

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting December 09, 2024

6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, December 9th, 2024. The meeting was held in-person. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Tom McLaughlin. Trustees participating were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Trustees Jacquelyn Ryan and Kallie Gatzemeier were absent for the meeting. Superintendent Molly Blakely and District Clerk Justine Reese were present for the meeting. District staff participating included Erin Ellis (Curriculum Coordinator), Tiffany Hobbs (Bldg. 3 Principal), Brendan Brown (Spec.Ed. Director), Jamie Courville (Bldg. 4 Principal), Chris Clevenger (Bldg. 1 Principal), and Julia McCarthy-McLavery (Bldg 2. Principal). Community members in attendance included: Henry Ihde (student), Noah Westhoff (student), Keegan Goodian (student), Ansel Ihde (student), Maddux Westhoff (student), Keegan Droessler (student), Barb Droessler (parent), Ken Goodian (parent), Megan Powell (parent), Erica Pekny (parent), and Scott Rouse (parent). There were up to 24 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Hot Chocolate Boys presented \$2,145.00 to Hellgate Elementary families in need. This group of students have sold hot chocolate and other goodies every year for the past three years and have donated the proceeds to the district to assist families in need during the holiday season. The Trustees expressed their gratitude to the students.

HEEA

There was no representation from the HEEA at the meeting.

RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Tom McLaughlin thanked the Hot Chocolate boys and their families for their generosity.

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletter from OPI. Governor Gianforte sent a letter to the District thanking the Superintendent and Trustees for their implementation of the cell phone policy earlier this school year.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES-REGULAR MEETING 11-11-2024

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the minutes from the November 11th, 2024 regular meeting. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-NOVEMBER 2024

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the November 2024 claims. The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. There clarifying questions from the Trustees. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF BUDGET REPORTS

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for November 2024.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to approve the November 2024 Student Activities Report. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) STUDENT POLICY CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the following policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to be included in our student and staff handbook effective immediately (see official board packet for policy). There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Lori Christensen. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANT FUNDING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the application for the Advanced Opportunity Grant which is funding offered through OPI for the enhancement of career development opportunities (see full strategic plan in official board packet). There clarifying questions regarding the item. The motion was seconded by Lori Christensen. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CLASSIFIED HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock motion to approve the hiring of Eliya Kasereka to be a custodian, effective November 11, 2024. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Rod Sharkey. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

MATERNITY LEAVE HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the hiring of Mr. Braxton hill to be a long-term maternity substitute, effective January 6, 2025. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

COACHING HIRING CONSIDERATION

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the following to be Drama coaches for the 24-25 school year.

Drama Co-Directors: Randi Ruhkamp and Ashlyn Schatz-Eason

Drama Assistant Directors: Rhiannon Roos and Lori King.

There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Lori Christensen. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Lori Christensen and Rod Sharkey. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

OPI AWARE: The District was awarded \$7,000 to train staff on EIS procedure.

Grant Creek Crossing TEDD: The County Commissioners agreed to remove Hellgate Elementary permissively levied funds from the TEDD and will conduct a look-back clause in the instance the development sees a large amount of residential growth.

Unified Champion Schools: Grant funding of \$4,500 to offset transportation costs for the Life Skills students who are training for the Special Olympics.

Donors Choose: With the help from Donors Choose, the band department purchased 4 snare drums and 2 bass drums

2025 School Board Elections: There are three Trustee seats up for re-election: Lori Christensen, Tom Cook and Rod Sharkey. The candidacy forms are available on the district website or at the Administrative Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Building 1: Grades 2-3 are getting ready for the Holiday Season and all that entails.

Building 2: Gymnastics had a successful season and had great student participation. The music programs are getting ready for the upcoming concert/program schedules. The teachers in Building two are showing their support for a student who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Building 3: Grades 4-6 are getting ready for all the Holiday concerts that are coming up. The PTA wreath fundraiser just finished up and the building will hold its first assembly.

Building 4: Holiday concerts are coming along with the Toys for Tots Dodgeball Tournament. 'Can the Cats' was a success with 1500-1800 pounds of food donated.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be January 13, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair

Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk