

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD JULY 15, 2024**
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 15th day
7 of July 2024.

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:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business
20 Operations; Lance Boyd, Executive Director for Student Achievement; Jeff Williams,
21 Director of Information Technology; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls
22 Public Schools Foundation.
23

24 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
25 Trustees, indicated the meeting was being recorded per House Bill 890, and asked
26 everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.
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29 **ADOPT AGENDA**
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31 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to adopt
32 the agenda as presented.
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35 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
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37 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
38 Consent Agenda as presented.
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40 **A. Minutes of the June 24, 2024, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
41 minutes of the June 24, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
42

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

45 **C. Montana School Bus Driver’s Certificates – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the
46 Montana Bus Drivers’ Certificate – OPI TR-35 for the individual listed in the agenda.
47

1 **D. Student Activity Monthly Report for May 2024** – The Board approved Student
2 Activity Accounts for May 2024.

3
4 **E. Centerville Public Schools Bus Stop Request 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 2024-2025 school year.

8
9 **F. Belt Public School District Bus Stop Request Within Great Falls Public School
10 District Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request to allow Belt Public
11 Schools to enter the District with a route to pick up students at the Foothills Ranch
12 subdivision within Great Falls Public School District boundaries for the 2024-2025
13 school year.

14
15 **G. Sun River Valley District Bus Stop Request Within the Great Falls Public
16 School District Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request to allow Sun
17 River School District a bus stop within the Great Falls Public School District boundaries
18 for the 2024-2025 school year.

19
20 **H. Vaughn School District Bus Stop Request Within the Great Falls Public School
21 District Boundaries** – The Board approved the annual request to allow Vaughn School
22 District bus stops within the Great Falls Public School District boundaries for the 2024-
23 2025 school year.

24
25 **I. Outstanding (More Than One Year Old) Warrants (Checks)** – The Board approved
26 the cancelation of the outstanding warrants (checks) listed in the agenda in accordance
27 with MCA 20-9-223.

28
29 **J. Incoming Student Attendance Agreements for the 2024-2025 School Year** – The
30 Board approved the incoming student attendance agreements for the 2024-2025 school
31 year for the students listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the District of
32 Residence.

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35 **COMMUNICATION**

36
37 **A. Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Foundation Report** –
38 Great Falls Public Schools Foundation Director, Stephanie Becker, presented the
39 Foundation’s annual report and introduced the Foundation’s Executive Committee
40 members.
41 Joanie Agamenoni, Foundation Chair, highlighted the four pillars of the Foundation:
42 Excellence in Education, Building Enhancements, Scholarships, and Grants. She
43 recognized Ryan Faulk, 6th Grade Teacher at Riverview Elementary School, and Coda
44 Tchida, Health Enhancement teacher at Great Falls High School, as the recipients of
45 the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Teacher of the Year Award. She presented
46 the Board members with the annual Excellence in Education publication, which will also
47 be distributed to over 4,000 businesses and individuals.

1 Jordan Crosby, Program Committee Chair, highlighted grants. Forty-seven mini grants,
2 sixteen Learning Enhancement and Community Collaboration grants, and Four
3 Immersive Professional Learning grants were awarded, totaling over \$124,000.
4 Jamie Marshall, Vice Chair, discussed third-party fundraising partnerships and
5 upcoming projects for Fall 2024, including playgrounds, libraries, and stadium upgrades.
6 Stacey Lamy, Scholarship Committee Chair, spoke about facilitating donor contributions
7 through scholarships. The Foundation manages over one hundred scholarships and
8 organizes a combined Scholarship Celebration Night for all three high schools, bringing
9 donors, students and parents together.
10 Emily Morrison, Treasurer, reported a clean annual audit and mentioned the
11 Foundation's guiding investment policy.
12 Ashley Whitney, Public Relations Committee Chair, emphasized increased social media
13 visibility includes videos produced by our staff and students showcasing awarded grants
14 and a successful Truck Raffle.
15 Stephanie welcomed Michelle Noriega to the Foundation staff and new board member
16 Scott Moody. Gordon Johnson transferred his Foundation Board leadership position to
17 Trustee Marlee Sunchild. The Truck Raffle, which raised significant funds last year,
18 continues to be the major fundraiser, with active student participation.
19 This comprehensive overview reflects the Foundation's efforts and future plans to
20 support the District's educational and operational needs.

