

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 23, 2026

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a regular meeting on Monday, March 23, 2026, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with Vice President Josh Anderson presiding.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

Student Board Members Present: None.

Student Board Members Absent: McKayla Sagini and Adrianna Tande.

Others Present: Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager; Dr. Catherine Gillach, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education; Michelle Shepperd, President, GFAFB School Board; Joe Drumm, Vice President, Grand Forks Education Association; and Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order and Voluntary Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Approval of Agenda.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Flynn to approve the agenda as written. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Larson, Lunn, Flynn, Houdek, Manley, Palmiscno, Berger, and Anderson. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Public Comments.

Listed below are the names of citizens who spoke before the Board, along with the topics they indicated on their comment cards. The topics reflect what was written and may differ from the details of their spoken remarks.

- Andrew Krauseneck – PILOT approval revision.
- Vivien Mayo – elementary music programs.
- Whitney Mayo – elementary music – CODA.

Reading of School Board Meeting Norms.

Palmiscno read aloud the school board's meeting norms.

Budget Realignment Administrative Update.

Dr. Gillach reviewed administrative work completed over the past two weeks about the reduction-in-force (RIF) planning and implementation. Following legal counsel's advice, the district adjusted its approach to pursue an alternative strategy that preserved qualified teachers by prioritizing reassignment to existing positions, allowing budget goals to be met while minimizing full RIF actions to two staff members, each for a 20% RIF.

Valley Middle School ND First Update.

Dr. Gillach reported on the ND FIRST (Fostering Improved Results for School Transformation), which is North Dakota's new state and federal accountability model and support system for low-performing schools that have been part of the Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) process, designed to provide enhanced support to schools in their second cycle of CSI. Valley Middle School has engaged in the ND FIRST process, with the primary goal of moving out of "low-performing" status through a structured, three-year improvement plan based on the following three tenets: engage in purposeful school renewal processes, address school- and district-level systemic improvement, and engage

multiple stakeholders or “partners” in the school renewal process.

Reduction-in-Force (RIF) Update.

Griffin Gillespie, Director of Human Resources, updated the board on staffing adjustments, noting that affected positions were reduced from 25 to 11 through attrition, staff movement, and retention efforts. Classified staff reductions are ongoing, with some occurring through voluntary departures.

Baumbach reported that custodial staffing has been adjusted based on square footage, with approximately half of the affected staff exiting voluntarily, and further conversations are anticipated if needed.

Consent Agenda.

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

- March 9, 2026, Grand Forks School Board meeting minutes;
- Teacher resignation of Daniel Quinn, effective May 29, 2026;
- Agreement to Partial Reduction-in-Force Nonrenewal for Mary Ann Crow, effective at the end of this school year;
- Agreement to Partial Reduction-in-Force Nonrenewal for Dr. Cynthia Boehm, effective at the end of this school year;
- Teacher appointments effective August 17, 2026, of Olivia Rike-Norman, Math Teacher, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 3, \$50,973; and Lauren Van Winkle, Speech Language Pathologist, salary placement at MA/MS, Step 1, \$56,322; and
- School-sponsored fundraising report as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Lunn, Larson, Kleven, Flynn, Houdek, Manley, Berger, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: None.

General Fund Financial Statement.

Baumbach reported that for the period from July 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026, total general fund revenue was \$83,583,532 and total general fund expenditures were \$75,766,397, resulting in revenue exceeding expenditures by \$7,817,135.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Kleven to approve the General Fund Financial Statement for July 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026, as outlined. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Manley, Flynn, Lunn, Houdek, Kleven, Palmiscno, Larson, Berger, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: None.

Consideration of Head Start Third Year of the Five-Year Grant.

Tracey Johnson, Director of Head Start, reported that the proposed budget includes \$3,133,227 for Program Operations and \$33,281 for Training and Technical Assistance activities. The Non-Federal Share is 20% of the grant, totaling \$791,627. Details of each budget category were provided in the meeting materials.

The Grand Forks Head Start Policy Council unanimously approved the grant on March 17, 2026.

It was moved by Houdek and seconded by Manley to approve the third year of the five-year grant for \$3,166,508, as outlined. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Larson, Kleven, Palmiscno, Houdek, Lunn, Berger, Flynn, Manley, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: None.

Proposed Revised Process for TIF and PILOT Tax Incentives.

Baumbach distributed an updated proposed revised process for TIF and PILOT tax incentives, received this afternoon. The revised process consists of four detailed steps, with the second step a combined City Council, School Board, and County Commission work session.

