (six-figure range).

Next steps:

- Continue obtaining quotes and evaluating long-term options.
- No board action or funding motion is needed at this time; any future funding requests will be brought back once plans are finalized.

DRINKING FOUNTAIN INSTALL UPDATE

New drinking fountains are completely installed and operational at both Manchester and Poplar Grove Elementary Schools. Filters have been installed and logged for scheduled replacement.

HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT HOLE IN BUS AREA

There is an issue of a hole in the high school bus parking area needing repair. Jim Nolen has met with Stenstrom and Northern Illinois Contractors (NIC) and both are reviewing the issue and providing quotes. Stenstrom gave a rough estimate of \$6,000, possibly \$2,500 per unit for the repair. Collins Sanitary (for internal storm drain work) was also contacted by has not yet responded.

Next steps include awaiting final written quotes with temporary safety measures (metal or plywood cover) will be added to minimize fall risk until the repair is done. The goal is to complete the repairs by mid-to-late October. The budget is expected to stay under \$10,000, so that it will be covered under operating expenses with no board approval needed.

PAINTED LINES FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS UPDATE

Field maintenance:

- Mowing of athletic fields has significantly improved, and overall appearance is better.
- However, painted lines (soccer and football) were noted as uneven or jagged by parents and visiting teams.

- o Concern has already been communicated to the maintenance team for corrections.
- o It was also confirmed that current line-painting equipment is functioning properly.

LIFE SAFETY ANNUAL REVIEW

The Annual Life Safety Review is scheduled for October 29th. All principals and custodians have been notified and are conducting pre-inspections. No major issues are currently identified with previous reviews earning A and B grades. New batteries for safety systems are being delivered to ensure compliance before the inspection.

PARKING LOT AT UPPER ELEMENTARY – DISCUSSION

There are ongoing traffic and safety concerns during student drop-off and pick-up at the Upper Elementary parking lot.

- The lot has one way in and one way out, causing congestion and unsafe backing or turning.
- Parking spaces are largely occupied by staff, leaving limited space for parent traffic.

Discussion included:

- Suggestion to restrict the main parking lot to staff only and create a loop system for parent pick-up/drop-off, potentially using the old high school/middle school bus loop.
- Idea to time parent pickups after buses depart to avoid traffic overlap.
- Concerns raised about bus stop-arm violations if parents follow too closely behind buses.
- Some members suggested it may be easier to adjust bus flow rather than parent flow.
- Safety and communication are top priorities, any changes must be clearly marked, mapped, and communicated to families.

Next steps:

- Develop a site map for review at the next meeting to visualize traffic flow options.
- Continue exploring both short-term fixes (traffic direction, signage) and long-term solutions, possibly integrated with future campus/architectural planning and ADA compliance improvements.

STORAGE FOR ATHLETICS – DISCUSSION

Storage for athletic equipment has been a recurring issue with no solution implemented yet. Equipment for sports such as baseball and softball is spread out and frequently moved, leading to wear and potential damage. Athletic Director Isaiah Johnson raised the concern again during budget discussions. He is currently gathering quotes for storage size and quantity needed.

Options discussed included:

- Previous ideas included storage pods, containers, or permanent structures similar to the Menards-style building near the middle school softball field.
- Due to the district's spread-out facilities, multiple storage units may be necessary.
- A permanent structure could cost around \$80,000 and may not align with future plans if new athletic complexes are built.
- A temporary or mobile storage option (trailers or containers) could be more practical until a master facilities plan is finalized.

Action items included:

- Check existing storage buildings for available space or items that can be reorganized.
- Explore temporary storage solutions rather than permanent builds.
- Revisit the topic next month after gathering more information on cost estimates.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MURAL

The Viking head mural above the Middle School arch has faded and needs to be redone. The Booster's Club is organizing the project and looking for an artist. A student artist from Stillman Valley, known for painting their gym murals, was recommended. Boosters may also consider updating additional wall areas.

