

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2024

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 met in regular session on Monday, January 8, 2024, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with President Amber Flynn presiding.

Board Members Present: Josh Anderson, Dave Berger, Amber Flynn, Monte Gaukler, Joel Larson via phone, Eric Lunn, Jeff Manley, Bill Palmiscno, and Cynthia Shabb. **Absent:** None.

Student Board Members Present: Ryaan Alshami. **Absent:** Maggie Barker.

Others Present: Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager; Catherine Gillach, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education; Matt Bakke, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Melissa Buchhop, President, Grand Forks Education Association; and Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Reading of School Board Meeting Norms. Anderson read aloud the school board norms.

Approval of Agenda. It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Gaukler to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously. Absent: Shabb.

Celebrating Success – Viking Elementary School. Principal Jolyn Bergstrom shared the school's goals for this school year.

Shabb joined the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Bergstrom reported on assessment data which indicated increased proficiency in several areas.

Alshami joined the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Bergstrom continued her presentation with highlights of several opportunities for students and the school community. Teachers Joan Huus and Lisa Spicer participated in the presentation.

Approval of Minutes. It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Manley to approve the minutes of December 11, 2023, as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments (non-agenda items). None.

Consent Agenda. It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Anderson to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- ◆ Appointment of Katelyn Johnson, First-grade Teacher, salary \$25,737 (103 days), effective January 2, 2024;
 - ◆ Resignation of Tracy Lawler, School Counselor, effective May 31, 2024; and
 - ◆ Third-Party Request for Student Information for Western Kentucky University College of Health & Human Services (includes South Central Area Health Education Center) student teachers.
- Motion carried unanimously.

Contracted Staff Resignation and Request for Release from Contract – Amber Haskell. Dr. Brenner reported Ms. Haskell is resigning effective January 12, 2024, to take a position as the North Dakota United Northeast Field Consultant.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Berger to approve Ms. Haskell's resignation effective January 12, 2024, with the 5% liquidated damages under Policy DKBB. Motion carried unanimously.

Seventh and Eighth Grades English Language Arts Adoption. Chief Academic Officer Amy Bartsch and Instructional Coach Carla Haaven reported on the recommendation to adopt Wit and Wisdom for the seventh and eighth grades. The discussion included the adoption process, piloting the curriculum, testimonies about the curriculum, and its alignment with standards, and costs. The adoption costs include \$184,966.89 for the seventh grade, \$163,236.26 for

the eighth grade, and up to \$50,000 for professional learning over the course of the nine-year adoption, for a total of \$398,203.15.

Following discussion, it was moved by Lunn and seconded by Shabb to approve the seventh and eighth grades English Language Arts adoption of Wit and Wisdom as recommended.

Alshami left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Following additional discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Snow Removal Contractor for Remainder of 2023-2024 School Year. Baumbach reported on the administrative recommendation to approve M & W Services, Inc., d/b/a Fert-L-Lawn Lawn Care as the snow removal vendor for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.

Baumbach said the District has determined R&R Sand and Gravel is unable to meet the snow removal needs of the district and that both parties have mutually agreed to terminate the contract. Other parties that submitted bids were contacted and a positive response was received from Fert-L-Lawn. Fert-L-Lawn has provided interim service for snow removal and has performed admirably.

It was moved by Manley and seconded by Palmiscno to approve M & W Services, Inc., d/b/a Fert-L-Lawn Lawn Care as the snow removal vendor for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance Committee Report. Palmiscno and Baumbach reported on the January 3, 2024, meeting of the Finance Committee. Discussion topics and topics for consideration are detailed below.

- **Career Impact Academy New Market Tax Credit Update.** A relationship with Urban Research Park CDE, LLC, out of Maryland has the administration expecting to secure \$20 million in tax credit allocation. This would draw in a net project investment of \$3.164 million to the project. This reduces the anticipated project gap to \$2,293,356.

In preparation for a closing date of March 21, 2024, the administration has been working with Kutak Rock, LLP (legal), Novogradac & Company

LLP (finance), and S.B. Clark Companies Inc. (finance). All fees are paid on the date of closing and are factored into the net proceeds' calculation.

- **Consideration of Increasing Guaranteed Maximum Price for Career Impact Academy.** The anticipated sales tax assumed by the contractors was not included when the school board approved a construction budget of \$24,983,859 with an owner's contingency of \$1,249,193 for a total of \$26,233,052. To correct this, the administration is asking to increase the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) by \$670,000 which brings the construction budget to \$25,653,859 with an owner's contingency of \$1,282,693 for a total of \$26,936,552.

It was moved by Berger and seconded by Shabb to approve a construction guaranteed maximum price for the Career Impact Academy of \$25,653,859 and a 5% contingency of \$1,282,693. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Consideration of Career Impact Academy Expenses to be paid from the Building Fund.** To align with the intention of North Dakota Century Code 57-15-17.1(b) and for accounting purposes, the administration is seeking approval to construct the Career Impact Academy with sources from the building fund. Doing so has no impact on sources and uses.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Manley to approve total project expenses of \$26,936,552 for the construction of the Career Impact Academy to be paid from the building fund. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Consideration of Initial Resolution for General Obligation Building Fund Bonds for Career Impact Academy.** To close the final portion of the project expense gap, the administration is proposing this initial resolution for general obligation building fund bonds. If adopted, a 60-day protest period from the public begins. If no protest is received during this window, then the board has the choice to sell bonds at market rates or to apply for the state's School Construction Loan program administered by the Bank of North Dakota. The rate of interest on these loans is set at 2%. The amount on the initial resolution is higher than the anticipated total project gap due to timing and

cash flow issues. This is primarily due to the nature of the donations being made over 5-10 years.

It was moved by Gaukler and seconded by Berger to adopt the Initial Resolution for General Obligation Building Fund Bonds for Career Impact Academy. Motion carried unanimously.

- Consideration of Change Order Process for Projects. The Career Impact Academy is the first of many anticipated major projects within the school district in the coming years. Others include a new Valley Middle School, a new Child Nutrition Central Kitchen, and a major investment in district-wide safety and security improvements. Change orders can be expected and when a change order is requested, time is of the essence.

Policy BBBB provides that the Board may delegate by a 2/3rds majority vote of the Board prior authority to a committee to act upon an issue. The finance committee and administration are recommending the following guidelines:

- The finance committee be designated as a committee for the review of change orders.
- Assuming a sufficient balance in the owner contingency, any change order more than \$50,000 must be approved by the finance committee.
- Assuming a sufficient balance in the owner contingency, any change order less than \$50,000 can be approved by the administration, and
- Any increase in the guaranteed maximum price must be approved by the school board.

It was discussed and understood that anything that may be semi-controversial would still be brought to the board.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Shabb to approve the recommendation for the change order process for the Career Impact Academy, new Valley Middle School, new Child Nutrition Central Kitchen, and district-wide safety and security improvements. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Resolution Authorizing School Construction Loan Applications. Baumbach reported that once initial resolutions are passed by the school

board, the school district is eligible to apply to the state's School Construction Loan program made available through the Bank of North Dakota. This program provides 2% interest rate loans which are less costly than the alternative option of selling bonds at market rates.

The administration is recommending the adoption of the Resolution Authorizing School Construction Loan Applications for the district's Guaranteed Energy Savings Program project and the Career Impact Academy building. Their initial resolutions were adopted by the board on June 26, 2023, and earlier in this agenda, respectively.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Lunn to adopt the Resolution Authorizing School Construction Loan Applications. Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Joint Powers Agreement with Grand Forks County for Election Services. Baumbach reported on the administrative recommendation for approval. The proposed agreement provides for election services by Grand Forks County and automatically renews for an annual term commencing on the first day of January and ending on the 31st day of December unless any of the parties notify the other parties in writing of its intention to withdraw, modify or amend this agreement.

It was moved by Gaukler and seconded by Manley to approve the Joint Powers Agreement with Grand Forks County for the School District's elections. Motion carried unanimously.

Announcements. Dr. Brenner announced that January is National School Board Members Month and thanked Board members for the investment of time and service and dedication to students.

Buchhop also thanked Board members for their school stops and announced that teachers notice and appreciate them.

Board Requests for Future Consideration. Shabb requested information about the therapeutic learning center and a multi-lingual update.

School Board Norms – How Did We Do? Anderson reported the board did very well in following its meeting norms.

Executive Session (closed meeting). It was moved

by Manley and seconded by Anderson to convene into an executive session as allowed by North Dakota Century Code Section 15.1-15-10 to discuss the suspension of Nneka Nwaokeafor while discharge for cause is pursued. Motion carried unanimously.

Board members moved to the superintendent's office and convened the executive session at 7:15 p.m. Following the executive session at 7:23 p.m., Board members returned to the meeting room and reconvened the open meeting.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

APPROVED _____
(Date)

Amber Flynn, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager