

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD JULY 17, 2023**
4

5 A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public
6 Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4th Street South, on the 17th day
7 of July 2023.

8
9 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.

10
11 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
12 Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson
13 Bill Bronson
14 Mark Finnicum
15 Marlee Sunchild
16 Amie Thompson
17 Paige Turoski
18

19 **Others Present:** Brian Patrick, Director of Business Operations; Heather Hoyer,
20 Executive Director for Student Achievement and Stephanie Becker, Great Falls Public
21 School Foundation Director.

22
23 Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) President.

24
25 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
26 Trustees and asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

27
28
29 **ADOPT AGENDA**

30
31 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to adopt
32 the agenda as presented.

33
34
35 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

36
37 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
38 the Consent Agenda as presented.

39
40 **A. Minutes of the June 26, 2023, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
41 minutes of the June 26, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

42
43 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.

44
45 **C. Good Apple Award** – The Board approved the nomination for Good Apple Award:
46 Colonel Christopher Karns, Malmstrom Air Force Base.
47

1 **D. Montana School Bus Driver’s Certificates – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the
2 Montana Bus Drivers’ Certificates – OPI TR-35’s for the individuals listed in the agenda.

3
4 **E. Centerville Public Schools Bus Stop Requests Within the Great Falls Public
5 School Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request for Centerville Public
6 Schools to enter the District with two bus routes, allowing one to stop within the Great
7 Falls Public School District boundaries for the 2023-2024 school year.

8
9 **F. Sun River Valley District #55F Bus Stop Request Within the Great Falls Public
10 School District Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request to allow Sun
11 River School District a bus stop within the Great Falls Public School District boundaries
12 for the 2023-2024 school year.

13
14 **G. Vaughn School District Bus Stop Requests Within Great Falls Public School
15 District Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request to allow Vaughn School
16 District three bus stops within the Great Falls Public School District boundaries for the
17 2023-2024 school year.

18
19 **H. Belt Public School District Bus Stop Request Within Great Falls Public School
20 District Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request to allow Belt Public
21 Schools to enter the District with a route to pick up students at the Foothills Ranch
22 subdivision within Great Falls Public School District boundaries for the 2023-2024
23 school year.

24
25 **I. C.M. Russell High School Student Activity Account Closures** – The Board
26 approved the closure of Student Activity Accounts *Class of 2023, Electric City FFA,*
27 *Model United Nations, Youth Alive, American Field Services (AFS) Club and Science*
28 *Olympiads* at C.M. Russell High School as they are no longer being used and the
29 balances have been cleared.

30
31 **J. C.M. Russell High School Student Activity Account** – The Board approved C.M.
32 Russell High School to open a *Class of 2027* Student Activity Account.

33
34 **K. Outstanding (More Than One Year Old) Warrants (Checks)** – The Board
35 approved the cancelation of the outstanding warrants (checks) listed in the agenda in
36 accordance with MCA 20-9-223.

37
38
39 **COMMUNICATION**

40
41 **A. Audience Communication** – None

42
43 **B. Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Foundation Report** –
44 Foundation Chair Drew Blewett said the Great Falls Public School Foundation’s main
45 pillars to enhance education are Excellence in Education, Building Enhancements,
46 Scholarships, and Grants. He said the Foundation is in a great position and continues
47 to grow. He reported on the Excellence in Education event that was held on May 3,
48 2023 at the Great Falls High Fieldhouse where distinguished students honored two

1 teachers who were instrumental to their success. Burlington Northern and Santa Fe
2 Railway (BNSF) 2023 Teachers of the Year were announced at the event. The teachers
3 selected were Steve Skaer from C.M. Russell High School and Jill Christensen from
4 Lincoln Elementary School. The Foundation welcomed guest speaker Dr. Kathryn
5 Wells, a Great Falls High School alumni at the event. Dr. Wells is a renowned expert in
6 the field of child abuse/neglect prevention.

