Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting March 10th, 2025
6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, March 10, 2025. The meeting was held in-person. The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Tom McLaughlin. Trustees participating were: Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier. Trustees Rod Sharkey and Lori Christensen 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), Brent Heist (Bldg. 3 Assistant Principal), Tiffany Hobbs (Bldg. 3 Principal), Jamie Courville (Bldg. 4 Principal), Julia McCarthy-McLaverty (Bldg 2. Principal), Christy Wassem (Teacher), Sara Bermingham (Teacher), and Kristen Guidoni (Teacher). Community members in attendance included: Megan Powell (parent). There were up to 16 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

HEEA

Sara Bermingham represented the HEEA and provided a brief update to the Trustees.

RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

There was no recognition at this meeting.

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees reviewed the monthly newsletter from OPI.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES-REGULAR MEETING 2-10-2025

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2025 regular meeting. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-FEBRUARY 2025

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the February 2025 claims. There were clarifying questions from the Trustees. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF BUDGET REPORTS

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for February 2025.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the February 2025 Student Activities Report. 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

MATERNITY LEAVE SUBSTITUTE HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the hiring of Chloe Grandeen to be a long-term maternity substitute for a kindergarten position, effective February 11, 2025. There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CLASSIFIED HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve the hiring of Jordan Courter to be a paraprofessional, effective February 18, 2025. There was no discussion on topic. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

SUBSTITUTE HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve the hiring of the following substitutes:

- Josie Ray (Nurse Sub)
- Nicholas Johnson
- Lindsay Brown
- Jenny Canalichio
- Isabella Honzel

There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED STAFF RESIGNATION CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve the resignation of Mrs. Hayley Blankers, 4th grade teacher (letter available in official board packet). There was brief discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED STAFF SABBATICAL CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve a sabbatical for Ms. Sara Bermingham, 5th grade teacher, for the 2025-2026 school year (letter available in official board packet). There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously

APPROVAL OF THE HIRING OF TRACK COACHES:

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve the hiring of the following personnel to be track coaches for the 24-25 season:

● Head Coaches: Dale Asanovich and Adelle Donohue

● Assistant Coaches: Taylor Nordby, Shane Byers, Angela Piazzola, Sammy Rasmussen, Emily Jones, and Michael Straw

There was a correction, Tyler Lind was originally included as an Assistant Coach but resigned prior to the Regular Board Meeting and was therefore removed from the track coaching list. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF 25-26 ACADEMIC CALENDAR:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve Option 2 of the 2025-2026 academic calendar (survey results included in official board packet). There was brief discussion regarding the changing in spring break, it will correlate with MCPS spring break schedule for the 25-26 school year. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

GENERAL FUND LEVY CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve the ballot language as presented, for the May 6, 2025 General Fund voted levy election (see complete ballot language in official board packet). There was a large discussion of the pros and cons related to running a levy. Superintendent Blakely and Justine Reese provided information as requested. There was discussion of how the funds were to be utilized, ultimately to offset the rising cost of property and liability insurance amongst other expenses in the district. The Trustees discussed marketing the levy as well as the history of past levies. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

BUILDING RESERVE SAFETY FUND LEVY CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve the ballot language as presented, for the May 6, 2025 School and Student Safety and Security Building Reserve Fund voted levy election (see complete ballot language in official board packet). There was discussion related to the taxpayer impact along with other pros and cons to running the levy. If the levy passes, the intent of the funding is to offset the cost of the School Resource Officer and Counselor salaries and benefits. The motion was seconded by Jacquelyn Ryan. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ADOPT RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO IMPOSE CHANGE IN LEVIES:

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to adopt the following "Resolution of Intent to Impose Change in Levies": As an essential part of its budgeting process, the Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees is authorized by law to impose levies to support its budget (full document is available in the official board packet). There was discussion related to the economic impact on taxpayers and the trade-off between running a voted levy and implementing permissive levies. Justine Reese presented on the permissive levies that the district currently utilizes. The motion was seconded by Tom Cook. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Governor Gianforte Education Commission of the States Appointment: Superintendent Blakely notified the Trustees that Erin Ellis had been selected by Governore Gianforte to sit on the Education Commission of the States from February 2025 through January 2029 (letter is available in official board packet).

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Building 1: Absent

Building 2: Absent

Building 3: Tiffany Hobbs provided an update to the Trustees. Parent Teacher conferences were happening in the week along with a variety of concerts. She thanked the maintenance department and staff. She noted a few different fieldtrips that were coming up for Building Three.

Building 4: Jamie Courville provided an update to the Trustees. A variety of sports were in session with track starting up soon. The music department has been busy hosting concerts.

SPED: Superintendent Blakely spoke on behalf of the Special Education Department. The Spec. Ed student athletes will be practicing their Special Olympic events at the University of Montana Track and Field facility.

Curriculum: Erin Ellis presented testing data for DIBELS and Early Literacy Program (ELP) data improvements. She noted overall students test scores are trending up in the Early Literacy Program. She reviewed grades K-2 DIBELS testing scores and noted overall improvement. She discussed Kindergarten and 1st graders are piloting a curriculum, UFLI.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be April 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kristen Guidoni presented to the Trustees the Northwest Honor Band plaque that was presented to the students. She had a plaque made with every student's name who participated in the event.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Evaluation of Superintendent and District Clerk

Superintendent Blakely requested a closed session for the Superintendent and District Clerk evaluations. Board Chair McLaughlin granted the request and called for a closed session of the board, "The next matter to come before the Board for consideration is a personal matter and in this connection it has been determined as follows: (1) that the matter of individual privacy is involved, (2) that such privacy demands protection of the individual for the sake of reputation and otherwise that little, if anything could be gained by publicly disclosing the information to be discussed, & (3) that the demand of individual privacy, in this matter clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure." Guests were excused from the meeting. The Trustees, Superintendent and District Clerk remained for the evaluations. The meeting was closed at 6:54 p.m.

Executive Session

The Board came out of executive session at 7:58 p.m.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

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Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk