

Board Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2026

Present were:

Sarah Godlewski, Board Chair
John Leiber, Commissioner
Josh Kaul, Commissioner
Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary
Rich Sneider, Chief Investment Officer
Denise Nechvatal, Controller
Chuck Failing, IT Manager
Thuy Nguyen, Office Manager
Peter German, Staff

Secretary of State
State Treasurer
Attorney General
Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Secretary of State

ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Godlewski called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ITEM 2. APPROVE MINUTES (August 18th board meeting)

MOTION: Commissioner Kaul moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: The motion passed 3-0.

ITEM 3. APPROVE LOANS

MOTION: Board Chair Godlewski moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Sneider reported that loans #1, #3, #4 and #5 are all for roadwork. Loan #3 is to the Town of Polk. The town is doing a Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) project. The majority or entire loan will likely be repaid once the project subsidy is received from the state. Loan #2 is a development incentive for the Carver Flats project in Waupun. Carver Flats is a 60 unit multi-family complex with total development costs about \$9.5 million. Construction is expected to commence by November 1st. Loan #6 is to finance the purchase of attachments for a new plow we financed earlier this year for the Town of Salem. Loan #7 is to the Town of Janesville for their Fire Protection services provided by the City of Janesville. The town borrowers for this purpose annually and other towns are catching on to this strategy. This allows an increase in the annual tax levy beyond the municipal levy limit as principal and interest payments are above the municipal levy limit calculations. We may see more borrowing of this type in the future as budgets continue to get tighter.

VOTE: The motion to approve the loans passed 3-0.

The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) unanimously approved **\$3,537,453.00** in State Trust Fund Loans to support **7** community projects in Wisconsin.

1. Town of Slinger / Washington County / Finance roadwork / \$440,000.00
2. City of Waupun / Dodge and Fond du Lac County / Finance Carver Flats development incentive / \$500,000.00
3. Town of Polk / Washington County / Finance LRIP road project / \$888,600.00
4. Town of Ashippun / Dodge County / Finance roadwork / \$275,500.00
5. Town of Salem / Pierce County / Finance roadwork / \$90,000.00
6. Town of Salem / Pierce County / Finance purchase of plow truck attachments / \$166,000.00
7. Town of Janesville / Rock County / Finance fire protection / \$1,177,853.00

ITEM 4. CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Sneider reported that last week the investment committee voted to purchase long-dated Treasury bonds for the Common School Fund. The interest rate on 30-year bonds is the highest it has been in nearly 20 years. Treasury bonds do not have a call option, so unlike most of the other fixed income securities in our portfolio, the Treasury cannot pay off these bonds early. The call option available on most of our bonds allows the issuer to redeem the bonds by refinancing the debt, which usually occurs if and when market rates go down. In our situation, if the rates decline in the future, the value of our new Treasury bonds will increase. We would then have the option to sell the Treasuries for a capital gain and reinvest the proceeds or continue to receive the ongoing interest payments.

ITEM 5. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Executive Secretary Nelson reported that she and Denise Nechvatal, Chief Financial Officer, have been preparing our budget submittal to DOA for the September 15 deadline. She and Denise have met with staff from the DOA Budget Office to go through our budget requests. We are requesting funds for a second accountant to manage risk mitigation for our large portfolio. The meeting went well.

We will be presenting a land sale next board meeting. She thanked Board Chair Godlewski and Commissioner Leiber for making themselves available to sign the land patents for the six land bank sales previously approved which are now being finalized.

The Waukesha Circuit Court heard oral arguments and ruled this morning that the diversion of Milwaukee County fines, fees and forfeitures from the Common School Fund were unconstitutional. WEMTA's amicus brief, on behalf of the public school librarians, requested Milwaukee County reimburse the Common School Fund for the diverted money it received during the period between when the new statute diverted 100% of fines, fees, and forfeitures to today when the law was reverted. The decision on this question is scheduled to be made on November 6th. There have been discussions about whether specific legislative guidance should be given to the counties on how to determine what belongs in the Common School Fund. An audit of these reports is possible.

Board Chair Godlewski agreed that we need clarity from the legislature on repayment of the diverted funds.

Executive Secretary Nelson reiterated a critical aspect of the Common School Fund: the state Constitution requires us to distribute earnings from the fund annually to public schools. The only way the fund can grow is from the deposit of fines, fees and forfeitures plus unclaimed property. The growth of the Common School Fund is critical to keep up with inflation.

Commissioner Leiber cautioned that nothing is quite final until the appeal has gone through, if Milwaukee County decides to appeal. A final decision won't be made until after the appeal is done. However, this ruling is a good first step.

ITEM 6. BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

None

ITEM 7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

BCPL Budget Request

ITEM 8. OLD BUSINESS

None

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION RERERENCE CHECKS FOR THE FUTURE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

10(a). Convene in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 19.85(1)(c) ("Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.")

The board will go into closed session to discuss reference checks for the future Executive Secretary.

MOTION: Board Chair Godlewski moved the board convene in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. Section 19.85(1)(c); Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: The motion passed 3-0.

Convene to closed session 2:15 pm - 3:12 pm

Reconvene to open session 3:12 pm - 3:13 pm

ITEM 10. ADJOURN

Board Chair Godlewski moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0; the meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.



Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary

Link to audio recording:

<https://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/SharedDocuments/Board Meeting Docs/2026/2026-09-01 BoardMtgRecording audio.mp3>