21
22 Trustees Bronson, Finnicum, and Johnson thanked Stephanie and the Foundation
23 Board members for their hard work and dedication to helping teachers and students
24 achieve their goals and follow their dreams. Trustee Bronson asked about the
25 Foundation's outreach to estates and the status of the renovation project of the CMR
26 auditorium. Stephanie replied that several projects already completed are the result of
27 estate contributions and hopes to continue the growth in that area. Asbestos abatement
28 prior to the start of the CMR auditorium renovation has created a shortage of funding
29 and a delay in the start of the renovation.

30
31 **B. Superintendent Report –**
32 Superintendent Hoyer expressed her gratitude to the Foundation, noting that their
33 grants have had a visible positive impact in the schools. She introduced Jeff Williams,
34 the new Information Technology Director for Great Falls Public Schools, and extended
35 thanks to Royce from AVI Systems for assisting with the new audio/visual installation.
36 Superintendent Hoyer shared her enjoyment of attending the Safety Town event and
37 watching the young children participate. She emphasized the importance of learning
38 during the summer break, highlighting that education continues well beyond the end of
39 the school year in June.
40 She provided updates on ongoing summer work, including roof work at CM Russell High
41 School, library projects at West and Lewis and Clark Elementary Schools, and boys'
42 bathroom renovations at Great Falls High School. Superintendent Hoyer recounted the
43 fun at the 4th of July Parade, where 24 individuals joined in to hand out pencils. She
44 also mentioned the friendly competition between the Hoyer and Boyd families, with the
45 Boyd family emerging victorious.
46 Lastly, she discussed the "Profile of a Learner," identifying five key characteristics that
47 define successful learners.

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1 **C. Audience Communication – None**
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4 **ACTION ITEMS**
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6 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for May 2024** – Director of Business
7 Operations, Brian Patrick, reported the District is in good financial condition at the end
8 of the fiscal year due to the use of remaining ESSER funds.
9

10 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum and Paige Turoski, passed
11 unanimously to approve the May 2024 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks
12 #133781 - #134358 in the amount of \$3,374,716.15 and Payroll checks #81396 -
13 #81618 in the amount of \$375,289.52 as presented.
14

15 **B. Transfer of Budgeted Funds – Elementary General Fund Budget (101) to the**
16 **Elementary Compensated Absences Fund Budget (121) and High School General**
17 **Fund Budget (201) to the High School Compensated Absence Fund Budget (221)**
18 – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick, explained this is an annual transfer for
19 the purpose of financing the accumulated sick leave and vacation pay that a non-
20 teaching or administrative school district employee is entitled to upon termination of
21 employment. The transfer is limited to 30% of the sick and vacation leave payout for
22 non-teaching and administrative employees.
23

24 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
25 transfer of \$765,000.00 from the Elementary General Fund (101) to the Elementary
26 Compensated Absences Fund Budget (121) and \$330,000.00 from the High School
27 General Fund Budget (201) to the High School Compensated Absences Fund (221).
28

29 **C. Great Falls Public Schools Three-Year Strategic Plan** – Superintendent Hoyer
30 provided a detailed review of the 3-year Strategic Plan, highlighting key elements
31 discussed during the June 21st work session. She mentioned that the plan began with a
32 community survey in 2023, followed by a Gap Analysis. The plan is designed to be a
33 living document that reflects ongoing data and will receive quarterly updates. Data
34 points, including ACT (American College Test) scores, will be regularly updated and
35 presented to the board. She referenced several specific pages in the plan.
36

37 Trustee Thompson expressed that she missed the work session but appreciated the
38 addition of rationales. She valued the actionables and how easily they can be
39 measured.

40 Trustee Skornogoski appreciated the inclusive process, noting that it involved people at
41 all levels, thus serving teachers and staff by including their voices. She praised the shift
42 in focus towards academic growth rather than just reaching a certain standard,
43 emphasizing that having growth-related goals means valuing the growth of every
44 student.

45 Trustee Finnicum thanked Superintendent Hoyer and the leadership team (Lance Boyd
46 and Jackie Mainwaring) for their team effort in developing the plan.

47 Chairperson Johnson stated that in addition to the one-and-a-half-hour work session,
48 the Board has been well informed of the content of the entire plan.

