

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD NOVEMBER 25, 2024**

A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4th Street South, on the 25th day of November 2024.

Chairperson Johnson reported that, per Board Policy 1420, all Board meetings are now recorded and posted on the District website for one (1) year.

ROLL CALL: Brian Patrick took roll call.

Trustees Present: Gordon Johnson - Chairperson
Kim Skornogoski – Vice Chairperson
Bill Bronson
Mark Finnicum
Amie Thompson
Paige Turoski

Trustee Absent: Marlee Sunchild - Excused

Others Present: Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business Operations; Jeff Williams, Director of Information Technology; Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Director of Student Achievement; Luke Diekhans, Director of Human Resources; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation. Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association President.

At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

ADOPT AGENDA

Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with special thanks for the generous donation of welding supplies from ADF International Inc.

A. Minutes of the November 11, 2024, Regular Board Meeting – The Board approved the minutes of the November 11, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

1 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.

2
3 **C. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple
4 Awards: Jamie Pierce, Teacher Aide at Riverview Elementary School; Amy Blado,
5 Paraprofessional Educator at Loy Elementary School; Erin Bucher, Student Services
6 Coordinator for Great Falls Public Schools; Tami Faulkner and Paul Culbertson,
7 Associate Principals, both at Great Falls High School; and Jessa Youngers, Supervisor
8 of Food Service for Great Falls Public Schools.

9
10 **D. Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35's** – The Board approved the
11 Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35's for the individuals listed in the
12 agenda.

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14 **E. Donation of Miscellaneous Welding Supplies** – The Board approved the donation
15 of miscellaneous welding supplies from Trevor Floerchinger, on behalf of ADF
16 International Inc., to Great Falls Public Schools with special thanks.

17
18 **F. Student Activity Accounts for October 2024** - The Board approved the Student
19 Activity Accounts for October 2024.

20 21 22 **COMMUNICATION**

23
24 **A. Character Strong – West Elementary School** – Lyndsey Stulc, West Elementary
25 School Principal, along with six (6) student representatives reported on *Character*
26 *Strong* and what gratitude means to West Elementary School. Each student also shared
27 one thing for which they are grateful.

28 29 **B. Superintendent Report** –

30 Luke Diekhans, Director of Human Resources was recognized for his upcoming
31 birthday.

32 Superintendent Hoyer stated winter sports have begun in high schools and will start in
33 January for middle schools.

34 She reviewed how students have been representing the District throughout the
35 community. Peer mentor students at North Middle School spoke about the program on
36 the radio, student art is showcased at the Ergon Art Exhibit at Great Falls College
37 Montana State University (GFCMSU) which will run until December 10, 2024, and
38 students participating in the Touro Montana MedAchieve program finished their first
39 semester.

40 Superintendent Hoyer encouraged everyone to attend the CMR drama production of
41 *The Pirates of Penzance*. This play will run December 5, 6, 7, 13, and 14, 2024 at CMR
42 High School.

43 District Holiday programs have been scheduled throughout December, and Mrs. Hoyer
44 thanked Dusty Molyneaux, Supervisor of Fine Arts, and the schools for their work.

45 Flying S Title Company and Great Falls Realtors generously donated fourteen hundred
46 (1400) pairs of socks to District students for "Socktober".

47 She reported on how the District/Cabinet is working on and/or completing each task
48 within each main component of the Strategic Plan. She then provided insight from

District Leadership. Superintendent Hoyer stated that behavioral issues, compared to this time last year, are down 9.3%. She believes that *Character Strong* and Responsibility-Centered Discipline (RCD) de-escalates students before they resort to violence. Mrs. Hoyer reviewed other data regarding the Healthy, Safe, and Secure Schools component of the District's Strategic Plan.

Superintendent Hoyer reported that the key takeaways from the Listening Sessions were a) community involvement is essential for any financial strategy, especially as it relates to supporting increased funding and engaging in grassroots advocacy efforts, b) teacher retention and support must remain a top priority, as it is directly tied to educational quality and long-term sustainability, c) alternative funding sources should be explored more intensively to reduce reliance on traditional tax models and adapt to shifting financial realities, and d) clear communication around the budget, its impact on education quality, and the need for community support to mitigate misunderstandings and foster trust.

C. Audience Communication – None

ACTION ITEMS

A. **Lincoln Elementary School Fire Alarm Upgrade** – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick, stated that the Lincoln Elementary School fire alarm system is original to the building and needs to be replaced. The upgraded fire alarm system will allow for both internal and external building voice alarms. He reported that GPD Engineering has been accepted by the District as an Indefinite Demand, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) vendor and they will create the bid documents and specifications. The project will be advertised in the Great Falls Tribune for two consecutive weeks as required by state law.

Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve the advertising for Fire Alarm Bids to upgrade the Lincoln Elementary School Fire Alarm System as presented.

B. **Financial Report and Check Register for October 2024** – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick, explained why reserves are important to the District. He also presented the financial report and check register for October 2024.

Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the October 2024 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #136169 - #136703 in the amount of \$2,452,558.12 and Payroll checks #82289 - #82534 in the amount of \$723,950.26 as presented.

ACTION: OTHER

There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

1
2 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**
3

4 **A. 2025 School Election Calendar and Trustee Filing Timeline** - Director of Business
5 Operations, Brian Patrick, reviewed the 2025 School Election Calendar that was
6 included in the agenda and is available on the District's website. He explained the
7 nominating petitions and candidacy forms for Trustee positions will be available starting
8 December 12, 2024. There will be three (3) open seats on the GFPS Board of Trustees,
9 each for a three-year term. These Trustee positions are currently held by Chairperson
10 Gordon Johnson, Trustee Mark Finnicum and Trustee Paige Turoski. Mr. Patrick said
11 candidates must live within the Great Falls Public School District boundary and must
12 submit a Declaration of Intent and Oath of Candidacy for Trustee Candidate form no
13 later than March 27, 2025, to be included on the ballot or by April 3, 2025, to be a write
14 in candidate. The annual school board election will be held on May 6, 2025.
15

16 **B. First Reading of Deleted, New and Revised Board Policies 1610 – Goals and**
17 **Objectives; 2162P (New) – Procedure for Education of Students with Disabilities**
18 **Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; 2162R (Delete) – Section 504**
19 **of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”); 2320 – Field Trips, Excursions**
20 **and Outdoor Education; 3630 – Cell Phones and Other Electronic Equipment;**
21 **5430 – Volunteers; 5430F – Volunteer Agreement Form; and 8132 – Activity Trips**
22 – Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the recommended changes, in detail, for Board
23 Policies 1610, 2162P, 2162R, 2320, 3630, 5430, 5430F, and 8132 and stated that if
24 anyone has questions or concerns about these policies to contact her before the next
25 scheduled Board meeting.
26

27 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

28 Trustee Bronson thanked Superintendent Hoyer and Jackie Mainwaring for the
29 information received from the Listening Sessions. He also encouraged fellow Trustees
30 to watch the previous recording of *Think Tank Thursday* from Montana School Boards
31 Association (MTSBA). He is confident and impressed with the amount of knowledge that
32 will be taken to the next legislative session.

33 Trustee Skornogoski stated that she had the opportunity to participate in the Armed
34 Intruder Training on November 1, 2024. She also spoke on her experience in
35 participating in the *Learning Sessions* and appreciated the open discussion. She stated
36 that she spent four (4) hours reviewing federal cards for students in three (3) schools as
37 her part in the Convocation assignment. She also thanked her fellow Trustees for their
38 work.

39 Trustee Turoski appreciates the involvement of school principals and students in Board
40 Policy Meetings.

41 Trustee Finnicum enjoys hearing about how *Character Strong* is being implemented in
42 schools. He thanked the Cabinet, fellow Trustees and District staff for their work.

43 Trustee Thompson thanked Superintendent Hoyer for the data regarding the District
44 Strategic Plan. She is in support of making the Peer Mentor group available for credit.

45 She is happy to hear that *Character Strong* is positively affecting the District and student
46 behavior.
47
48

1 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

2
3 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,
4 December 16, 2024, and Monday, January 13, 2025.

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7 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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9 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adjourn
10 the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:23 p.m.

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15 _____
16 Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk