

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD APRIL 10, 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 10th day
7 of April 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:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business
20 Operations; Jackie Mainwaring Executive Director for Student Achievement; Luke
21 Diekhans, Director of Human Resources; and Stephanie Schnider, Director of the Great
22 Falls Public Schools Foundation.

23
24 Also present was Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education Association (GFEA) President.

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

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30 **ADOPT AGENDA**

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32 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adopt the
33 agenda as presented.

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36 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

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38 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
39 Consent Agenda as presented.

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41 **A. Minutes of the April 3, 2023, Special Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
42 minutes of the April 3, 2023, Special Board Meeting as presented.

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

45
46 **C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple
47 Awards: Diane Seder, Kindergarten Teacher at Lewis & Clark Elementary School and
48 Sanna Beerman, GFPS Occupational Therapist Coordinator.

1
2 **D. Montana School Bus Driver Certificate – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the
3 Montana Bus Driver Certificate – OPI TR-35 for the individual listed in the agenda.
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5 **E. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance at the Early Learning Family**
6 **Center for the 2022-2023 School Year** – The Board approved the student listed in the
7 agenda to attend the Early Learning Family Center for the 2022-2023 school year due
8 to exceptional circumstances per Board Policy 3100.
9

10 **F. Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG)**
11 **Ignite Trip to Helena, MT** – The Board approved the Paris Gibson Education Center
12 Jobs for Montana Graduates students’ travel request to attend the Ignite Conference in
13 Helena, MT, April 25-27, 2023.
14

15 **G. Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Archery Club Travel Request to Sandy, UT** –
16 The Board approved the Great Falls Public Schools Archery Club students’ travel
17 request to attend the National Archery in the Schools Program national shoot in Sandy,
18 Utah, April 27-30, 2023.
19

20
21 **COMMUNICATION**
22

23 **A. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Communication - None**
24

25 **B. Superintendent’s Report** –

26 Superintendent Moore reported that students and teachers have been on Spring Break
27 April 5-10, 2023, and that due to Spring Break, the student representatives will report at
28 the April 24 Board meeting instead of tonight’s meeting.

29 Thank you to the staff and students at C.M. Russell (CMR) High School for hosting a
30 basketball game between the CMR students and MAFB airmen. MAFB families,
31 students and staff attended this fun event with the proceeds going to help airmen in
32 need.

33 Superintendent Moore reported that High School House students, Griz Biz students and
34 their advisors participated in the Home and Garden Show on March 31 – April 2, 2023.
35 He gave special thanks to Home Builders Association Director Katie Hanning for
36 donating the space for a booth and the High School House shed.

37 Superintendent Moore said the IM Bison students were honored at a City Commission
38 Meeting that was held on April 4, 2023. The student group was nominated for
39 recognition by Neighborhood Council #9 for their contribution to Great Falls High School
40 and the community.

41 Superintendent Moore thanked the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation, various
42 Hutterite colonies and many community volunteers for distributing thirty-five food boxes
43 to Whittier Elementary School families in need before the start of the Spring Break
44 holiday.

45 Last week over 500 purple pinwheels were planted outside the Great Falls Public
46 Library to recognize the start of No More Violence Week. Whittier Elementary students,
47 GFPS Cabinet members and other volunteers helped plant the pinwheels.

48 Superintendent Moore reviewed the scheduled events for No More Violence Week,

1 including the Community Forum sponsored by Great Falls Public Schools on April 13,
2 2023. The forum is focused on School Safety and Youth Wellbeing and will include a
3 panel of experts who will discuss school safety issues, what is being done and how the
4 community can help. He encouraged all to attend.

5 Superintendent Moore said a celebration for the completion of bond building projects is
6 scheduled for May 1, 2023. An Open House is scheduled at Great Falls High School
7 starting at 5:30 p.m. and at C.M. Russell High School starting at 7:00 p.m. Each event
8 will begin with a presentation including recognitions in the schools' auditorium with
9 building tours to follow.

10 Superintendent Moore announced that April is the Month of the Military Child. He said
11 many events are planned throughout the District and that April 27th is designated as
12 *Purple Up Day* for our community and schools. The District will also be celebrating the
13 accomplishments of its Purple Star Schools and individuals who have made a difference
14 in the lives of Military Children.

15 Superintendent Moore reported that he, Indigenous Education Director Dugan Coburn
16 and Indigenous Education Instructional Coach Jordann Lankford Forester attended the
17 Office of Public Instruction sponsored Tribal Nation Education Summit last week in
18 Billings. Data was reviewed on Indigenous students and discussion was held on what
19 school districts are doing to close the achievement gap.

20 Superintendent Moore reported that he and Director of Business Operations Brian
21 Patrick met today with County Commissioner Rae Grulkowski and Clerk and Recorder
22 Sandra Merchant concerning the upcoming school district Trustee Election. Board
23 members were provided a timeline of events between April 4-10, 2023, that outlined
24 correspondence the District had with the Elections Office, the Secretary of State's Office
25 and Commissioner Grulkowski. During today's meeting, Superintendent Moore and
26 Brian Patrick were guaranteed that timelines of the election would be met including
27 Absentee ballots mailed on April 17th and the canvassing of election results following
28 the close of the election. Clerk and Recorder Sandra Merchant gave a cost estimate
29 \$41,821.01 for the election. Trustee Skornogoski asked if the Elections Office
30 understands the amount of staffing and other adjustments that a Poll Election requires.
31 Brian Patrick said he asked those questions and was assured there were no problems
32 with holding a Poll Election. Trustee Bronson said he is concerned with the cost
33 estimate given by the Elections Office. If she is comparing the past two elections, those
34 amounts would be lower since they were All-Mail Ballot elections. Brian Patrick said the
35 amount given was her best estimate.

36 Community member Gerry Jennings is concerned that the 10,000 people who will not
37 receive a ballot in the mail will be confused as to why and will they know what they need
38 to do in order to vote. Superintendent Moore said information will be on the District's
39 website to inform the public of the change. Great Falls Public Library Director Susie
40 McIntyre said she would be willing to work with District on an Election Education
41 Campaign to inform the community of their options of voting.

42 Community member Jane Weber asked if the election cost estimate included both the
43 mailing of the Absentee ballots and the Poll Election. Superintendent Moore said he
44 understood it to be for both.

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46 **C. Audience Communication - None**
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1 **ACTION ITEMS**

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3 **A. Non-Renewal of a Temporary, Non-Tenured Teacher Whose Position Expires**

4 **June 2, 2023** – Director of Human Resources Luke Diekhans explained the non-
5 renewal of the non-tenured teacher listed in the agenda is required because the teacher
6 was hired for a position on a temporary basis with a contract that expires on June 2,
7 2023. He explained the teacher has the opportunity to apply for jobs next year for which
8 the teacher is qualified to teach.

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10 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
11 the non-renewal of the teacher listed in the agenda as the teacher’s position is
12 temporary and will expire June 2, 2023.

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14 **B. Non-Renew of Non-Tenured Teachers** - Director of Human Resources Luke
15 Diekhans explained that the District is exercising its right to non-renew non-tenured
16 teachers with or without cause as provided for by MCA 20-4-206 – *Notification of non-*
17 *tenured teacher re-election – acceptance – termination*. The list of teachers in an
18 addendum and will be included, in a secured confidential envelope, with the official
19 Board minutes.

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21 Motion – Bill Bronson, Second – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve the
22 request to non-renew the non-tenured teachers as presented.

23
24 **C. Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Between Great Falls Public Schools**

25 **(GFPS) and the Great Falls Education Association (GFEA)** – Director of Human
26 Resources Luke Diekhans explained GFEA and GFPS have been negotiating since
27 January utilizing traditional bargaining. The GFEA membership has voted to accept the
28 proposed changes as outlined in the agenda to include a 4% increase on the base
29 salary for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Mr. Diekhans reviewed
30 language changes and additions that included Case Management days for Special
31 Education Teachers and language for Liquidated Damages. Changes were made to the
32 hourly rates when directly working with students and when not directly working with
33 students, and adjustments were made to the number of Personal Business (PB) and
34 Sick Leave (SL) days. Teachers will receive five (5) PB days and ten (10) SL days each
35 year compared to the previous three (3) PB days and twelve (12) SL days. He noted an
36 error on the 2024-2025 salary schedule. The amount on Line 17, BA + 20 will be
37 corrected to read \$67,841.

38 Trustee Thompson asked about the starting salary of a new teacher with no experience.
39 Mr. Diekhans explained beginning teachers start at Step 2 and stay there for two years,
40 except for teachers with Emergency Authorizations who would start at Step 1. Trustee
41 Finnicum asked how Great Falls compares with the other AA districts for teacher pay.
42 Mr. Diekhans said Great Falls is in the middle range of the AA school districts. Trustee
43 Bronson suggested that the Collective Bargaining Agreement be reviewed for
44 redundancies.

