

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting April 14, 2025

6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in regular session on Monday, April 14th, 2025. 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, Rod Sharkey, and Lori Christensen. 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), Julia McCarthy-McLavery (Bldg 2. Principal), Brendan Brown (Special Education), Chris Clevenger (Building 1 Principal), Dale Asanovich (Technology) and Kristen Guidoni (Teacher). There were no community members in attendance. There were up to 17 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

HEEA

Kristen Guidoni 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 3-10-2025

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2025 regular meeting. 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, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF THE WARRANTS-MARCH 2025

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the March 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, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF BUDGET REPORTS

Trustees reviewed the budget reports for March 2025.

REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to approve the March 2025 Student Activities Report. 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

MATERNITY LEAVE SUBSTITUTE HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Jacquelyn Ryan to approve the hiring of Lauren Dunlap, effective April 21, 2025 and Tatum Egan, effective May 19, 2025 to be long-term maternity substitutes. There clarifying questions 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, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

SABBATICAL REQUEST CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey motion to approve a sabbatical request for the 2025-2026 school year for Ms. Claire Walde, 2nd grade teacher (letter available in official board packet). There was no discussion on topic. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. Voting in favor of the motion were Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED HIRING CONSIDERATION

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to approve the hiring of Thomas Houska to be the physical education teacher in building one, effective March 31 2025. There was discussion related to the position. The motion was seconded by Rod Sharkey. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CLASSIFIED STAFF RESIGNATION CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the resignation of Ms. Bella Currie, effective April 18, 2025 and Ms. Brittany Paulin, effective March 31, 2025; paraprofessionals (letters are available in official board packet). There was a correction to the date in the original agenda item, otherwise no discussion. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CLASSIFIED STAFF HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Tom Cook to approve the hiring of Ms. Natalee Rod, paraprofessional, effective April 3, 2025 and Ms. Grace Niswanger, paraprofessional, effective April 9, 2025. There was no 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, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ASSISTANT TRACK COACH HIRING CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to approve the hiring of Mr. Derek Dungan to be an assistant track coach effective March 31, 2025. There was brief discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Rich Thornock. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED STAFF RESIGNATION CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Rod Sharkey to approve the resignation of Mr. Tyler Lind, Industrial Arts teacher, effective March 21, 2025 (letter available in official board packet). 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED STAFF RETIREMENT CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to approve the retirement of Ms. Kirstie Hartwell, school psychologist, effective June 12, 2025 (letter available in official board packet). 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF HIRING ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the hiring of the following members of the administrative team for the 2025-2026 school year:

- Ms. Julia McCarthy-McClaverty, Principal Bldg 2
- Mr. Brent Heist, Principal Bldg 1
- Ms. Tiffany Hobbs, Principal Bldg 3
- Mr. Jamie Courville, Principal Bldg 4
- Dr. Erin Ellis, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
- Mr. Brendan Brown, Director of Special Services

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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF RENEWAL OF SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to approve the renewal of a three-year contract for Dr. Molly Blakely, Superintendent, effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028. 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPT THE FISCAL AUDIT FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR:

A motion was made by Lori Christensen to accept the audit for the 2023-2024 school year that was conducted by Mr. Ross Stalcup, CPA, PC and Lisa A. Petrescu, CPA (attached). There were clarifying questions related to the expense of the audit. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REQUEST TO DISPOSE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS:

A motion was made by Tom Cook to allow Hellgate Elementary to destroy school district records in accordance with the Montana Local Government Retention and Disposition Schedule for school districts (MCA 20-1- 212). There was no 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, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

REQUEST TO DISPOSE OF NON-REPAIRABLE/OBSOLETE ITEMS:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to adopt a resolution (enclosed) to allow the district to dispose of obsolete, unusable/non-repairable equipment, materials, textbooks, library books, and property that are no longer utilized. 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, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER TECHNOLOGY/SAFETY PROJECT PROPOSAL AWARD:

A motion was made by Rich Thornock to consider awarding the Safety and Technology Project/Proposal to Bluum (see completed proposals attached). Superintendent Blakely provided an overview of the project. The project is primarily grant funded by the 2024 COPS Office School Violence Prevention Program. The project will focus on campus wide paging and emergency panic buttons. Dale Asanovich contributed to the discussion and addressed questions as the Trustees asked them. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Tom McLaughlin, Rich Thornock, Tom Cook, Jacquelyn Ryan, Rod Sharkey, Lori Christensen and Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Election Information: Superintendent Blakely provided an update on the Trustee and levy election marketing.

Emmy Finalist: Kristen Guidoni is a quarter finalist for an Emmy Award.

School Garden: The Hellgate School Garden is coming along well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports at the meeting.

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Building 1: Chris updated the Trustees on events in Building 1 including the Grey-Hammy run, field trips and MAPS testing just finished.

Building 2: Julie provided an update to the Trustees: Early Literacy Program testing begins soon (64 applicants) and 88 kindergarteners have registered for the upcoming school year. DIBELS testing scores are also looking really good.

Building 3: Tiffany provided an update to the Trustees. The STEAM fair was a success and track started for 6-8 graders. The 6th graders went to meet Mr. Courville in preparation for the upcoming school year.

Building 4: Absent

SPED: Brendan provided an overview of the recent activities and events in the special education program. The life skills program participated in an athletic day at the University of Montana Dome. This was a big opportunity for the students and they all greatly enjoyed it. He also thanked Kirstie Hartwell for the 17 years she has been with the district as well as being named Montana School Psychologist 2025.

Curriculum: Erin provided an overview of the testing that is in session throughout the district. Social studies was up for review and the review process has been completed. Erin will present for the board the final recommendation at the May board meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be May 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm.

Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair

Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk