

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD OCTOBER 13, 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 4th Street South, on the 13th day
7 of October 2025.
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9 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of
10 Trustees and informed the participants and audience that the meeting was being
11 recorded per Board Policy 1420.
12

13 **ROLL CALL:** Luke Diekhans took roll call.
14

15 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
16 Bill Bronson
17 Craig Duff
18 Paige Turoski
19

20 **Trustee Absent:** Kim Skornogoski, Excused
21 Marlee Sunchild, Excused
22 Amie Thompson, Excused
23

24 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Business
25 Operations; Jackie Mainwaring and Lance Boyd, Executive Directors for Student
26 Achievement; Jeff Williams, Director of Information Technology; Heather Spurzem,
27 Interim Director of Human Resources; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls
28 Public Schools Foundation.
29

30 Also present was Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education Association President.
31

32 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Geoffry Habel, Great Falls High School Principal.
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34

35 **ADOPT AGENDA**
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37 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt the
38 agenda as presented.
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41 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
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43 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the
44 Consent Agenda as presented.
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46 **A. Minutes of the September 22, 2025 Regular Board Meeting** – The Board
47 approved the minutes of the September 22, 2025 Regular Board Meeting as presented.
48

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

2
3 **C. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations of Good Apple Awards
4 for Amber Rausch, 1st Grade teacher, Logan Warren, Teacher Assistant, Hannah
5 Crawford, 4th Grade teacher, Amanda Haas, Resource 1 teacher, Michelle Peterson,
6 Health Enhancement teacher, and Jennifer Martyn, Principal, all at CORE School at
7 Morningside; and Erica Harp, Great Falls Public Schools Lead Registered Nurse, Paris
8 Gibson Education Center.

9
10 **D. Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificates**
11 The Board approved the Montana OPI TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificates for the
12 individuals listed in the agenda.

13
14 **E. TR-1 Bus Route Reimbursement Claims** - The Board approved the TR-1 Bus
15 Route Reimbursement Claims for the bus routes of the high school and elementary
16 school districts.

17
18 **F. Incoming Student Attendance Agreement for the 2025-2026 School Year** – The
19 Board approved the incoming student attendance agreement for the 2025-2026 school
20 year for the student listed in the agenda. Tuition will be paid for by the District of
21 Residence.

22
23 **G. Student Activity Monthly Report for August 2025** – The Board approved the
24 Student Activity Accounts for August 2025 as presented.

25
26 **H. Accept Lewis and Clark Elementary School Playground Donation** – The Board
27 approved the donations of playground and recess equipment, including installation, from
28 the Lewis and Clark Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the City
29 of Great Falls. The estimated value of playground and recess equipment at Lewis and
30 Clark Elementary School is \$232,295.00.

31
32 **I. Great Falls High School Advanced Placement Studio Art Travel Request to**
33 **Tucson, Arizona** – The Board approved Great Falls High School Advanced Placement
34 (AP) Art students' travel request to Tucson, Arizona for National Portfolio Day from
35 October 23-26, 2025.

36
37 **J. Charles M. Russell High School Student Government Conference Attendance**
38 **Request** – The Board approved Charles M. Russell High School Student Government
39 to attend the Montana Association of Student Councils Conference in Great Falls,
40 Montana on November 16-18, 2025.

41
42 **K. Resolution to Dispose of Unsuitable District Property** – The Board approved the
43 items listed in the agenda as surplus property as they are no longer suitable for District
44 use.

