

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD MARCH 23, 2026**
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 23rd Day
7 of March 2026.

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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
16 Kim Skornogoski
17 Bill Bronson
18 Craig Duff
19 Paige Henning
20 Marlee Sunchild
21 Amie Thompson
22

23 **Others Present:** Luke Diekhans, Director of Business Operations; Lance Boyd and
24 Jackie Mainwaring, Executive Directors of Student Achievement; Jeff Williams, Director
25 of Information Technology; Heather Spurzem, Director of Human Resources; and
26 Katelyn Marsik, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation.

27
28 Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association President.

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30 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Johnson.
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33 **ADOPT AGENDA**

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35 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the
36 agenda as presented.
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39 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

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41 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to
42 approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
43

44 **A. Minutes of the March 9, 2026 Special Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
45 minutes of the March 9, 2026 Special Board Meeting as presented.
46

47 **B. Minutes of the March 9, 2026 Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
48 minutes of the March 9, 2026 Regular Board Meeting as presented.

1
2 **C. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.
3

4 **D. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations of Good Apple Awards
5 for George Levandoski, Amber Williamson, and Pat Kelley, Para Educators; and Janette
6 O’Leary, Long-Term Substitute Teacher, all from Whittier Elementary School; Great
7 Falls Public Works, City of Great Falls; Great Falls Fire Rescue, City of Great Falls;
8 Great Falls Police Department, City of Great Falls; Nathan Vogler, Paul Gallagher,
9 Bruce Huen, Ashton Gondeiro, Ron Goldinger, Tracey Hughes, and Danny Schaak,
10 Engineers, Paris Gibson Education Center, Lewis and Clark Elementary School, and
11 Lincoln Elementary School; Lane Spurzem, Tim Heisler, Justus Hilbig, Tanner
12 Greenwood, Zach Shumaker, Jess LeMaster, Chris Upchurch, Albert Flammand, Scott
13 Watson, Morgan Yelvington, Dale Whitish, and Justin Heiberg, Grounds men and
14 Carpenters, Buildings and Grounds; Jack Norris, Facilities Assistant, Buildings and
15 Grounds; and Tammie Ulstad, Administrative Assistant, Buildings and Grounds.
16

17 **E. Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificates**
18 The Board approved the Montana OPI TR-35 School Bus Driver Certificates for the
19 individuals listed in the agenda.
20

21 **F. 2026-2027 Instructional and Office Paper Supply Bid** – The Board approved the
22 request to call for bids for the 2026-2027 annual Instructional and Office Paper Supply
23 order.
24

25 **G. GFPS Air Force Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) Archery**
26 **Team Travel Request to the National Archery Tournament in Sandy, Utah** – The
27 Board approved the GFPS JROTC Archery team travel to Sandy, Utah April 22-26,
28 2026 for the Western National Archery Tournament.
29

30 **H. Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) Big Foot Archery Club Travel Request**
31 **to the National Archery Tournament in Salt Lake City Area (Sandy), Utah** – The
32 Board approved the PGEC Big Foot Archery Club travel to the Western National
33 Archery Tournament in the Salt Lake City Area (Sandy), Utah on April 24-26, 2026.
34

35 **I. Approval of Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School Key Club Student to Attend**
36 **the Key Club District Convention in Billings, Montana** – The Board approved the
37 CMR Key Club student to attend the Key Club District Convention in Billings, Montana
38 on March 29-31, 2026.
39

40 **J. Student Activity Monthly Report for February 2026** – The Board approved the
41 Student Activity Accounts for February 2026 as presented.
42

43
44 **COMMUNICATION**
45

46 **A. Character Strong – Meadow Lark Elementary School** – Principal Lyndsey Stulc
47 and seven (7) students reported on what cooperation, the *Character Strong* word of the
48 month, means to Meadow Lark Elementary School and how they demonstrate

1 cooperation at home and at school. The students created an activity where cooperation
2 was necessary as they used verbal commands to guide Trustees Skornogoski and
3 Henning through a series of cones while the trustees' eyes were closed.

4
5 **B. Superintendent Report** – Executive Director Boyd delivered the Superintendent's
6 Report on behalf of Superintendent Hoyer and began by recognizing two special
7 student groups and their achievements. He introduced Mr. Jeff Reiger, who was
8 accompanied by nine members of his North Middle School student archery team, noting
9 that teams won the middle school 3-D and Bullseye titles at the state competition in
10 Helena and that nineteen (19) students would be traveling to Utah for the national
11 tournament. Ms. Mary Somerfeld also introduced members of the North Middle School
12 (NMS) Science Academic Bowl team, explaining that two NMS teams advanced through
13 a sixteen (16) team regional competition, finishing first and second after round-robin
14 play. After competing against each other closely in the final round, only one team
15 earned the opportunity to attend the national competition in Washington, D.C., with
16 expenses covered by the U.S. Department of Energy. Mr. Boyd also highlighted the
17 54th annual Bosses Night, recognized Meadowlark Library as Employer of the Year,
18 and acknowledged students nominated from Charles M. Russell High School, Great
19 Falls High School, and Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) for the Patti Cooper and
20 Sid Nasby Memorial Awards, as well as the Patty McHenry Memorial Award at
21 Secondary Life Skills. He reported that Great Falls Public Schools Good Apple Awards
22 were presented to 48 individuals at a recent City Commission meeting, including several
23 off-duty firefighters who assisted in clean-up efforts immediately following the Lincoln
24 Elementary School roof incident. Director of Business Operations, Luke Diekhans,
25 provided an update on the Lincoln Elementary roof project, noting that four qualified
26 roofers will submit bids and a special Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March
27 31, 2026, to review and accept a bid to expedite students' return to the building. Mr.
28 Boyd then summarized strategic plan updates shared by four schools—Sacajawea
29 Elementary, CORE School, Meadowlark Elementary, and Riverview Elementary—
30 highlighting efforts related to safety planning, behavioral supports, academic
31 interventions, and family engagement, and recognizing staff members from each site.
32 He concluded with the *Data for the Day*, noting positive feedback from parents
33 regarding the districtwide use of the ParentSquare communication platform, with
34 approximately 98.5% of parents reachable by email or phone.

35
36 **C. Audience Communication** – Community member Judy Mortensen provided a
37 handout to the Board regarding marijuana taxes collected by the State of Montana and
38 upcoming legislation on the State of Montana marijuana laws. She reflected on the
39 dangers of marijuana use by our youth and encouraged the community and District staff
40 to stay attuned and take under advisement the *Common Sense Solutions to THC*
41 proposed bill in the upcoming 2027 legislative session.

42
43 Chairperson Johnson thanked Ms. Mortensen for her continued vigilance and updates
44 to the Board.

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47 **ACTION ITEMS**

1 **A. Second Read 7-10 Math Resources** – Secondary Curriculum Director, Beckie
2 Frisbee reviewed the proposed math curriculum adoption utilizing new resources from
3 Savvas, which emphasize an integrated approach to mathematics aligned with K–8
4 practices. The model combines multiple strands—algebra, geometry, trigonometry,
5 probability, and statistics—into cohesive instruction to increase rigor and interconnected
6 learning, rather than teaching concepts in isolation. Honors courses in grades 7–10 will
7 follow a four-year sequence covering five books. Materials and information was shared
8 publicly through district communication channels for the past two weeks, generating
9 increased community feedback. Comments focused on course naming changes,
10 instructional delivery methods, rigor, college preparedness, and support for struggling
11 learners. Trustees discussed implementation details, including training, comparisons to
12 other districts, course sequencing, and access to honors pathways, with Beckie
13 affirming that integrated instruction will span multiple semesters, maintain student
14 opportunities, and allow flexibility for entry into honors coursework.

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16 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to
17 approve the purchase of Savvas enVision Math materials for 7th grade, 8th grade,
18 Integrated I and Integrated II in the amount of \$476,688.05.

19
20 **B. Approval of Girls’ Flag Football as a Club Activity at Great Falls High School**
21 **(GFHS) and Charles M. Russell (CMR) High School** – Executive Director Lance Boyd
22 reviewed prior discussions regarding the addition of girls’ flag football as a club activity,
23 noting that the District has explored the opportunity over the past five years. The
24 program would be funded through the Arthur Blank Grant, providing \$15,000 annually to
25 each high school, with estimated program costs slightly below that amount. Additional
26 sources from the Arthur Blank Grant and the Under Armour Corporation will provide
27 future funds. The fall season is anticipated to be a short 6–7 week duration.

28
29 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Craig Duff.

30
31 Trustee Thompson commented that colleges play flag football in the spring and asked if
32 it was anticipated that the flag football season would eventually move to spring. Mr.
33 Boyd stated that girls’ flag football would remain a fall sport.

34
35 Chairperson Johnson reviewed the previous motion. Motion passed unanimously.

36
37 **C. Trustee Election by a Conditional Acclamation** – Director of Business Operations
38 Luke Diekhans stated the District will not have to run an election this year since there
39 are only three (3) candidates who applied for the three (3) open positions on the GFPS
40 Board of Trustees. Cascade County has already cancelled the election, saving the
41 District approximately \$70,000 based on costs from prior elections.

42
43 Chairperson Johnson thanked the three candidates who filed for re-election for their
44 work that has been well-received and accepted by the community.

45
46 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Marlee Sunchild, passed unanimously to cancel
47 the election since there are the same number of candidates as open positions and no
48 levy elections scheduled for the ballot. The three candidates, Bill Bronson, Kim

1 Skornogoski, and Amie Thompson, shall be duly elected by acclamation for three-year
2 terms to the Board of Trustees of Great Falls School District 1 & A.

3
4 **D. Financial Report and Check Register for February 2026** – Director of Business
5 Operations, Luke Diekhans, expressed gratitude to the three Board members who ran
6 again for reelection. He then reviewed the financial report and check register for
7 February 2026.

8
9 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to
10 approve the February 2026 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #143207-
11 #143590 in the amount of \$1,855,278.79 and Payroll checks #85540 - #85735 in the
12 amount of \$516,565.14 as presented.

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15 **ACTION: OTHER**

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17 There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

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20 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

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22 **A. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

23 Trustee Thompson expressed appreciation for the Character Strong presentation,
24 noting it was very well received.

25 Trustee Duff thanked students for the Character Strong presentation; congratulated
26 North Middle School archers; recognized Lacey George, Meadow Lark Elementary
27 School librarian for Employer of the Year honors; acknowledged CMR essay award
28 recipients; and commended the quality of athletic reports, while also thanking fellow
29 trustees for their commitment to continued service.

30 Trustee Skornogoski reflected on board service and expressed appreciation for
31 expanded student activities and improved communication through ParentSquare. She
32 noted the value of increased community feedback on curriculum and encouraged
33 consistency moving forward.

34 Trustee Sunchild thanked district leadership and school administrators for maintaining
35 safety and emphasized the importance of supporting teachers during a particularly
36 demanding time of year.

37 Trustee Bronson shared appreciation for the district's response to the recent incident at
38 Sacajawea Elementary School and noted positive communication among trustees from
39 other districts about the incident. He highlighted takeaways from the MTSBA
40 conference, including discussions on best practices and district performance and
41 expressed pride in one student's essay when she stated she would give her award to
42 another essay winner if they needed the monetary award more.

43 Trustee Henning thanked community member Judy Mortensen for the informative
44 handouts; expressed support for the upcoming math curriculum and integrated model;
45 and recognized student-led fundraising efforts supporting Special Olympics.

46 Chairperson Johnson shared plans to teach one-half day of third grade next week to
47 fulfill his Convocation obligation from the beginning of the school year.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events include a Board Policy Committee Meeting followed by a Special Board Meeting on Tuesday, March 31, 2026 and the next Regular Board Meeting on April 13, 2026.

ACTION TO ADJOURN

With no further comments or items to be discussed, motion by Chairperson Johnson and seconded by Trustee Skornogoski to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:56 p.m.

Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

Luke Diekhans, Clerk