WALKIE-TALKIES DISCUSSION

Currently, many walkie-talkies are outdated or not functioning (e.g., Poplar Grove has 5 working and 10 non-working units; Manchester is also short on radios). The district previously planned a full system replacement (including buses and base stations), but the plan was tabled due to unclear bids and high costs (\$150K-\$160K).

Immediate needs include:

- Each school needs additional working radios (at least 6 new units in total).
- Jim Nolen will purchase new digital-compatible models (approx. \$500 each) and keep spares on hand.

Long-term plan:

- Revisit the districtwide radio upgrade plan to replace obsolete analog systems with digital communication linked across all campuses and buses.
- A new RFP will be issued to gather updated quotes and verify system compatibility (including with the upcoming School Resource Officer's communications).
- Explore potential grant funding for school safety communication upgrades in the future.

PLANNING FOR WINTER

Snow removal and salting:

- A third-party contractor (Priest Farms) handles large-scale snow removal for parking lots and drives.

- On-site staff manage sidewalks and smaller areas.
- Salt application is timed and coordinated with snow events.
- Equipment readiness is checked in advance.

Communication protocols:

- A mass email and TV ticker system communicates closures or delays to staff and students.
- Key personnel (facilities, transportation, communications, athletics, head custodians) are kept in a single decision-making space during inclement weather.
- Superintendent and leadership maintain a group text for final decisions.
- Teachers are informed about expectations for snow days.

Facilities check:

- Review of potential ice dams.
- Cooling tower treatments and generator additives to prevent winter issues.

Decision criteria for school closures:

- Wind chill thresholds: roughly -25 degrees F to -30 degrees F; extreme cases almost certainly lead to closures.
- Consideration of bus safety, student walking distances, and road conditions.
- Coordination with neighboring districts to avoid being the only open school.

Vehicles and equipment:

- Buses must be plugged in and checked to ensure that they start in extreme cold.
- Extreme cold can freeze engines even if buses start initially, so caution is required.

Other considerations:

- Athletic events may not always be canceled even if school is closed.
- Review of contracts for snow removal pricing and liability for potential damage.

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Proactive planning approach:

- Goal is to anticipate needs rather than react.
- Early discussions help secure funding, prepare board requests, and schedule work efficiently.

Sports and facility projects:

- Tennis court decisions may be handled over winter.
- Auxiliary gym painting is under consideration, accounting for holiday events and basketball tournaments.
- Other potential facility needs include building automation updates or equipment upgrades.

Needs, wants, and wishes:

- Directors, principals, and budget managers are asked to submit requests for equipment, repairs, or projects.
- This ensures that small available funds (e.g., \$30,000) can be allocated efficiently without last-minute scrambling.

Asset audit and replacement planning:

- A comprehensive inventory of district assets has been requested (desks, chairs, smartboards, playground equipment, vehicles, etc.).
- Purpose: track existing assets, forecast replacements, and develop a long-term succession plan.
- Inflation and replacement cost increases are factored in the future budgeting.

Budgeting and timeline:

- Asset and project date will be reviewed in late November/early December.
- Spending cutoff planned for March to allow accurate year-end reporting.
- Preliminary budgeting for FY27 begins in late February/early March.
- Regular updates will be provided (e.g., snapshots in November and December) to track progress.

The overall goal is to build a structured, forward-looking system for project planning, asset management, and budgeting to streamline the operations, avoid last-minute issues, and ensure funding and resources are properly allocated.

GROUNDS EQUIPMENT INVENTORY & RELIABILITY

Equipment procurement:

- Early identification of needs (tractors, mowers, etc.) allows for informed ordering decisions.
- Prioritize efficiency and cost savings while preparing for winter and future projects.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted by:



Russell O'Donnell, Chair



Judy Hutchinson, Vice-Chair

Approved: 11 / 18 / 2025