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2 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski and Amie Thompson, passed
3 unanimously to approve the 2024-2027 three-year Strategic Plan as presented.
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5 **D. 2024-2025 Student Handbook** – Executive Director of Student Achievement, Lance
6 Boyd reviewed the changes to the student handbook, which were driven by recent
7 policy changes. He highlighted several key areas, including the cover sheet
8 confirmation process sign off, a new medical notification policy, passed in March, that
9 allows a single document sign-off or opt out for individual dental, vision, speech or other
10 testing, and a sign-off for approval of clubs and activities in middle and high schools.
11 Other changes are were addressed in the agenda packet.
12

13 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
14 the 2024-2025 Student Handbook as presented.
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16 **E. Second Reading of New Board Policy 2250F – *Adult Education Activity***
17 *Acknowledgement of Risk* – Superintendent Hoyer explained the form allows for
18 emergency care if GFPS students are on the college campus for courses. She said no
19 comments or recommendations for changes were received since the first reading of the
20 policy on June 24, 2024.
21

22 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve new
23 Board Policy 2250F as presented.
24

25 **F. Electronic Vote on Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) Business** –
26 Trustee Finnicum explained that the MTSBA annual meeting is typically where the
27 membership votes on the items that require a vote of the membership. MTSBA did not
28 meet the quorum requirements to conduct business of the Association at the meeting,
29 therefore, Board members discussed the items requiring a vote during the meeting and
30 will submit an electronic vote following the meeting.
31

32 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Paige Turoski and Bill Bronson, passed
33 unanimously to approve the items discussed in the agenda: Fiscal Year 2026 Dues
34 Revenue Estimate, Vision Based Strategic Advocacy Resolution amendments, Gap
35 Analysis Resolution, and the nominations of Krystal Zentner as MTSBA President-Elect
36 and Rick Cummings as MTSBA Vice-President. The results will be sent to the MTSBA.
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39 **ACTION: OTHER**

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41 There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.
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44 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**
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46 **D. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments** –
47 Trustee Sunchild shared that she attended a CORE School meeting and encouraged
48 everyone to follow social media for updates, as a lot of information is being put on the

1 website. She expressed her excitement about the Jumpstart program and its potential
2 impact.

3 Trustee Finnicum reminded the board of the upcoming Budget meeting on July 24th. He
4 mentioned that informal discussions were held with Mike Henneberg and the Cabinet to
5 address questions. He discussed the ongoing deliberations about the implementation of
6 a boys' baseball program, inviting all board members to attend relevant meetings. Mark
7 hopes to have enough information by the August 5th meeting to make a decision about
8 the baseball program, with another meeting scheduled for August 15th. A final decision
9 needs to be made by December 1st. He also appreciated the Foundation report and the
10 strategic plan.

11 Trustee Skornogoski welcomed Jeff Williams to the team and congratulated
12 Superintendent Hoyer on her first official Board meeting, praising her vision and its
13 impact. She informed fellow trustees about volunteer opportunities, including "Stuff the
14 Bus" on August 8th, "Unstuff the Bus" on August 9th, with more information on the
15 United Way website, and the "Back to School Blast" on August 16th. Kim also
16 expressed her excitement about the Taylor Swift club at East Middle School.

17 Trustee Thompson praised the Foundation report, highlighting the mini grants and truck
18 raffle, and emphasized that every dollar stays in the community. She also commended
19 the strategic plan.

20 Trustee Bronson acknowledged the Foundation and its ongoing efforts. He spoke highly
21 of the Safety Town program, noting positive feedback from parents, grandparents, and
22 children. Bill encouraged fellow trustees to attend Think Tank sessions on the MTSBA
23 site to explore new ideas and concepts about funding public education.

24 Trustee Turoski thanked Stephanie Becker, welcomed Jeff Williams, and expressed
25 eagerness to work with Superintendent Hoyer. She also acknowledged the custodial
26 staff's work during the summer and their efforts at Valleyview Elementary School.
27 Chairperson Johnson praised Stephanie Becker and the work of the Foundation. He
28 also thanked fellow trustees for their hard work on all committees.

29
30 Chairperson Johnson allowed public comment from community member Judy
31 Mortenson. She said she was a member of a non-profit organization that had
32 fundraised several thousand dollars but did not have the means to advertise
33 themselves. She asked the Trustees and Administrators to provide input if they know of
34 groups who are in need of help.

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37 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

38
39 Chairperson Johnson stated Board Budget Committee and Board Policy Committee
40 meetings would take place next week and the next regular Board meeting is scheduled
41 for August 5, 2024.

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44 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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46 Motion – Chairperson Johnson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to
47 adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:05 p.m.

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Brian Patrick, Clerk

Gordon Johnson, Chairperson