

- Call to order and adoption of agenda
 - 5:33 p.m.
 - Erin motioned
 - Liz second
 - All in favor
- Roll call (sign-in sheet)
 - Present: Michelle Kaschak, Amy Kinnon, Michael Perinotti, Sarah Halpin, Katie Straughn, Valerie Kile, Matthew Koncz, Erin Vermuelen, Liz Lake, Carissa Snelling, Leann Stitzel, Jim Warfel, Ryan Wukitsch
 - Not in Attendance: Greg Kuhn, Jake Oldaker, Daniel Macauley, Joe Velarde
- Approval of [2.9.26 NWLEF Meeting Minutes.docx](#)
 - No changes proposed
 - Motion Matthew
 - Seconded Katie
 - All in favor
- Communications/Announcements

Goodbye to Jim: Thank you for all you have done for the school district and the foundation.
Michael reminded everyone he is done in June. Jim asked who would do the hot dogs at the events?
Val will be done in October.
Michelle attended an AI in education seminar at Harvard Business School
- New Business
 - AI Assisted Meeting Notes: Michelle announced that she is piloting some AI notetakers to help capture some of the conversations. Tonight we are piloting [Fireflies.AI](#) tonight. Meeting highlights from the AI transcripts are at the end of the traditional minutes.
- Development Director - [Amy Kinnon](#)
 - Bucks for Baxter Wrap Up - \$2290 including matching donations from Giving Tuesday; down from the previous year; let's discuss in future meetings for new ideas for Giving Tuesday
 - Recap -
 - Teacher Wellness Day
 - Donations matched the expenses, so we did not have any out of pocket costs.
 - Coffee, yogurt parfaits, and infused water were served.
 - Leann said everyone seemed to enjoy it.
 - Middle School Building Tour
 - Mr. Dovico was key to the agenda for the day.
 - 19 people showed up not including board members; mix of current sponsors and current individual donors. Those who could not show had a positive response to the invite.
 - Good story-telling event; hopefully keep current donors and attract new donors.
 - Teacher Appreciation Week: First week in May
 - Using Buttered Crumb for small box of baked goods; probably individual cakes for each teacher.
 - Val asked if we had enough postcards to put with the cakes. Amy believes we have enough.
 - Lions Follweiler Grant
 - Submit once a year

- Small pool because only for NWL area non-profits
 - Submitted one for “SAW into innovation”
 - Maker space item for art teachers
 - Table saw for middle school tech area
 - Last year's grant was a mural, Amy saw sketches and drawings and will incorporate the foundation logo as well as Lions Follweiler name.
- DD & Board Member 1:1
 - Amy completed those after starting a year ago.
- Donor Retention Rate
 - Can check donor retention in Bloomerang.
 - Our number is 35%
 - Take out senior signs and our number is 45%
 - Transactions versus relationships; opportunity to deliver senior signs with messaging.
 - Remember mission to build the relationships. Partly why donor rate is low.
 - Ryan asked Is there a way to target the people who are not already aware and part of the foundation? Maybe we need to ask for an address- increase connection; can snowball the event
 - Jim commented on personalizing the event
- Goal Update
 - [Prospect List](#)
 - Carissa is “extra” with amazing contacts; Carissa has committed to talk to people.
 - Matt provided some names and we got a new sponsor from it.
 - Several tabs to check out.
 - Please always check Bloomerang
 - General donations at \$23,648 and event fundraising at \$29,218; annual partner goal at 62% of \$69,250.
 - General Donations
 - Amy feels like most growth potential is in general donations.
 - EITC: Anticipating two bank donations in this category; usually arrive in April
 - Postcards - please send thank you notes out. Prompt paper went around to everyone.
- Committee Reports
 - [Community Engagement](#) - [Sarah Halpin](#)
 - Alumni Spotlight - [Distinguished Alumni - Nomination.docx](#)
 - Created draft of a submission form
 - Likely best to start small with one person per year
 - Football game to announce the winner; small event prior to game
 - More alumni present
 - More community involvement
 - Homecoming game is preference with a small event and announcement before the game.
 - Want to keep it small and sustainable
 - Close in August; start soon
 - Leann concerned about “when” during the game
 - Sarah- lower lift but higher visibility event; plaque
 - Work with marketing for an ad in the NW Press
 - No formal vote needed, but Val asked if there any objections, and there were no concerns.
 - Vote and make decision at August board meeting