The Board discussed the proposed tax incentive

review process and identified several areas needing clarification, including language referencing a second joint meeting, expectations for public input, and the Board's role in the process. A preference for maintaining the process as an administrative procedure rather than a formal policy to allow for flexibility, while still ensuring transparency, was discussed.

Additional discussion included the importance of legal review for each proposal, alignment with City public notice timelines and the six-week review window, and maintaining an open-minded approach given the unique nature of each request.

Administration will gather additional clarification on process details—including meeting structure, timelines, and responsibilities—and bring the information back for further Board consideration. Interest was also expressed in inviting City representation to a future meeting.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Houdek to postpone action on this topic until the April 27, 2026, school board meeting. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Flynn, Houdek, Berger, Kleven, Larson, Lunn, Manley, Palmiscno, and Anderson.
Nay: None. Absent: None.

Finance Committee Report.

A report on the March 16, 2026, committee meeting and resulting recommendations was heard.

- **Consideration of Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2025.** Brian Opsahl of Brady, Martz & Associates presented the FY2025 audit reports for Grand Forks Public School District #1 and Grand Forks Air Force Base Public School District #140; both received clean opinions. The general fund balance was 6.5% (below the recommended 10%). Four minor internal control deficiencies were noted. The committee recommends acceptance.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by

Houdek to accept the audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2025, for Grand Forks Air Force Base Public School District #140 and Grand Forks Public School District #1. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Berger, Manley, Lunn, Larson, Kleven, Houdek, Flynn, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: None.

- **Consideration of School-Led Initiatives for Capital Enhancements (SLICE) Allocation for 2026.** The committee reviewed first-year SLICE program allocations for Central, Century, Phoenix, Viking, and Wilder, including project scopes. The committee recommends that the Board approve the allocations and use of the building fund for these projects, not to exceed \$255,650.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Larson to approve the first-year allocations and the use of the building fund for the SLICE projects as outlined. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Lunn, Houdek, Manley, Flynn, Kleven, Larson, Berger, Palmiscno, and Anderson.
Nay: None. Absent: None.

- **Consideration of Use of Building Fund for Roof Restoration and Authorization to Submit School Construction Approval Request and School Facility Plan.**

The committee heard bid results for roof restoration at Schroeder Middle School and above Head Start at Lake Agassiz. Materials were contracted through a state cooperative (\$276,944.53), and the installation bid was \$286,873, with a total estimated cost of \$348,390.16, including contingency. The committee recommends Board approval of the project scope, use of Building Fund dollars up to \$648,390.16, and submission of required forms to the ND Department of Public Instruction.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Palmiscno to approve the roof restoration

project scope and use of Building Fund dollars up to \$648,390.16; and authorize the submission of SFN 52304 and SFN 52813 to the ND Department of Public Instruction. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Houdek, Larson, Flynn, Palmiscno, Lunn, Berger, Kleven, Manley, and Anderson.

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

- **Consideration of Use of Building Fund to Replace Light Fixtures at Discovery Elementary.**

The committee heard that the administration identified a growing need to replace aging light fixtures at Discovery Elementary. Buildings & Grounds obtained a quote for 75 fixtures to be installed by district staff, totaling \$38,385. The committee recommends using Building Fund dollars for this purchase.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Manley to approve the use of Building Fund dollars for \$38,385 to purchase light fixtures for Discovery Elementary. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Larson, Manley, Lunn, Palmiscno, Houdek, Berger, Kleven, Flynn, and Anderson.

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

- **Notice of Committee Action Related to Consideration of Additional Expense for Schroeder Safety and Security Project to Add Air-Cooled Condensing Unit.**

The committee heard that the Schroeder Safety and Security Project, completed last fall, came in approximately \$115,000 under budget. An additional condenser unit has been procured to expand air conditioning to a remodeled area, with installation quoted at \$47,500 by Johnson Controls. This is considered a change order within the approved budget and was approved by the finance committee; no Board action is required.

- **Consideration of Use of Building Fund for Sanding and Refinishing Central First Floor Gym.**

The committee heard that Grand Forks Central's first-floor gym requires a full sanding and refinishing, part of the district's regular gym maintenance cycle. A verbal quote of \$19,950 was received, and Administration recommends using Building Fund dollars. The committee recommends Board approval to spend up to \$19,950 of Building Fund dollars for this work.

It was moved by Manley and seconded by Houdek to approve up to \$19,950 in Building Fund dollars to sand and refinish the Central High School first-floor gym. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Larson, Palmiscno, Lunn, Manley, Flynn, Houdek, Berger, and Anderson.

Nay: None.

Absent: None.

Announcements.

None.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

None.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Palmiscno concluded that the board followed its meeting norms very well.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager