

REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL DISTRICT #6  
NOVEMBER 10, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District Six was held at 6:00 P.M., Monday, November 10, 2025, in the Boardroom of the administration offices at 501 Sixth Avenue West, Columbia Falls, Montana.

PRESENT:

Jill Rocksund ..... Board Chair  
Barbara Riley ..... Vice Chair  
Megan Upton ..... Trustee  
Keri Hill ..... Trustee  
Amanda Pacheco ..... Trustee  
Casey Heupel ..... Trustee  
Cory Dziowgo ..... Superintendent of Schools  
Dustin Zuffelato ..... Business Manager/Clerk

ABSENT:

Justin Cheff ..... Trustee  
Heather Mumby ..... Trustee

Call to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chair Rocksund.

CALL TO ORDER

Motion by Upton, second by Heupel, to approve the agenda as presented.  
Passed 6-0.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Pacheco, second by Hill, to approve the consent agenda.

APPROVE CONSENT  
AGENDA

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Approval of October Bills

Approval of Investment Reports

Out-of-District Approval – SY 25-26

26-196

26-197

26-198

26-199

26-200

Passed 6-0

Public Participation:

Approximately three (3) people participated in the meeting remotely via Google Meets.

Approximately fourteen (14) people participated in person.

PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION:

Senior Class President, Fiona Bryant, and Vice President, Maddy Barker, shared events occurring at the High School. The Student Council held a blood drive for anyone the age of sixteen or older who wished to participate. The High School had their annual Cats/Griz food drive for the local food bank. Fall sports ended with the girls' soccer team winning the State Championship; football and volleyball lost in their playoffs. The anatomy and physiology classes went to FVCC for a field trip to shadow some different medical fields. Upcoming events, winter sports will be starting in November. The National Honor Society will induct a record number of inductees on November 19. The annual Veteran's Day Assembly will be November 11, 2025, at 10:25 A.M.

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Community Member Russ Vukonich expressed his thoughts following the denial of the High School Bond. Mr. Vukonich does not believe that the District and the Board provided a compelling reason as to why the community should have approved an eighty-four-million-dollar project. Many community members wanted to support the High School facility but felt that the price tag was too high, especially with the jail bond on the ballot. Property taxes would have increased by too much and many citizens had to choose between the school and the county jail. Mr. Vukonich is asking the Board to put forth a stronger argument for the community to approve the much needed High School improvements.

REPORTS:

Written Reports:

Board Standing Committee reports are located on the District's Website.

The Elementary School Principals (Penni Anello, Allison Hawes, and Ted Miller) provided the Board with written reports.

High School Principal, Josh Gibbs, provided the Board with a written report.

Curriculum Director, Mark McCord, provided the Board with a written report.

Special Services Director, Michelle Swank, provided the Board with a written report.

Verbal Reports:

Trustee Barbara Riley provided the Board with the recent proceedings of the Consortium of State School Board Associations (COSSBA) and the Montana School Board Association (MTSBA). MCEL held their annual conference in Helena in October. The Montana Council on Economic Education (MCEE) was contracted to investigate what is included in the funding system and are requesting further inputs from communities, teachers, administrators, parents, etc. With this information Mrs. Riley stated the committee will provide a report and budget/funding package for the state legislature to consider. Mrs. Riley also attended sessions on audits, the new assembly system on maintaining district policies, and meetings on how districts are to maintain school buildings when there is no money in the General Fund formulas. Earlier in the morning Mrs. Riley received an email from Representative David Fern wanting to visit our schools. Representative Fern is gathering information to help make informed decisions.

District Business Manager/Clerk provided the Board with a written report. Federal grants are being worked through the annual grant application process. The Title funding is based on free and reduced lunch numbers, and the numbers are increasing. Glacier Gateway Elementary has eighty-two percent of students that qualify for free or reduced lunch, Ruder Elementary is at seventy-four percent, Junior High is at sixty-four percent and the High School comes in at fifty-one percent. These numbers resulted in additional Title I funding this year that the District will be using to balance the general fund budgets as a result of the certified collective bargaining agreement finalized after the budget was adopted in August. Mr. Zuffelato noted that the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) funds stayed the same. The District has received some smaller grants including the state Gifted and Talented at three thousand dollars and the McKinney Vento Homeless Grant provides ten thousand dollars. The number of students in the District that these grants serve is significant and it takes more than what the District is provided

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from the federal level to support those kids.

Superintendent Cory Dziowgo discussed the High School Bond efforts being unsuccessful and the District needs to regroup and decide on future steps as the need is still there to update and improve the building. Mr. Dziowgo shared that the Charter School application has been submitted and the scheduled interview with the Board of Public Education is on December 1st at 9:00 A.M. The interview will be only thirty minutes, breaking down to ten minutes to discuss, eighteen minutes for their board to ask questions, and two minutes for public comment. Mr. Dziowgo has been in talks with businesses in the area for support as well as the Flathead Valley Community College.

Action/Discussion Items:

Glacier Gateway Principal, Penni Anello, and teacher Kristy Orem shared an update on the Early Literacy Program serving pre-kindergarten students at Glacier Gateway Elementary. This is a new program this school year. Mrs. Anello, Mrs. Orem, and many others have been working on the planning for over a year, looking at other districts' programs across the state. A slide presentation was shared with the Board showing how students are eligible, the classroom design, the curriculum used, and how the students are assessed.

Motion by Riley, second by Upton, to approve Resolution #447 – Disposition of Abandoned, Obsolete, and Undesirable Property.

Mr. Zuffelato shared the process of disposing of items. There is a notification in the newspaper for fifteen days and then the items are recycled or put up for auction. The District has also sent items to other schools or the county if needed.

Public comment was requested and there was none.

Passed 6-0.

Motion by Heupel, second by Upton, to approve participation in the Statewide Health Insurance Trust – Bridged Health Alliance:

- Multi District Agreement for the Formation of the Bridged Health Alliance Trust
- Participation Agreement – Bridged Health Alliance Trust
- Trust Agreement

It was shared that most AA schools in the state have committed to participating in the program and the numbers are approaching the twelve thousand lives and one hundred-fifty districts required to validate the program.

Public comment was requested and there was none.

Passed 5-0, Abstained - Riley.

Motion by Pacheco, second by Riley, to approve the following Transportation Committee recommendations.

- Annual School Bus Replacement – FY27
  - o Purchase SPED bus – 2027 Bluebird
  - o Dispose Bus #38 -- 2009 Bluebird VIN 0672

Public comment was requested and there was none.

Passed 6-0.

Review of the November 4, 2025 High School General Obligation Bond Election.

Motion by Riley, second by Pacheco, to approve the Canvass of Votes and Declaration of Results, and Certificate of Election.

ACTION /  
DISCUSSION ITEMS

EARLY LEARNING  
LITERACY PROGRAM  
UPDATE - P. ANELLO  
AND K. OREM

MOTION TO APPROVE  
RESOLUTION 447

MOTION TO APPROVE  
THE STATEWIDE  
HEALTH INSURANCE  
TRUST - BRIDGED  
HEALTH ALLIANCE

MOTION TO APPROVE  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS

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MOTION TO APPROVE  
CANVASS OF VOTES  
AND DECLARATION  
OF RESULTS AND  
CERTIFICATE OF  
ELECTION

The canvass of votes was 1,489 for the bond, 3,148 against, and voter turnout was forty-five percent.

Public comment was requested and there was none.

Passed 6-0.

PERSONNEL:

Personnel:

The Board acknowledged the following resignations previously accepted by the Superintendent: Linda Jaquette – Bus Driver; Rory Christiaens – High School Counselor

MOTION TO APPROVE  
ELEMENTARY  
DISTRICT HIRING  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion by Upton, second by Pacheco, to approve the following Elementary District hiring recommendations: Julia Teeters – Ruder Elementary Kindergarten Paraeducator; Anna Pickard – Junior High Girls’ Basketball Coach; Stephen Blados – Junior High Special Education Paraeducator; Mark Casazza – Junior High Boys’ Basketball Coach; Bryan McGrath – Junior High Boys’ Basketball Coach

Public comment was requested and there was none.

Passed 5-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE  
HS AND DISTRICT-  
WIDE HIRING  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion by Heupel, second by Hill, to approve the following High School/District-wide Hiring Recommendations: Alia Hanson – High School Campus Professional Development Specialist; Ross Lingle – High School Counselor; Kendra Skelton – High School Special Education Paraeducator; Benjamin Woody – High School Head Play Director/Drama Coach; Emily Hackethorn – High School Assistant Drama Coach; Kate Daniels – Non CDL Activity Bus Driver; Dean Perry – Full-time Bus Driver/Bus Washer; Aaron Finney – IT Support Technician  
Public comment was requested and Counselor Ross Lingle introduced himself to the Board.  
Passed 6-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE  
SUBSTITUTE HIRING  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion by Riley, second by Pacheco, to approve the substitute hires.

Public comment was requested and there was none.

Passed 6-0.

MISCELLANEOUS  
AND FUTURE  
PLANNING:

Miscellaneous and Future Planning:

- Veteran’s Day Assembly – November 11, 2025 – 10:25 A.M. – High School
- Health Insurance Committee Meeting – November 19, 2025 – 4:00 P.M.
- Board Work Session – November 24, 2025 – 6:00 P.M. – Administrative Conference Room

MEETING  
ADJOURNED

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Chair Rocksund adjourned the meeting at 6:58 P.M.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Business Manager/Clerk