45 Superintendent Moore thanked both sides of the negotiating team. He said this was the
46 first time he was part of a negotiating team and he learned a lot. He thanked Brian
47 Patrick for his budget presentation to the team.

1 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
2 the two-year 2023-2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Great Falls
3 Education Association, MEA/MFT as presented.
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6 **ACTION: OTHER**

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8 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**
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10 **A. School-Based Medically Related Professionals (MRP) Compensation for 2023-**
11 **2025** – Director of Human Resources Luke Diekhans explained the positions within the
12 School-Based Medically Related Professional group are required under special
13 education law and are necessary to serve students with physical and medical needs.
14 The positions include occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists
15 and full-time nurse(s). Mr. Diekhans said the salary schedule included in the agenda for
16 the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years reflect a 4% increase each year. The cost
17 of the 4% base increase for 2023-2024 will result in an approximate increase of
18 \$2,046,952 and the cost of the 4% base increase for 2024-2025 will result in an
19 approximate increase of \$2,218,830. The 2023-2024 increase will be included in the
20 2023-2024 budget that will be presented to the Board in August.

21 Mr. Diekhans explained the MRPs received the same number of Personal Business and
22 Sick Leave as the teachers. An addition to the MRP handbook set specific dates for
23 professional training.
24

25 **B. School Psychologist Compensation for 2023-2025** – Director of Human
26 Resources Luke Diekhans explained that School Psychologists are required under
27 special education law and are necessary for the identification and assessment of
28 children with disabilities. Mr. Diekhans said the salary schedule included in the agenda
29 for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years reflect a 4% increase each year. The
30 cost of the 4% base increase for 2023-2024 will result in an approximate increase of
31 \$870,519 and the cost of the 4% base increase for 2024-2025 will result in an
32 approximate increase of \$905,340. The 2023-2024 increase will be included in the
33 2023-2024 budget that will be presented to the Board in August.

34 Mr. Diekhans explained the School Psychologists received the same number of
35 Personal Business days and sick leave days as the teachers. The revised School
36 Psychologists' handbook includes language changes regarding Prior Credit Approvals.
37

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

39 Trustee Finnicum thanked the GFEA and GFPS bargaining groups for their work on the
40 two-year Collective Bargaining Agreement. He was glad the salary increase was 4%
41 which is more than in years past. He commented on the number of upcoming events
42 listed in the agenda for May.

43 Trustee Turoski wished everyone a Happy Easter and said she was glad the teachers
44 would be receiving a 4% raise in each of the next two years. She said she is looking
45 forward to all the upcoming events throughout the District.

46 Trustee Sunchild thanked the negotiating teams who worked on the Teachers'
47 Collective Bargaining Agreement. She recognized school librarians for the all the work
48 they do every day behind the scenes and feels they are sometimes overlooked.

1 Trustee Sunchild said she is concerned about the senior citizens in the community not
2 knowing or understanding the change to the upcoming school election. Most seniors do
3 not access social media and may be missing important information.
4 Trustee Bronson recognized the thirty-two newly hired teachers listed in the agenda and
5 applauded the District for its recruiting efforts. He indicated he may not be able to
6 attend the next Board meeting.
7 Trustee Thompson thanked the bargaining teams and thanked Superintendent Moore
8 and Brian Patrick for their work with the election process. She agreed that information
9 needs to get out to the community of the upcoming election process. She said she
10 looks forward to all the upcoming events.
11 Trustee Skornogoski said the District is lucky to work with a great group of union
12 leaders. She is glad the teachers' raise for the next two years is 4% but said they
13 deserve so much more. Trustee Skornogoski thanked The Electric for keeping the
14 community informed of the election process and said she is impressed with the students
15 of the District working with one another and taking pride in their school. She said great
16 things are happening in the District.
17 Chairperson Johnson thanked the community members in attendance and thanked
18 them for their comments during the meeting.

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21 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

22

23 Chairperson Johnson reminded everyone of the School Safety and Student Wellbeing
24 Community Forum on April 13, 2023, in the Great Falls High School Auditorium and
25 said the next Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 24, 2023.

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28 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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30 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adjourn
31 the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:43 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk