

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
July 29, 2025

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a special meeting on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with President Dave Berger presiding.

Board Members Present: Josh Anderson, Dave Berger, Amber Flynn (via phone), Dr. Sherry Houdek, Jay Kleven, Eric Lunn, Jeff Manley, and Bill Palmiscno. **Absent:** Joel Larson.

Others Present: Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager; Dr. Catherine Gillach, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education; Matt Bakke, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Joe Drumm, Vice President of the Grand Forks Education Association; Terry R. Snider, Sr., Vice President, GFAFB School Board; and Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Reading of School Board Meeting Norms.

Manley read aloud the meeting norms.

Consent Agenda.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Lunn to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- July 14, 2025, school board meeting minutes as written;
- Teacher appointment effective August 18, 2025, of Stephanie Larson, school counselor, salary placement at MA/MS, Step 25, \$84,931; and
- Correction to Teacher Negotiated Agreement related to Elementary VEX Robotics.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Manley, Anderson, Houdek, Kleven, Palmiscno, Flynn, Lunn, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

School Board Committee and Community Liaison Appointments for 2025-2026.

Berger reported on the recommendations for school board appointments to standing and community committees, and administrative

assignments for district and school building liaisons.

It was moved by Manley and seconded by Palmiscno to approve the school board committee and community liaison appointments for 2025-2026 as recommended by the school board president and superintendent. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Lunn, Palmiscno, Flynn, Anderson, Kleven, Manley, Houdek, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Appointment of Behavioral Health and Wellness Director.

Dr. Gillach reported on the hiring process and recommendation for appointment.

It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Kleven to appoint Dr. Amy Geinert as the Behavioral Health and Wellness Director for the 2025-2026 school year, at a salary of \$104,594 plus a \$5,000 education factor, for a total of \$109,594. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Houdek, Kleven, Manley, Flynn, Lunn, Anderson, Palmiscno, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Compensation Recommendation for Chief Academic Officer.

Dr. Brenner reported on the negotiations with the chief academic officer and provided recommendations for compensation for the years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Anderson to approve compensation for Chief Academic Officer Amy Bartsch for 2025-2026 of \$151,300.80 plus a \$2,200 education factor for a total of \$153,500.80 and 2026-2027 of \$155,839.26 plus a \$2,200 education factor for a total of \$158,029.82. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Flynn, Houdek, Anderson, Manley, Lunn, Kleven, Palmiscno, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Compensation Recommendation for Business Manager.

Dr. Brenner reported on the negotiations with the business manager and provided recommendations for compensation for the years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Palmiscno to approve compensation for Business Manager Brandon Baumbach for 2025-2026 of \$151,665.70 and 2026-2027 of \$155,988.17. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Lunn, Flynn, Anderson, Houdek, Manley, Kleven, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Compensation Recommendation for Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education.

Dr. Brenner reported on the negotiations with the associate superintendent and provided recommendations for compensation for the years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Manley to approve compensation for Dr. Catherine Gillach for 2025-2026 of \$185,144 plus a \$5,000 education factor for a total of \$190,144 and 2026-2027 of \$190,698.32 plus a \$5,000 education factor for a total of \$195,698.32. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Anderson, Flynn, Kleven, Houdek,

Palmiscno, Lunn, Manley, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Compensation Recommendation for Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education.

Dr. Brenner reported on the negotiations with the assistant superintendent and provided recommendations for compensation for the year 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Lunn to approve compensation for Matt Bakke for 2025-2026 of \$184,936.50 plus a \$2,900 education factor for a total of \$187,836.50 and 2026-2027 of \$190,484.60 plus a \$2,900 education factor for a total of \$193,384.60. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Palmiscno, Lunn, Manley, Flynn, Houdek, Anderson, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Consideration of Preliminary Budget and Tax Levy for FY2025-26.

Baumbach reported on the recommendation for a preliminary budget and tax levy, which calls for a total levy of 130.68 mills. The levy includes 70 mills for the general fund, 12 mills for miscellaneous, 4 mills for tuition, 3 mills for a special reserve fund, 20 mills for the building fund, 1 mill for special assessments, and 20.68 mills for sinking & interest.

Baumbach reported that one difference the district is working on in 2025-2026 is the application of property tax caps passed during the 2025 legislative session.

Baumbach also reported that it would be challenging to achieve the Board's goal of a 15% general fund balance by 2026 due to increasing needs. Revenue came in under budget, and expenditures exceeded the budget, resulting in a loss of \$1.9 million and reducing the current general fund balance to 7.6%. Salaries and benefits are over budget, and property tax revenues are under budget.

Baumbach also reported on the recommendation that the board conduct a public hearing on the 2026 property tax levy on Monday, September 8, 2025, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Mark Sanford Education Center.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Kleven to approve the 2025-2026 preliminary budget and tax levy of 130.68 mills which includes 70 mills for the general fund, 12 mills for miscellaneous, 4 mills for tuition, 3 mills for a special reserve fund, 20 mills for the building fund, 1 mill for special assessments, and 20.68 mills for sinking & interest, and to schedule the public hearing on the budget and tax levy for Monday, September 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Manley, Lunn, Palmiscno, Houdek, Anderson, Kleven, Flynn, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Consideration of Governmental Lease for Bus for Career Impact Academy Routes.

Baumbach reported on the exploration process leading up to the recommendation to provide student busing to and from the Career Impact Academy.

The recommendation is to enter into a governmental lease from Horizon Financial Bank in Bismarck for a bus being sold by Harlow's Bus Sales. The lease is for a single-year term with an auto-renewal clause for two additional annual terms. At the end of the third year, the school district will have the option to purchase the bus. The sale price is \$132,500 with three annual lease terms of \$24,747.27 per year and a pre-negotiated sale price at the end of the third year of \$72,875.

Baumbach reported that a community benefit grant associated with the New Market Tax Credit of \$240,000 will cover these costs for the first two years of operation.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Palmiscno to approve the governmental lease agreement with Horizon Financial Bank as

presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Anderson, Flynn, Houdek, Kleven, Lunn, Manley, Palmiscno, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Announcements.

- Swimming is happening at the recommissioned Grand Forks Central pool.
- The Career Impact Academy ribbon cutting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 13, at 1:00 p.m., and an open house begins at 3:00 p.m.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

Kleven requested an update on the boundary process. This will be a topic at the upcoming school board retreat.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Manley pointed out specific areas in which the board followed its meeting norms.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager