

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD SEPTEMBER 22, 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 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day  
7 of September 2025.

8  
9 At 5:30 pm, Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski called to order the Regular Meeting of the  
10 Board of Trustees.

11  
12 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski reported that, per Board Policy 1420, all Board meetings  
13 are recorded and posted on the District website for one (1) year.  
14

15  
16 **ROLL CALL:** Luke Diekhans took roll call.  
17

18 **Trustees Present:** Kim Skornogoski – Vice-Chairperson  
19 Bill Bronson  
20 Craig Duff  
21 Marlee Sunchild  
22 Paige Turoski  
23

24 **Trustees Absent:** Gordon Johnson – Chairperson - Excused  
25 Amie Thompson - Excused  
26

27 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Business  
28 Operations; Lance Boyd and Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors of Student  
29 Achievement; Heather Spurzem, Interim Director of Human Resources; Jeff Williams,  
30 Director of Information Technology; and Stephanie Becker, Director of Great Falls  
31 Public Schools Foundation. Also present were Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education  
32 Association President and Lisa Sapp, Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) liaison.  
33

34 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
35  
36

37 **ADOPT AGENDA**  
38

39 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt the  
40 agenda as presented.  
41

42  
43 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**  
44

45 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the  
46 Consent Agenda as presented.  
47

1 **A. Minutes of the September 8, 2025, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved  
2 the minutes of the September 8, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

3  
4 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.

5  
6 **C. Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35** – The Board approved the  
7 Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35s for the individuals listed in the  
8 agenda.

9  
10 **D. Kindergarten Early Entrance for the 2025-2026 School Year** – The Board  
11 approved the student listed in the agenda to enroll in kindergarten for the 2025-2026  
12 school year by special permission per Board Policy 3110R.

13  
14 **E. Student Activity Monthly Report for July 2025** – The Board approved the Student  
15 Activity Accounts for July 2025.

16  
17 **F. Establish Student Activity Account “Class of 2029” at Great Falls High** – The  
18 Board approved Great Falls High School’s request to open the “Class of 2029” Student  
19 Activity account.

20  
21  
22 **COMMUNICATION**

23  
24 **A. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Communication** - Malmstrom Air Force Base  
25 (MAFB) School Liaison Specialist, Lisa Sapp, reported on Pupil-Instruction Relation  
26 (PIR) opportunities MAFB provided District teachers throughout the summer. She also  
27 spoke about the Military Family Information Fair that happened in August. She stated  
28 that twenty-two (22) teachers participated in Mock Deployment Day on August 11, 2025.  
29 Lisa thanked Great Falls Public Schools for their continued support and partnership.

30  
31 **B. Superintendent Report** –

32 Superintendent Hoyer reported that Informational Technology (IT) Professional Day was  
33 recognized on September 16, 2025. Thank you to the twenty-two (22) District  
34 employees who make up our IT department. She reviewed the day-to-day  
35 responsibilities of the technology department.

36 Superintendent Hoyer stated that *Worlds of Work* is scheduled for September 23, 2025.  
37 Sophomore and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will engage with interactive exhibits from regional  
38 employers and try hands-on activities demonstrating actual job skills.

39 Visual Arts students volunteered to help with the annual *Arts on Fire* event and  
40 fundraiser for Paris Gibson Museum on September 13, 2025. They also participated in  
41 the annual T-shirt design contest where C.M. Russell High School students Mariah  
42 McFee took first place, and Lillian Harris took second.

43 Superintendent Hoyer thanked community partners for their continued support and  
44 donations to the District.

45 Superintendent Hoyer reported that she completed her half workday Convocation  
46 obligation at Longfellow Elementary as the First Engineer. She thanked Tim Wagenman  
47 from Great Falls High School for stepping in and talking her through how to fix the  
48 automatic floor scrubber when she thought she had broken it.

1 Special thank you to Miranda Murray, teacher on special assignment, for her work  
2 informing students of United States Constitution/Citizenship Day on September 17<sup>th</sup>.  
3 Superintendent Hoyer reviewed the other commemorative days the District instructs  
4 students on through the school year.

5  
6 **C. Audience Communication – None**

7  
8  
9 **ACTION ITEMS**

10  
11 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for July 2025** – Director of Business  
12 Operations, Luke Diekhans, reviewed the first financial report and check register of the  
13 2025-2026 school year.

14  
15 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the  
16 July 2025 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #140395 - #140682 in the  
17 amount of \$1,568,666.38 and Payroll checks #84406 - #84461 in the amount of  
18 \$62,032.37 as presented.

19  
20 **B. Lowest Qualified Bidder for the Great Falls High School Shop Renovation -**  
21 **Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Innovative Learning Center** – Director of  
22 Business Operations, Luke Diekhans, reported that this project went out to bid on  
23 August 17, 2025. Seven (7) bids were submitted and opened on September 9, 2025,  
24 and each bid was reviewed by Thomas Dean & Hoskins Inc (TD&H), who was hired by  
25 the District to oversee this project. The lowest qualified bidder is Wadsworth Builders  
26 Company, Inc with the base amount of \$1,191,900.00 and alternate bid #1 of  
27 \$104,400.00. Luke stated that Innovative Tax Credit donations received over the last  
28 four (4) years will be used to fund this project.

29  
30 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the  
31 lowest qualified bidder, Wadsworth Builders Company, Inc., for the Great Falls High  
32 School Shop Renovation in the amount of \$1,191,900 for the Base Bid and \$104,400 for  
33 the Alternate Bid #1 for a total project amount of \$1,296,300.00, as presented.

34  
35 **C. 2025-2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement with Craft Council** – Director of  
36 Business Operations, Luke Diekhans, reported that the International Brotherhood of  
37 Electrical Workers – Local 233, Western States Regional Council 82, Local 1922,  
38 Plumbers and Fitters – Local 41, and International Union of Operating Engineers –  
39 Local 400 combined to create the Craft Council and the Collective Bargaining  
40 Agreement (CBA) for this group expired on June 30, 2025. The District and the Craft  
41 Council agreed to an adjustment of a 4% increase in wages per hour retroactive to July  
42 1, 2025 for the 2025-2026 school year and a 3% increase in wages per hour for the  
43 2026-2027 school year. The District and Craft Council also agreed to add \$.50 to the  
44 Grounds base rate in the 2025-2026 school year and \$.25 again in the 2026-2027  
45 school year. Finally, agreement was made on increasing the foreman base pay an  
46 additional \$.18 per hour. The expected budget for the 2025-2026 school year will be  
47 \$1,034,009, an increase of \$53,689 from the previous year. In the 2026-2027 school  
48 year the projected budget will be \$1,068,994, an increase of \$34,985. An additional

1 \$2,520 each year will be contributed towards health insurance for two (2) Electricians  
2 and four (4) Carpenters. Luke then reviewed the purposed language changes in the  
3 CBA.

4  
5 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to ratify the  
6 two-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with Craft Council as presented.

7  
8 **D. Substitute Teacher Pay Increase for 2025-2026 School Year** - Interim Director of  
9 Human Resources, Heather Spurzem, reviewed the current substitute teacher  
10 compensation schedule and stated that substitute teachers work seven (7) hours per  
11 day and may not work more than one hundred thirty (130) hours per month, with the  
12 exception of full-time and long-term substitute teachers. The Districts fill rates continue  
13 to remain near 80%; meaning 20% of absences were filled by other staff, due to a lack  
14 of substitute teachers. Heather stated that the purposed pay increase for unlicensed  
15 substitute teachers is \$5.00 per day and the purposed pay increase for licensed  
16 substitute teachers is \$15.00 per day. The estimated cost is an approximate increase of  
17 \$47,033 per year and this amount is based on a three-year average for all teaching  
18 positions.

19  
20 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to approve  
21 the outlined pay increase for substitute teachers as presented.

22  
23 **E. 2025-2026 Substitute Teacher Incentive Pay** - Interim Director of Human  
24 Resources, Heather Spurzem, presented a proposal to continue the practice of offering  
25 incentive payments to substitute teachers during the 2025-2026 school year. Due to  
26 increased teacher absences and decreased availability of substitutes, the incentive  
27 program was effective in the 2024-2025 school year. The proposed continuation offers  
28 \$400 in additional compensation for substitutes who work a minimum of 25 days in each  
29 of the designated two-month periods, and 18 days during May 1-June 5. The estimated  
30 fiscal impact is \$27,610, which will be covered by the District's Substitute Teacher  
31 funds.

32  
33 Motion – Marlee Sunchild, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to approve  
34 \$400 of additional compensation for all substitute teachers who work a minimum of 25  
35 days during the two-month time frames presented (September 1 – October 31;  
36 November 3 – December 31; January 1 – February 27; and March 2 – April 30) or  
37 eighteen days during the last month of the school year (May 1 – June 5).

38  
39 **F. Second Reading of New and Revised Board Policies 1015FE – *Personalized***  
40 ***Learning Opportunities*; 3650 – *Student Online Personal Information Protection*;**  
41 ***and 5430F – *Volunteer Agreement Form**** – Superintendent Hoyer stated that no  
42 comments or recommendations for changes were received since the first reading of the  
43 policies at the September 8, 2025 Board Meeting. She stated that the policy numbers  
44 listed in the discussion portion on the agenda were incorrect, but the recommendation  
45 reflected accurate policy numbers.

46  
47 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve New  
48 and Revised Board Policies 1015FE – *Personalized Learning Opportunities*; 3650 –

1 *Student Online Personal Information Protection*; and 5430F – *Volunteer Agreement*  
2 *Form* as presented.

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5 **ACTION: OTHER**

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7 There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.  
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10 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

11  
12 **A. Staffing Update Report** - Interim Director of Human Resources, Heather Spurzem,  
13 reviewed the hiring, retirement, resignation, and termination status from last year. She  
14 also reviewed the current open positions within the District. Heather reported on the  
15 hiring trends from the previous six (6) school years. She also spoke on the Districts  
16 recruitment, marketing, networking, and retention strategies and how beneficial they  
17 are.  
18

19 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

20 Trustee Sunchild congratulated Lewis and Clark Elementary School on the new  
21 playground. It is a great opportunity and a great partnership with the Montana School for  
22 the Deaf and Blind. She also thanked Superintendent Hoyer, Jackie Mainwaring, Lance  
23 Boyd, Heather Spurzem, and Luke Diekhans for their work.

24 Trustee Duff appreciates all the information and reports given during Board meetings.  
25 He also stated that he attended the football game over the weekend and likes to see the  
26 excitement on the students' faces.

27 Trustee Bronson attended the ground-breaking event for the High School house, and he  
28 loved to hear the positive feedback from the community. He also spoke on the  
29 advancement of technology and wants to see how the District plans to remain proactive.

30 Trustee Turoski thanked all District staff for all the work they do.

31 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski encouraged everyone to stop by the *World of Work*  
32 event tomorrow. She attended a presentation on mental health, and said the students  
33 had positive feedback. She then spoke on the Decennial Study and how it affects  
34 school funding.  
35

36 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

37  
38 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for  
39 Monday, October 13, 2025, and Monday, October 27, 2025.  
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41  
42 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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44 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
45 at 6:34 p.m.  
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Luke Diekhans, Clerk

Kim Skornogoski, Vice-Chairperson