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47 **COMMUNICATION**

1 **A. Report of the Student Representatives**

2 Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School student representatives Emerson Hamma, Lydia
3 Comstock, and Addie Crist reported that students were highly engaged this month
4 through academics, activities, and athletics. Clubs such as HOSA, Key Club, BPA, and
5 Student Government supported community causes, prepared for upcoming
6 conferences, and hosted Homecoming events. Students showcased creativity and
7 critical thinking through lessons in *The Crucible*, Advanced Placement (AP) debates,
8 chemistry labs, essay writing, and circuit-building projects. Fall sports teams wrapped
9 up strong seasons, with several golfers earning all-state honors and teams competing
10 successfully in soccer, cross country, volleyball, and football. High School House
11 students received carpentry tools donated in memory of former GFPS employee and
12 carpenter Dan Ridgeley, honoring his legacy of craftsmanship. Students also
13 participated in a Sletten Construction job site tour for hands-on learning. Homecoming
14 week was filled with spirited participation, highlighted by parades, competitions, and the
15 crowning of King Dalton Heggem and Queen Kamryn King. The student representatives
16 expressed that Rustler Pride was demonstrated by students turning out in full force for
17 school events and activities—showing spirit, supporting one another, and creating
18 lasting memories.

19
20 Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) student representatives Aspen Logan-
21 Schwecke and Kaytlynn McClure reported Paris Gibson students have been busy this
22 fall with hands-on learning and career exploration. Students attended the College Fair at
23 the University of Providence, Worlds of Work, and the Chamber’s Lunch with a
24 Professional event. Three students participated in Leadership High, and several earned
25 or began Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) training through Great Falls College.
26 Activities included a successful blood drive, honey harvesting that produced seven
27 gallons of honey, and textile lessons in preparation for the Great Falls Public Schools
28 Powwow. Students also enjoyed “Foreign Fridays” learning about world cultures through
29 international snacks. Recent geology field trips to Memorial Falls and Butte gave
30 students the chance to explore fossils, mines, and Montana’s natural history.
31 Scholarship information sessions were well attended, and scholarship applications are
32 already being submitted.

33
34 Great Falls High School (GFHS) student representatives Seth Royer, Kaitlynn Fulbright,
35 and Weston Stoll reported Great Falls High celebrated Homecoming Week with themed
36 days, assemblies, and a school BBQ, culminating in the crowning of King Colter DeVos
37 and Queen Eve Green. The seniors won the float contest with a “Love Island” design,
38 and the annual Color Run drew 200 participants while raising funds for a fellow student.
39 Fall sports teams continued strong performances, highlighted by football and soccer
40 victories. Lessons students loved included hands-on projects in Marketing, Culinary
41 Arts, and Physics classes. A new tradition recognizes a Teacher of the Week and
42 Support Staff Member of the Month. Leadership High students attended a professional
43 development event, High School House students began construction on the 48th house,
44 and Business Professionals of America (BPA) members attended a statewide
45 leadership conference to get their year started. The Class of 1970 celebrated its 55th
46 reunion with music and ice cream in the Jack Fisher Memorial Sculpture Garden they
47 originally helped create. Sophomores participated in the annual World of Work event,
48 gaining hands-on experience in a variety of local career fields including healthcare,

1 firefighting, welding, and construction. The month also included celebrations for National
2 Custodian Day, Scholarship Night, and student volunteer participation at Paris Gibson
3 Square’s Arts on Fire event.

4
5 **B. Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Hoyer reported that students are actively
6 involved in many events across the district. She recognized the efforts of ninety-three
7 (93) custodial staff employees, under the leadership of Brent Cutler, in honor of National
8 Custodian Day and thanked Tradehome Shoes for donating sixty (60) pairs of shoes
9 and socks to Valley View Elementary School students. She highlighted the *Montana’s*
10 *Future at Work* initiative, which brings together education partners to explore how to
11 leverage opportunities for the state’s workforce, and shared updates on the partnership
12 with the new Mark and Robyn Jones School of Nursing facility—one of five statewide—
13 where students can now complete their full degree locally. Superintendent Hoyer also
14 commended Julie Shotnokoff, Transportation and Safety Lead Technician, and Becky
15 Nelson, Community Connections Coordinator, for their response to an elementary
16 crosswalk incident that led to enhanced student safety measures, including reflective
17 tape for all PreK–6 students. She announced her participation in an honorary
18 commander exchange with Colonel Brian Low from Malmstrom AFB to strengthen
19 district-military partnerships. The *Night Without a Bed* event raised awareness of local
20 homelessness and supported the McKinney-Vento program. District liaisons Lee Houle,
21 Tony Forster, and Erin Bucher will present related data at a future Board meeting.
22 Finally, she noted that open enrollment remains a moving target due to some districts
23 who have not turned in requests for reimbursements; with current figures showing forty-
24 six (46) students transferring out of the district and two (2) transferring into the district.

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27 **C. Audience Communication** – None

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30 **ACTION ITEMS**

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32 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for August 2025** - Director of Business
33 Operations, Luke Diekhans, stated that interviews for the Lead Business Technician
34 position have just been completed and the position will hopefully be filled soon. He
35 presented the financial report and check register for August 2025 and stated that all
36 financial numbers are reflective of this time of year.

37
38 **Motion** – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
39 August 2025 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #140683 - #140975 in the
40 amount of \$1,117,661.95 and Payroll checks #84462 - #84546 in the amount of
41 \$128,632.52 as presented.

42
43 **B. Approval of Easement Request from Northwestern Energy** – Director of Business
44 Operations Luke Diekhans reported that Northwestern Energy is requesting a fifteen
45 (15) foot easement from Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) to allow a power line to
46 pass through property at the Siebel Soccer Complex that will allow for the installation of
47 a new air quality monitoring station for the Montana Department of Environmental
48 Quality. Mr. Diekhans stated that GFPS relies on the monitoring stations to make

1 decisions regarding daily outdoor activities based on the current environmental
2 conditions.

3
4 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve the
5 request from Northwestern Energy for a fifteen (15) foot easement through Great Falls
6 Public Schools property for the purpose of running a power supply to a new Montana
7 Department of Environmental Quality air quality monitoring station.

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10 **ACTION: OTHER**

11 There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss
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14 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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16 **A. Summer 2026 Innovative Learning Program** – Superintendent Hoyer introduced a
17 new Summer 2026 Innovative Learning Program, fully funded through the Innovative
18 Tax Credit program with strong community support, including committee member Gerry
19 Jennings. The program will provide field experiences for all Great Falls Public Schools
20 students, with first through third graders eligible following JumpStart to maintain
21 participation in both. Principals will receive updates as planning continues, and teachers
22 were introduced to the program via email. Two upcoming meetings will provide further
23 details. Teachers will receive stipends, and a committee will review all submissions for
24 selection of six available opportunities. Two documents were presented to the Board
25 outlining the grant program and teacher application process, with adjustments
26 anticipated after the inaugural year.

27
28 **B. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

29 Trustee Duff shared that visiting schools over the past few weeks was a great
30 experience and expressed admiration for the Building and Grounds team, noting how
31 impressive it is that only eight people manage all district facilities.

32 Trustee Turoski reported that Valley View Elementary School staff and students were
33 very excited about the Tradehome Shoes donation. She also provided feedback on the
34 new math curriculum, noting there was overall satisfaction amongst teachers but
35 acknowledging that the different content structure may mean assessment scores might
36 not yet reflect the anticipated improvement.

37 Trustee Bronson expressed appreciation for the efforts behind the summer learning
38 program, emphasizing the educational value of field trips. He commented on the
39 importance of including all staff—such as custodians—in school communities. Trustee
40 Bronson also commended student presentations and remarked on the importance of
41 students learning about the historical debates surrounding the United States
42 Constitution, noting how such discussions remain relevant today.

43 Trustee Johnson shared that he was contacted by Coca-Cola regarding the district's
44 beverage contract and provided background information on its history. He stated that
45 electronic copies of the full contract package will be sent to all Board members and
46 suggested that future beverage agreements might proceed more smoothly.

1 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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3 Chairperson Johnson highlighted upcoming events to include the Montana Conference
4 of Educational Leadership (MECL) taking place in Helena this week and the All-State
5 Music Festival and Montana Music Educators Association Conference taking place in
6 Great Falls on Thursday and Friday, October 16th and 17th.

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9 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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11 With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Chairperson Johnson
12 and seconded by Trustee Turoski to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of
13 Trustees at 6:35 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Luke Diekhans, Clerk