7
8 Grant Program Committee Chair Stacey Lamy said the Discovery Grant Program
9 funded 21 projects totaling \$41,190 last year. Two of the projects funded were a
10 forensic comparison microscope for Jon Davis' class at C.M. Russell High School and
11 Paris Gibson Art Museum Tours for district-wide Art class tours. Ms. Lamy announced
12 that thirteen projects were funded through the Innovation Grants Program last year with
13 a total of \$98,531 being awarded. Two projects funded were a Dino Dig Field Trip for
14 Lincoln Elementary School and for an Archery Program at North Middle School. She
15 explained that the Grant Program has been operating since 2011 and has awarded
16 \$1.28 million dollars in grants. In June 2022, a sub-committee was formed to review the
17 grant program. A survey was made available to all GFPS staff and the results were
18 reviewed by the sub-committee. It was decided to restructure the Grant Program with
19 the changes being implemented for the 2023-2024 school year. Revised promotional
20 materials are in process and Pupil Instruction Related (PIR) workshops for GFPS staff
21 are scheduled for August. Ms. Lamy said the Foundation feels the new structure will be
22 beneficial to staff, students, and the community.

23
24 Building Enhancement Committee Chair Jamie Marshall reported that the Foundation
25 now has a Building Enhancement Guidelines Agreement with the District that was
26 approved by the Trustees in October 2022. On May 1, 2023, a Bond Project
27 Celebration was held celebration the completion of the bond projects and the donor
28 enhanced projects. Thirty-five community donors funded \$3,929,000 enhancement
29 projects district wide. Mrs. Marshall reviewed the current projects through Building
30 Enhancement that include the C.M. Russell High School Auditorium, Skyline School
31 Playground, West and Lewis and Clark Elementary School libraries and Memorial
32 Stadium at Great Falls High School. She said Third Party Fundraising projects have
33 grown exponentially. These are fundraisers and building projects initiated and overseen
34 by outside groups such as PTAs, GFPS staff and community members. The
35 fundraising is processed through the Foundation. Current projects include the CMR
36 Hall of Fame, and the Sacajawea and Lincoln Elementary Schools' playgrounds.

37
38 Vice Chair Joanie Agamenoni reported that the Foundation will award over \$353,000 in
39 scholarships to 93 graduating seniors. The Foundation manages over 100 scholarships
40 and added 10 new scholarships this year. For the first time last year, the Scholarship
41 Night Celebrations were combined into one event bringing students from all three high
42 schools, donors, and parents together. The amazing partnership between the
43 Foundation and High School Counseling Departments made the transition possible. The
44 Foundation continues to annually award twenty \$1,000 Heisey Scholarships to teachers
45 who are continuing their education.

46
47 Treasurer Emily Morrison said in order to maintain excellent donor relations, the
48 Foundation must have sound financial management. The Finance Committee, which

1 includes two ex-officio board members, has excellent oversight. Annual audits are
2 conducted, and annual meetings are held with investment advisors.

3
4 Public Relations Committee Chair Ashley Whitney explained the Foundation uses many
5 social media outlets such as Facebook, Grant Videos, Blog Articles and Truck Raffle
6 Public Service Announcement (PSA) Storyboard Presentations. A chat function was
7 enabled on the Foundation's website that allows communication through Facebook
8 messaging and blog articles of impactful stories are sent out monthly to 13,000 e-
9 subscribers.

10
11 Executive Director Stephanie Becker said the Foundation Board works very hard
12 throughout the year and while preparing the annual report to the Board, they reflect on
13 the accomplishments that have been made. She explained that Gold Stars, Honor
14 Gifts, and Memorial Donations, are other examples of giving opportunities. She
15 reported that the Truck Raffle was started in 2013 and has raised \$1.2 million dollars for
16 student groups and the Foundation's Grant Programs. She thanked City Motors for
17 their continued support and contributions to the Truck Raffle each year. Last year the
18 Truck Raffle raised \$149,400. Over \$81,000 went to school groups and \$67,000 went
19 to the grant programs. Mrs. Becker thanked Karen Brandvold who has completed her
20 third three-year term as a Board member, Joanie Agamenoni will take over as the
21 Foundation Chair and Jamie Marshall will step into the Vice Chair position. Mrs. Becker
22 thanked former Executive Director Dave Crum for his vision of the Foundation that
23 included strong Board members.

