

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD JANUARY 27, 2025**
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 27th day
7 of January 2025.

8
9 Chairperson Johnson reported that, per Board Policy 1420, all Board meetings are now
10 recorded and posted on the District website for one (1) year.

11
12 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.

13
14 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson - Chairperson
15 Kim Skornogoski – Vice Chairperson
16 Bill Bronson
17 Marlee Sunchild
18 Amie Thompson
19 Paige Turoski
20

21 **Trustee Absent:** Mark Finnicum - Excused
22

23 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business
24 Operations; Jeff Williams, Director of Information Technology; Jackie Mainwaring and
25 Lance Boyd, Executive Directors of Student Achievement; and Stephanie Becker,
26 Director of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation. Also present was Tom Cubbage,
27 Great Falls Education Association President.

28
29 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
30 Trustees.
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33 **ADOPT AGENDA**

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35 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to adopt
36 the agenda as presented.
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39 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

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41 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
42 Consent Agenda as presented.
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44 **A. Minutes of the January 13, 2025, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved
45 the minutes of the January 13, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
46

47 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
48

1 **C. Good Apple Award** - The Board approved the nomination of a Good Apple Award
2 for Jason Burleigh, Office Assistant at C.M. Russell High School.

3
4 **D. Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35’s** – The Board approved the
5 Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35’s for the individuals listed in the
6 agenda.

7
8 **E. TR-6 Bus Route Reimbursement Claims for 2024-2025 First Semester** – The
9 Board approved the TR-6 Bus Route Reimbursement Claims for bus routes for both the
10 high school and elementary districts for the first semester of the 2024-2025 school year.

11
12 **F. Incoming Student Attendance Agreements for 2024-2025 School Year** – The
13 Board approved the incoming student attendance agreements for the 2024-2025 school
14 year for the students listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the District of
15 Residence.

16
17 **G. Records Disposal Request – Business Office** – The Board approved the request
18 for disposal of the Business Office and Student records listed in the agenda that are in
19 compliance with the approved State, Local Government Records Committee Retention
20 Schedule.

21
22 **H. C.M. Russell High School Student Activity Account Closures** - The Board
23 approved the closure of the following six C.M. Russell High School Student Activity
24 accounts as all funds have been cleared and the balances are zero: “Women’s
25 Aerobic”, “Curtis Schwartz Memorial”, “German Club”, “Kyle McCracken Scholarship”,
26 “Class of 2024” and “Emma Strong”.

27
28
29 **COMMUNICATION**

30
31 **A. Character Strong – Valley View Elementary School** – Dannelle Dyke, Valley View
32 Elementary School Principal, along with four (4) student representatives reported on
33 and presented a video on *Character Strong* and what empathy means to Valley View
34 Elementary School.

35
36 **B. Superintendent Report** –Superintendent Hoyer congratulated Lesli Evans, a Para
37 Educator at C.M. Russell High School, on being awarded the Montana Theatre
38 Educator of the Year award.
39 She stated that the *Profile of a Learner* process started over a year ago when a
40 committee worked to determine: “What is learning?”, “What does the future hold?”, and
41 How do we prepare our learners for that future?”. A community-wide survey was
42 conducted to determine the five (5) most important skills, traits, and characteristics of a
43 learner. A Faculty Advisory Committee was then created to develop a rubric for the
44 identified skills, traits, and characteristics. Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the created
45 rubric in detail and how it will be implemented in District curriculum. She also thanked
46 Olivia Cordeiro, a C.M. Russell High School student, for creating the graphic design that
47 will be used. Ms. Cordeiro explained her thought process behind the design creation,
48 stating that she wanted to keep it simple so that it is understood by all.

1 Superintendent Hoyer thanked Anders Blewett and the Blewett family for their advocacy
2 and continued support and belief in public education. Great Falls Public Schools was
3 able to secure \$916,188.00 in Innovative Tax Credit donations thanks to Mr. Blewett
4 and Brian Patrick’s efforts.

5 Jennifer Martyn, Morningside CORE Elementary School, along with three (3) student
6 representatives shared a video presentation recognizing the Board members for their
7 work with Great Falls Public Schools. They also highlighted each Trustees’ traits and
8 skills.

9 Superintendent Hoyer congratulated Nate Achenbach for being awarded the Montana
10 High School Association / Montana Interscholastic Activity Administrators Association
11 (MHSA/MIAAAA) Gold Pass; Scott Smart for being awarded the Mildred Adams Award;
12 and Jim Grant, Great Falls Public Schools Athletic Director from 1969-1997 and Gary
13 DeGooyer, Great Falls Public Schools Athletic Director from 1997-2018, for being
14 inducted into the inaugural MHSA Athletic Directors’ Hall of Fame.

15 Superintendent Hoyer stated that Great Falls Public Schools will be applying for the
16 *Montana Reads* grant. This grant’s purpose is to advance literacy skills for
17 disadvantaged Montana students by using evidence-based practices, activities, and
18 interventions; provides professional development for school leaders and teachers; and
19 strengthens systems to increase collaboration and sustainability. Superintendent Hoyer
20 stated that an estimated \$50 million will be funded to Montana where large districts will
21 be rewarded an average of \$600,000 per year for four (4) years.

22 Superintendent Hoyer thanked Great Falls Ski and Board club for providing twenty-five
23 (25) passes for students to ski free this season.

24 National Association of Women in Construction-Education Foundation held a *Block Kids*
25 event at Longfellow Elementary School where students applied problem solving and
26 pre-construction skills to build objects, and then communicated verbally their thought
27 process.

28 Superintendent Hoyer presented data on website metrics and how the District website is
29 being utilized.

30
31 **C. Audience Communication – None**

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34 **ACTION ITEMS**

35
36 **A. Baseball Fundraising Approval** – Director of Student Achievement, Lance Boyd,
37 reiterated that baseball will be a community-driven emerging sport program. He
38 reviewed the fundraising timeline as previously presented at the January 13, 2025
39 Board meeting. He stated if the fundraising goals are reached, Baseball will begin play
40 in the 2025-2026 school year. However, if the fundraising goals are not met, baseball
41 will be moved to the next fiscal year for its inaugural season. Lance also stated that Tile
42 IX implications with facilities and field access will continue to be monitored.

43
44 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to approve
45 the initiation of fundraising efforts by the Baseball Committee to prepare for the
46 implementation of Baseball as a MHSA sanctioned sport for Great Falls Public Schools
47 beginning in 2026 as presented.

1 **B. Resolution Estimating Changes in Revenues/Mills for Tuition, Adult Education,**
2 **Building Reserve, Flexibility, Bus Depreciation, and Transportation Funds for**
3 **School Fiscal Year 2025-2026** – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick,
4 explained Montana State Law requires school boards to adopt a resolution whenever
5 Trustees intend to impose an increase in a non-voted levy in the ensuing fiscal year.
6 The Board Budget Committee reviewed the estimated permissive levies at a work
7 session held on January 9, 2025. Brian explained increases, decreases and/or no
8 changes in each of the funds. The estimated impact for all the combined Elementary
9 and High School budgets is an increase of 5.85 mills. The impact on taxes for a home
10 with an estimated taxable valuation of \$100,000 is an increase of \$7.91 for all funds
11 combined and a home valued at \$200,000 is an increase of \$15.84. This information will
12 be advertised in the local paper and on the District website. Exact fiscal implications will
13 not be known until August as these are estimates only.

14
15 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to adopt the
16 resolution estimating changes in revenues/mills to the Adult Education, Building
17 Reserve, Flexibility, Bus Depreciation, Transportation and Tuition levies for the school
18 fiscal year 2025-26 as presented.

19
20 **C. Second Reading of Deleted and Revised Board Policies 1113P – Vacancies;**
21 **1310 – District Policy and Procedures; 1312 (Delete) – Administrative**
22 **Regulations; and 1332 – Authorization of Signatures** – Superintendent Hoyer stated
23 the policies above were reviewed on first reading at the January 13, 2025, Board
24 meeting. She stated that she has not received any new questions or concerns
25 regarding the changes to the policies.

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27 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
28 deleted and revised Board Policies *1113P – Vacancies; 1310 – District Policy and*
29 *Procedures; 1312 (Delete) – Administrative Regulations; and 1332 – Authorization of*
30 *Signatures* as presented.

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33 **ACTION: OTHER**

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

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38 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

39
40 **A. School Nutrition Report** – School Food Services Supervisor, Jessa Youngers,
41 recognized three (3) District employees for their work on the required Environmental
42 Assessments due to the salmonella outbreak.
43 Jessa reported on the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program,
44 Summer Food Service Program, and the Community Eligibility Provision Sub-program.
45 She stated that there was a slight decrease of meals provided during the Summer Food
46 Service Program from last year. Jessa spoke on the “Park Pals” collaboration with Get
47 Fit Great Falls. She reported on student participation and meals served from the 2017-
48 2018 school year to current. Free and reduced meals are categorically based on

1 participation in certain Federal Assistance Programs or students classified as homeless,
2 migrant, runaway, foster, or select Medicaid. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
3 states that all students enrolled in a qualified CEP school will receive free meals due to
4 the high level of poverty among enrolled students. Seven schools within the District
5 qualify for this CEP. Jessa reviewed the notification process for students with negative
6 meal charged balances, which includes flyers, electronic bi-weekly notifications and
7 certified letters. She reported on the salmonella outbreak and how it affected Great Falls
8 Public Schools. Mrs. Youngers spoke on the 2024-2026 National School Food Study.
9 The Warehouse has received the new delivery truck from Normont Equipment
10 Company. Jessa ended her report by reviewing her current staff and stated that they
11 have nine (9) open positions.

12
13 Trustee Thompson asked why the District participates in *Breakfast in the Classroom*.
14 Jessa replied that it helps alleviate the stigma about needing to eat breakfast at school.

15
16 Trustee Skornogoski stated that more schools in Montana are becoming completely free
17 and reduced, and she asked why Great Falls is not. Jessa replied that while the
18 threshold has been lowered for the state it is not currently feasible for Great Falls to
19 sustain.

20
21 Trustee Bronson and Skornogoski thanked Jessa for her work, especially with the
22 salmonella outbreak.

23
24 **B. Consensus Building Priorities** – Executive Director of Student Achievement,
25 Jackie Mainwaring, reported that Great Falls Public Schools is projecting a budget
26 shortfall in the coming years. In order to generate solutions for potential budget
27 shortfalls, Great Falls Public Schools will utilize the consensus building process with a
28 stakeholder team in February. She stated that seven (7) community listening sessions,
29 comprised of both internal and external stakeholders, were held to prepare for the
30 consensus building process. In reviewing the results of the sessions along with the
31 Districts strategic plan, Great Falls Public Schools developed five (5) priorities for the
32 consensus team to keep in mind while working toward solutions.

33
34 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments** –
35 Trustee Sunchild thanked Morningside CORE Elementary school for their presentation
36 recognizing the Trustees. She and Trustee Thompson congratulated Scott Smart for his
37 achievements and stated that he deserves recognition and the award.
38 Trustee Thompson also stated that she is excited to attend upcoming Cross-Town
39 events.

40 Trustee Skornogoski reported that she was able to attend a Touro Montana
41 MedAchieve event. She also stated that she is excited about Consensus Building
42 committee discussions.

43 Trustee Bronson updated fellow Trustees about the progress regarding the new Health
44 Insurance Trust and said a presentation is being scheduled for late March 2025. He
45 also reported that concerns were brought to his attention about a proposed legislative
46 bill. He stated that he contacted Montana School Board Association (MTSBA) and they
47 are aware and are actively suggesting amendments to the purposed bill.