- Alumni update- Katie Straughn was voted to the Alumni board and she is very excited for the opportunity.
 - Next all class reunion currently being planned for July 2028
 - Katie did alert them that their website does not work.
 - They need more members.
 - Katie will share the Distinguished Alumni Award with them to nominate someone.
- Volunteer to represent NWLEF at a [School Board Meeting](#)
 - Sign up if you are available
 - Check presentation will take place in August
- [Kindergarten Registration - volunteer here](#) - Sarah took last volunteer spot. Thank you to everyone who volunteered!
 - After discussion, we decided to give away one legacy box with new newsletter sign-ups.
 - No approval needed.
- Weisenberg Community Center Opening - August 1
 - Amy committed to be there.
 - Stay tuned to sign up!
- [Allocations](#) - [Liz Lake](#)
 - Liz is the new committee chair for allocations.
 - [Grow Grants](#)
 - Committee met in early April to approve.
 - Approval to fund all of the grow grants for \$17, 072.38
 - Motion: Val
 - Matt seconded
 - Motion carried
 - [Competitive Psychology](#) - discussion/no vote needed
 - District is asking to fund a sports psychologist for two years.
 - Affect student athletes from grades 4-12; coaches, parents, etc.
 - Purpose to utilize psychologist in a number of ways; affect school performance, etc.
 - Leann: goal is for the general population of the high school
 - Other types of competitive clubs
 - Help with mindset; managing obstacles that come their way.
 - Start with athletics and move on from there.
 - Workshops for parents
 - Benefit everyone in the school; pride ourselves on having good students but we want to make sure that students can continue to better themselves emotionally and mentally
 - Contract: Would not be on staff (question posed by Michael)
 - Looking at two year contract for \$37,000 total
 - Question- is that dependent on how many students take part?
 - More sessions can be added for more cost.
 - Session sample titles:
 - Tackling performance anxiety
 - Tips for Parenting Student Athletes
 - Carissa asked about current school psychologists and what they think of it; Leann commented that they deal with student testing and emotional wellbeing. They do not have the capacity to take this on.
 - Liz reminded us that 90% of our students are involved in some kind of competition based performance, including theater.

- This would be mandatory and non-negotiable part of the practice.
- Ryan asked what the price includes and Leann noted meeting with athletes and running sessions.
- Trainings are an additional \$7000 for all of them
- Each team gets three hours of time for individualized sessions.
- Carissa- how are we measuring effectiveness?
- Liz noted that was included in grant proposal.
- Jim asked about cost sharing. The district applied for a mental health grant from the state to help cover the cost. Athletics will pick up some funding. Foundation is being asked for “any amount would be greatly appreciated”
- Discussed providing some funds each year. We do have budget available.
- Jim asked about the research on targeting athletes for this. Does not seem like the population we typically worry about.
- Erin feels the high school age is too late.
- Liz commented we have to start somewhere.
- Leann commented that most sanctioned school sports are high school only.
- Val asked about long-term plans for this like a permanent position. Leann said that is not a consideration. Ryan asked if we would be responsible for funding after this contract. What is the long term plan?
- Leann hopeful to alleviate some of the initial costs to negotiate later.
- Not tied to school general fund budget. Not relying on the general budget.
- Hitting the vast majority of students
- Discussion ensued around perceptions of supporting an “athletic” based grant
- We will discuss again at the next meeting.
- Finance - [Matthew Koncz](#)
 - [Financial Summary Feb- Mar](#)
 - \$195,547 in checking and savings right now
 - GoDaddy Renewal \$23.19
 - Val motioned
 - Liz seconded
 - All in favor
 - See report for specific numbers.
 - [YTD Variance to Budget Detail](#)
 - Should come in under budget
 - We need to fund kindergarten books for \$390
 - Marketing video approval will also be an expense
 - Matt explained to new board members that we use this file to help project expenses for the year.
 - Due date for each committee will be around May 14th. This gives Matt time to help create the budget for the June meeting to be approved.
 - As of now, allocations is under budget.
 - We always project to keep around \$60,000. Do we still fund the entirety of the allocations budget IF we do not hit goals this year?
 - \$17462 check to be written (grow grants plus kindergarten books)
 - 2026-2027 Annual Budget Planning
- Events - [Erin Vermeulen](#)
 - Tiger Run & Fun Walk - [Registration](#) and [Volunteering](#)
 - Sunday, June 7th.
 - Registration is open

- Please share on social media
 - Press inserts in mid-May
 - 1 mile fun run, 5k/10k options.
 - School building incentive
 - Peer-to-peer competition where the winner chooses the teacher/ school who should receive the funds.
 - Concern about the peer-to-peer option and its success.
 - Erin felt it was a low lift, so it is worth a try.
- [Online Auction](#)
 - Notification for when people sign up.
 - We have over 40 donations.
 - Amy is hoping to reach 50 baskets/ prizes.
 - Online platform- easy bidding.
 - Running from May 1 to June 8th (bidding closes)
 - Mail what we can and coordinate with admin for community pickups.
- Fundraisers: Senior Signs (73 sold) + Legacy Boxes (4 sold/1 order)
 - Legacy box flyers shared on social media with parent groups and in local daycares.
 - Senior sign drop off volunteers will be needed.
- Tiger Takeovers: Eight Oaks this week on Friday! Please stop by! Come thirsty and hungry!
 - Carissa shared ideas. We need a June event.
- [Marketing - Valerie Kile](#)
 - Social Media Training/Access
 - If you want access, let Val know.
 - Video Project (x2)
 - Val met with admin and video team. Getting closer to scheduling a date.
 - Val is also getting some social videos from a contact (free!)
- Executive
 - [Strategic Plan](#) - Continue to review and update
 - [Chad Berger Recommendations](#)
 - [Proposed Committee Reorganization](#) - 4 committees
 - Right now we have five committees (technically six)
 - Eliminate the finance committee (can be ad-hoc)
 - Consolidate marketing and community engagement
 - We can go to three, but that feels extreme.
 - Open to feedback
 - Events has always been anything with an expense
 - Amy wants to keep the word fundraising
 - No finance committee needed.
 - Allocations stays, executive stays. How extreme do we go?
 - Organizing committees based on outcome?
 - Events and fundraising
 - Community development
 - Executive
 - Allocations
 - Motion to approve
 - Liz
 - Val

- All in favor
- Proposal to retitle the DD role
 - Roll that into performance review cycle.
 - Will do this at June meeting.
- Succession Planning: 2-3 planned vacancies
 - Val is stepping away from the presidency and will take either a smaller role or take a break from the board depending on volunteers.
 - What does Val do? Erin and she meet when they need to address things that come up. Speaking at events, representing the brand in varying spaces. Val will answer any questions you may have,
 - We need two board members after June.
- Bills for Payment (checks to be cut at conclusion of meeting)
 - Check mentioned above.
 - No other bills for payment.
- Amy recruited multiple volunteers for senior sign delivery. Michelle, Val, Erin, Liz and others
- Adjournment at 7:59 p.m.
 - Val motioned to approve
 - Erin seconded.
 - All in Favor

AI meeting summary

[AI Recording](#)

- **Fundraising Success:** General donations at \$23,648 and event fundraising at \$29,218; annual partner goal at 62% of \$69,250.
- **Donor Retention Challenge:** Retention rate at 35%; improving relationships with one-time donors could raise it to 43%.
- **New Mental Health Initiative:** Proposed \$37,000 contract for sports psychologist; funding from multiple sources, with program effectiveness evaluated through feedback and data.
- **Distinguished Alumni Program:** Launching with one honoree per year, incorporating social media, local ads, and collaboration with the Alumni Association.
- **Upcoming Events:** Tiger Run on June 7 aims to boost participation; first online auction runs May 1–June 8 with 50-item goal.
- **Solid Financial Position:** Cash assets around \$195,000; budget review on May 14 with year-end reserve goal of \$60,000.

Notes

Fundraising Performance and Strategy

Fundraising efforts show strong progress with nearly all goals on track, but donor retention and engagement remain key challenges.

- **Strong general donations and event fundraising** reached **95% and 69% of goals respectively**, with general donations at **\$23,648** and event fundraising at **\$29,218** as of the meeting (22:31)
 - Annual partners are at **62% of the \$69,250 goal**, with **\$3,500 committed but unpaid**; challenges include changes in representatives and organizational restructuring at key sponsors.
 - The Tiger Run and Golf Tournament are expected to bring additional sponsors before fiscal year-end, supporting event fundraising growth.
 - EITC donations are anticipated from two banks in April, potentially boosting total revenue.
- **Donor retention rate is low at 35%, below the typical nonprofit average of 40-50%**, largely due to transactional giving like senior signs (25:44)
 - Removing senior sign donors raises retention to **43%**, highlighting the need to build deeper relationships beyond one-time purchases.
 - Amy plans to send targeted follow-up emails to senior sign buyers to nurture ongoing engagement and promote alumni connections.
 - Discussion emphasized opportunities to educate donors during transactional moments, such as including flyers with senior signs or legacy boxes.
- **Efforts to engage new donors at events are ongoing but challenging**, especially reaching guests without prior ties to the district (28:10)
 - Strategies include identifying and tagging new attendees ahead of events for targeted outreach and promoting the mission behind events to foster connection.
 - Opportunities exist at casual moments like the putting green at the golf tournament to personally engage attendees.
- **Prospect list development and outreach are active**, with board members encouraged to connect with new potential donors identified by staff and volunteers (32:23)
 - Carissa has added numerous contacts, committing to personally engage many prospects.
 - Board members can volunteer to make initial contacts or provide warm introductions, improving outreach effectiveness.

Grant Funding and Allocations

The board approved key grant funding while considering a significant new mental health initiative, balancing priorities and budget constraints.

- **Approval of \$17,072.38 in GROW grants** for classroom projects spanning elementary to high school, vetted and approved by school principals prior to funding (38:30)
 - One grant was held for potential funding in the fall based on district request.
- **Discussion of a proposed \$37,000 two-year contract for a sports psychologist** focused on student-athlete mental health and performance (40:31)
 - The psychologist would provide team workshops, parent sessions, and asynchronous mindset programs for competitive students grades 4-12.
 - The contract includes about **3 hours of direct sessions per team annually** and potential expansion to non-athlete competitive clubs.
 - Funding is planned from a mix of foundation allocation, athletic concession revenue, and a state mental health grant with a \$10,000 earmark.
 - The school district will contract the psychologist; this is not a new staff hire, avoiding long-term salary commitments.
 - Evaluation metrics include pre/post surveys, coach and parent feedback, and utilization data to measure program effectiveness.
 - Board members expressed interest in exploring middle school participation and public parent nights to broaden impact.
 - The board will vote on final funding at the next meeting after more information about the provider and budget is shared.

- **Budget considerations highlight the need to balance allocations with fundraising outcomes**, maintaining a projected cash reserve of about **\$60,000** at year-end (51:34)
 - The foundation has about **\$200,000 in cash**, with allocations budgeted at **\$172,000**, leaving roughly **\$30,000** if fully funded now.
 - Allocation of funding to this new mental health initiative will depend on final revenue performance and priorities.

Community Engagement and Alumni Relations

Plans to launch a Distinguished Alumni program aim to boost community awareness and engagement through accessible nomination and recognition.

- **The Distinguished Alumni program will start small with one honoree per year, announced at a football game, possibly homecoming** to maximize alumni attendance and visibility (08:08)
 - The nomination process will use a rolling application with an August deadline for yearly selection.
 - A scoring rubric and blind review process are planned to reduce bias in selecting honorees.
 - The program includes potential social media campaigns, a small celebratory event at a local restaurant, and local advertising (e.g., Northwestern Press, sports radio).
 - Coordination with the Alumni Association is planned to leverage their network and support.
- **Community engagement efforts include collaboration with the Alumni Association** to improve communication and recruitment of younger members for revitalization (20:49)
 - The association is working on better website functionality and social media presence.
 - Joint event participation and information sharing are encouraged to strengthen ties.
- **Kindergarten registration outreach incorporates foundation awareness via legacy box flyers, newsletters, and direct conversations** (27:41)
 - A raffle tied to newsletter sign-ups is planned to increase engagement and contact capture.
 - Registration numbers are low this year, with many families delaying sign-up until summer, posing outreach challenges.
- **Volunteer recruitment and event support remain critical**, with active coordination for senior sign delivery and upcoming events (33:55, 42:06)

Events and Fundraising Initiatives

Multiple upcoming events and new fundraising formats are underway to increase participation and revenue, supported by strategic promotions.

- **The Tiger Run and Fun Walk is scheduled for June 7 at Anilani Park**, with registration open but early sign-ups below expectations (53:45)
 - The event includes 1-mile fun run, 5k, and 10k options, with a \$200 building participation incentive and peer-to-peer team fundraising.
 - Volunteer roles are short and flexible, with rain or shine conditions.
 - Peer-to-peer fundraising success is uncertain and may need more promotion and support.
- **A first-ever online auction is launching May 1 with a goal of 50 items**, closing June 8 after the Tiger Run (58:52)
 - Currently **41 items committed**, including many new donors and unique items like autographed books.
 - The auction platform allows easy bidding and shipping options.
 - Volunteers are encouraged to contribute items or funds to complete the goal.
- **Senior signs and legacy box sales are ongoing**, with **73 senior signs sold and four legacy boxes ordered** (02:03:28)
 - Delivery logistics are coordinated via mapping software to optimize volunteer routes.
 - Senior sign sales officially closed recently but remain open for a few extra days.

- **Tiger Takeover community events are scheduled monthly at local businesses**, with recent success noted at Buttercrumb and plans for farm tours in summer (02:06:11)
 - Increased social media promotion by locations boosts attendance.
- **Marketing efforts include social media training and a planned marketing video shoot for early May** to enhance awareness and engagement (02:10:46)

Organizational Structure and Leadership

The board approved restructuring committees to streamline operations and clarified leadership succession plans amid upcoming vacancies.

- **The board voted to consolidate six committees into four: Executive, Allocations, Events & Fundraising, and Community Advancement** (02:14:17)
 - Finance committee responsibilities will be handled ad hoc due to limited ongoing need.
 - Marketing and community engagement merged into Community Advancement for awareness-driven work.
 - Events and fundraising combined to better manage net income activities.
 - Committee naming and narratives will be refined later.
- **The Development Director role renaming and performance review integration are pending final approval at the June meeting** (02:19:05)
- **Succession planning identified open board seats and executive roles**, with President and Treasurer positions requiring elections this year (02:19:05)
 - Aaron is open to nomination for Vice President; no current interest in President from board members.
 - Two board vacancies need filling imminently due to upcoming departures.
 - Outgoing President committed to remain on the marketing committee to ensure smooth transition.
- **Board members encouraged to consider leadership roles and recruit new members** to maintain operational continuity.

Financial Overview and Budget Planning

The foundation maintains a healthy cash position with ongoing fundraising exceeding budget in some areas, while preparing for next fiscal year.

- **Cash assets totaled approximately \$195,000 at end of March**, with expected decreases due to allocations spending (36:24)
- **Revenue highlights include in-kind donations totaling \$3,000 and several sponsorship contributions ranging from \$250 to \$750** (37:36)
 - General donations brought in \$4,798, including monthly donors and restricted support dog funds.
 - Senior sign sales and Tiger Run registrations continue to add revenue.
- **Expenses remain within budget overall, with some overages approved for website, marketing, and accounting services** (41:50)
 - Credit card fees are slightly over budget but reflect increased online donations.
- **Marketing expenses include unbudgeted stadium ads and banner stands, with a marketing video and senior edition press ad upcoming** (47:04)
- **Budget timeline targets May 14 for committee feedback and June board meeting for approval**, aiming to align fundraising goals and spending plans (50:01)
- **Discussion highlighted maintaining a year-end reserve of about \$60,000**, with flexibility to adjust allocations based on actual revenue performance (51:34)
- **Board approved a \$23.19 payment for GoDaddy renewal**, reflecting minor over-budget expenses (42:06)

Action items

Michelle Kaschak

- Announce and finalize scheduling for Teacher Appreciation Week deliveries in early May (16:40)
- Follow up on Lions Faulkner grant award status and mural progress; coordinate with art teacher and Lions club for unveiling (17:58)
- Schedule one-on-one meetings with board members for updates and training, prioritizing new members (20:40)
- Assist in prospect list outreach and coordinate with board members claiming contacts for personal outreach (32:00)
- Facilitate research gathering and prepare additional information on sports psychologist proposal for next board vote (01:03:51)
- Coordinate Distinguished Alumni Award program launch, finalize nomination form and integrate marketing with alumni association (01:18:00)
- Share Distinguished Alumni program updates with alumni association and encourage nominations (01:21:30)
- Distribute kindergarten registration materials including Legacy Box flyer and books; coordinate volunteer efforts (01:28:00)
- Lead coordination of fundraising events including Tiger Run promotion and volunteer signups (01:54:30)
- Oversee online auction item procurement and management aiming for 50 items; prepare promotion timeline for May 1 soft launch (01:58:00)
- Organize senior sign delivery volunteer list and mapping for efficient drop-offs; coordinate pickups (02:03:00)
- Communicate and schedule Tiger Takeover events and farm tours; recruit local businesses (02:06:00)
- Support marketing efforts with social media training and video production coordination (02:10:00)

Amy

- Manage Giving Tuesday fundraising wrap-up and evaluate strategies for future improvements (06:48)
- Plan and execute Teacher Wellness Day activities adjusting for lessons learned regarding timing and refreshments (08:16)
- Coordinate Middle School Building Tour feedback and plan for continuation with rotating school visits (11:00)
- Coordinate Legacy Box flyer placement at daycares and other community locations for kindergarten awareness (01:53:00)
- Support in mailing thank you postcards to annual donors (01:39:00)
- Lead outreach efforts for prospect list with volunteers including Carissa and Matt (32:00)
- Deliver senior signs or facilitate their delivery and update volunteer rosters (02:03:00)
- Host or assist at Tiger Takeover events and promote (02:06:00)

Liz

- Head allocations committee, coordinate grant review and funding recommendations (36:40)
- Assist in oversight of sports psychologist proposal details and funding discussions (01:03:51)
- Collaborate with Amy on Lions Faulkner grant and mural project monitoring (17:58)
- Oversee Distinguished Alumni program development and scoring rubric refinement (01:08:00)

Matt

- Support prospect list outreach and sponsor recruitment, plus coordinate follow-up conversations (32:00)
- Prepare finance reports and budget timeline updates; distribute to committees and board (01:36:00)
- Process expenses and invoices, including kindergarten book payment coordination (01:53:00)

All Board Members

- Volunteer for senior sign delivery routes and notify Amy of preferred areas or addresses (02:03:00)
- Promote Tiger Run registration and peer-to-peer fundraising participation; share event info widely (01:54:30)
- Review prospect list and claim known contacts for outreach if comfortable (32:00)
- Provide feedback on Distinguished Alumni program and nomination process drafts (01:10:00)
- Collaborate on committee restructuring feedback and prepare for upcoming elections (02:18:30)

Executive Committee

- Initiate committee restructuring motion and approval process; communicate changes to full board (02:12:00)
- Prepare for upcoming performance review cycle including Development Director role adjustment (02:19:00)