24
25 Trustees Finnicum, Skornogoski, Thompson and Johnson thanked Stephanie and the
26 Foundation Board members for their hard work and dedication to help teachers and
27 students achieve their goals and follow their dreams. Chairperson Johnson serves on
28 the Foundation Board and said he is inspired by the work and vision of its members.

29 30 **ACTION ITEMS**

31
32 **A. Second Reading of New and Revised Board Policies 1110, 1650 (New), 3100,**
33 **7123 and 7125 (New)** – Director of Business Operations said new and revised Board
34 policies 1110 - Taking Office, 1650 - Public Charter Schools, 3100 - Early Childhood
35 Education Enrollment Exceptional Circumstances, 7123 - Fund Transfers for School
36 Safety, and 7125 - Multidistrict Agreements, were reviewed in detail at the June 26,
37 2023 Board meeting. No comments or concerns have been received since the first
38 reading of the policies.

39
40 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve new
41 and revised Board policies 1110, 1650, 3100, 7123 and 7125 as presented.

42
43 **B. Insurance Multidistrict Agreement** – Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick
44 explained that House Bill 332, which was passed by the 2023 legislature, provides for
45 the creation of a qualifying public school health insurance trust and incentive funding for
46 districts participation in the Trust if certain requirements are met. The AA Districts have
47 a collective interest in exploring the creation of a trust and are collaborating on a
48 proposal for the trust's structure and obtaining sufficient information to decide if they

1 wish to participate. Mr. Patrick said there is a \$40,000,000 incentive for the fund if it is
2 formed before June 30, 2026. The agreement formed by the AA Districts has an initial
3 deposit of \$50,000 from all districts involved. The amount per district will be
4 proportional to the K-12 student population of the districts. Great Falls has 16% of the
5 total students in the AA Districts, which amounts to a contribution of \$8,000 to the
6 Multidistrict Agreement. Mr. Patrick said the Billings Elementary School District will
7 serve as the Prime Agent for the agreement, not the Billings High School District as
8 stated in the agenda.

9
10 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
11 Great Falls Public Schools’ (GFPS) participation in the Insurance Multidistrict
12 Agreement between GFPS and the AA School Districts in Montana for the purpose of
13 exploring the creation of a trust under the provisions of HB332.

14
15 **C. Indefinite Demand, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Consultant Approval** – Director of
16 Business Operations, Brian Patrick said that during the time the District had many bond
17 projects under construction, it was very helpful to have a prequalified list of
18 professionals ready to work on projects when needed. At the January 9, 2023, Board
19 meeting, it was approved to advertise for Indefinite Demand, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ)
20 of professional services including Civil Engineering, Structural Engineer, Geotechnical
21 Engineering, Hazardous Materials, Mechanical Engineering, Special Systems and
22 Structural Engineering. Mr. Patrick said two companies submitted proposals with single
23 submissions for each of the IDIQ areas. He said the District has worked with both of the
24 companies previously and has been happy with their work.

25
26 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve
27 the hiring of the following companies for professional services:

- 28 Civil Engineering – TD&H Engineering
- 29 Structural Engineering - TD&H Engineering
- 30 Geotechnical Engineering – TD&H Engineering
- 31 Hazardous Materials - TD&H Engineering
- 32 Mechanical Engineering - GPD, PC
- 33 Special Systems – GPD, PC
- 34 Electrical Engineering - GPD, PC

35
36 **D. Transfer of Budgeted Funds – Elementary General Fund Budget (101) to the**
37 **Elementary Compensated Absence Fund Budget (121) and High School General**
38 **Fund Budget (201) to the High School Compensated Absence Fund Budget (221)**

39 – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick explained this is an annual transfer for
40 the purpose of financing the accumulated sick leave and vacation pay that a non-
41 teaching or administrative school district employee is entitled to upon termination of
42 employment. The transfer is limited to 30% of the sick and vacation leave payout for
43 non-teaching and administrative employees. Mr. Patrick said the requested transfer
44 amounts are just under 30%.

45
46 Motion – Amie Thompson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to
47 approve the transfer of \$510,500.00 from the Elementary General Fund (101) to the
48 Elementary Compensated Absences Fund Budget (121) and \$178,000 transfer from the

1 High School General Fund Budget (201) to the High School Compensated Absences
2 Fund (221).

3
4 **E. Electronic Vote on Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) Business –**
5 Chairperson Johnson explained that the MTSBA’s annual meeting was held on June 8,
6 2023. Trustees Johnson, Bronson and Finnicum attended the meeting in person and
7 Trustee Turoski participated virtually. The annual meeting is typically where the
8 membership votes on the items that require a vote of the membership. MTSBA did not
9 meet the quorum requirements to conduct business of the Association at the meeting,
10 therefore, Board members are to discuss the items during a regularly scheduled Board
11 meeting and submit an electronic vote following the meeting. Chairperson Johnson
12 explained that after the annual meeting, he received a prompt and submitted a
13 response on behalf of the Board. He then reviewed each of the seven (7) items listed
14 on page 55 of the agenda with the full Board and asked for a single vote at the end for
15 all seven (7) items. Director of Business Operations said the District’s membership
16 dues for 2023 are \$19,874. He said MTSBA’s guidance and support is invaluable.
17 Trustee Finnicum said he appreciated MTSBA’s updates throughout the 2023
18 Legislative session and feels MTSBA’s services are exemplary.

19
20 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
21 the seven (7) Montana School Boards Association’s items listed in the agenda on page
22 55 as one package.

23
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25 **ACTION: OTHER**

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28 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

29
30 **A. First Reading of Revised Board Policies 1005FE and 5123 –** Director of Business
31 Operations Brian reviewed the recommended changes to Board policies 1005FE -
32 Proficiency-Based ANB, and 5123 - Recruitment and Retention in detail. He asked if
33 anyone has comments or concerns about the policies to contact him before the next
34 Board meeting.

35
36
37 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

38 Trustee Sunchild thanked the Foundation Board for their report and thanked Director of
39 Business Operations Brian Patrick for conducting the Board meeting.

40 Trustee Turoski thanked the Foundation Board and said Montana School Boards
41 Association is a great organization and she appreciates their guidance with the Board
42 policy updates and new policies.

43 Trustee Bronson said he celebrated his 50th year Class Reunion last weekend. He and
44 many classmates toured C.M. Russell High School and they were complimentary on
45 how well the school has been maintained. He spoke to his classmates about the
46 Foundation and said some classmates were not aware the Foundation existed. Trustee
47 Bronson said the District’s 4th grade Social Studies textbook “Montana: A History of Our
48 Home” has won the American Association for State and Local History’s Award of

1 Excellence. He reported that Malmstrom Air Force Base Colonel Christopher Karns
2 wrote an Op-Ed prior to his departure from Great Falls that was published in the
3 AirForceTimes in which he praised Great Falls Public Schools.
4 Trustee Skornogoski announced that Stuff the Bus will be held on August 10, Unstuff
5 the Bus will take place on August 11 at the District Office Building and the 2nd Annual
6 Back to School Blast will be held on August 18. Volunteers are needed for all events
7 and she encouraged anyone that is interested to sign up through the United Way's
8 website.
9 Chairperson Johnson thanked Brian Patrick for conducting the Board meeting.

10

11

12 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

13

14 Chairperson Johnson said the next Board meeting is scheduled for August 7, 2023, and
15 a Board Work Session is scheduled for August 17, 2023. Both meetings will be held at
16 the District Office Building at 5:30 p.m.

17

18

19 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

20

21 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to
22 adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:33 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk

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