

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
3 **HELD APRIL 27, 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 27th day
7 of April 2026.

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 Paige Henning
22 Amie Thompson
23

24 **Trustees Excused:** Gordon Johnson – Chairperson
25 Marlee Sunchild
26

27 **Others Present:** Heather Hoyer, Superintendent; Luke Diekhans, Director of Business
28 Operations; Jackie Mainwaring and Lance Boyd, Executive Directors of Student
29 Achievement; Jeff Williams, Director of Information Technology; Heather Spurzem,
30 Director of Human Resources; and Katelyn Marsik, Director of the Great Falls Public
31 Schools Foundation. Also present was Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education
32 Association President.
33

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

37 **ADOPT AGENDA**
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39 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the
40 agenda as presented.
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43 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
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45 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Henning, passed unanimously to approve the
46 Consent Agenda as presented.
47

1 **A. Minutes of the April 13, 2026, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the
2 minutes of the April 13, 2026, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

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

5
6 **C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple
7 Awards: Kayla Gervais, Para Educator at Giant Springs Elementary School; Lonnie
8 Baker, Para Educator at Great Falls High School; Erica Harp, District Lead School
9 Registered Nurse at Paris Gibson Education Center; and Bob McNamee, District-wide
10 Substitute Teacher.

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

15
16 **E. Student Activity Monthly Report for March 2026** – The Board approved the
17 Student Activity Accounts for March 2026 as presented.

18
19 **F. Resolution to Dispose of Unsuitable District Property** - The Board approved the
20 items listed in the agenda as surplus property as they are no longer suitable for District
21 use.

22
23
24 **COMMUNICATION**

25
26 **A. Character Strong – Lincoln Elementary School** – Steve Yates, Lincoln Elementary
27 School Principal and five (5) student representatives reported on what courage, the
28 *Character Strong* word of the month, means to Lincoln Elementary School and their
29 cultural beliefs. They reviewed how they implement *Character Strong* within their
30 school.

31
32 **B. Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Hoyer stated that Wednesday, April 22,
33 2026, was Administrative Professionals Day and she thanked those employees of the
34 District for their work.
35 She welcomed Rea Medrano as the new Principal and Jolena Hichman as the new
36 Associate Principal at East Middle School and Mike Hodges as the new Associate
37 Principal at C.M. Russell High School for the 2026-2027 school year. They all stated
38 that they are looking forward to their new positions and are thankful for the opportunity.
39 Great Falls Public Schools has been named one of the Best Communities for Music
40 Education. This is the seventeenth time GFPS has been the recipient of this award.
41 Superintendent Hoyer updated the Board on the progress being made on the new
42 STEAM Innovative Learning Center at Great Falls High School.
43 She reviewed where the District is regarding the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.
44 Superintendent Hoyer stated that Paris Gibson Education Center (PGEC) English
45 Language Arts students at ReStart are reading *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds.
46 This young adult novel tells the story of a fifteen (15) year old boy who decides to
47 avenge his brothers murder by killing the suspected shooter. The entire narrative takes
48 place over a sixty (60) second elevator ride, where the ghosts of the victims' pasts –

1 including his brother – visit him to challenge “The Rules” of gun violence. The book
2 ends on the lobby floor, leaving the final decision – to shoot or not – open to the reader.
3 Superintendent Hoyer congratulated Chief Joseph Elementary School librarian, Tara
4 Murillo, and Great Falls High School math teacher, Neil Kynett, for being nominated and
5 receiving the *BNSF Teacher of the Year* award during the Excellence in Education
6 dinner.

7 Bob McNamee was presented with his Good Apple award and thanked for fifteen (15)
8 years of substitute teaching in the District. Superintendent Hoyer also read a letter
9 written by a student who recognized Bob as a favorite substitute amongst the students.
10 Superintendent Hoyer stated that Kindergarten early registration begins May 6, 2026.
11 She also reported on prior kindergarten enrollment numbers and projected a stagnant or
12 slight increase in kindergarten enrollment from 2026 to 2031. She also gave the Board
13 projected enrollment numbers for grades K-12.

14 Director of Business Operations, Luke Diekhans, updated the Board on the Multidistrict
15 Agreement changes due to the prior legislative session.

16
17 **C. Audience Communication – None**
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20 **ACTION ITEMS**

21
22 **A. Valley View Fire Alarm Upgrade** - Director of Business Operations, Luke Diekhans,
23 reported that the current system is original to the building, which was built in 1951 with
24 an addition in 1956. He stated that there were three (3) sealed bids received. Each bid
25 was reviewed by Thomas Dean and Hoskins (TD&H) Engineering and GPD, PC to
26 ensure that all qualifications have been met. AT Klemens was the lowest qualified
27 bidder with a bid of \$154,300.00.

28
29 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to award the
30 bid for replacement of the fire alarm system at Valley View Elementary School to AT
31 Klemens in the amount of \$154,300.00, as presented.
32

33 **B. Procurement of Natural Gas Supply Services Request for Proposals** – Director
34 of Business Operations, Luke Diekhans, reported that the District has historically
35 contracted with a natural gas company directly, with the assistance of Jim Morin,
36 PowerGas Corporation. Using a long-term contract to purchase natural gas for the
37 operations of our facilities allows the District to limit changes in the budget due to
38 current market fluctuations, while minimizing costs. Luke stated that the current contract
39 is set to expire on June 30, 2026, and the District must plan for future natural gas
40 needs. He reviewed the details in the Request for Proposal (RFP) listed in the agenda.
41 Jim Morin with PowerGas Corporation reviewed natural gas costs and GFPS usage. He
42 stated that he does not believe there will be a drastic increase in the next few years.
43

44 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to approve
45 advertising for the Request for Proposals for the natural gas supplier for Great Falls
46 Public Schools, as presented.
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1 **C. Financial Report and Check Register for March 2026** – Director of Business
2 Operations, Luke Diekhans, reviewed the financial report and check register for March
3 2026.

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5 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the
6 March 2026 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #143591 - #143978 in the
7 amount of \$1,756,168.82 and Payroll checks #85736 - #85945 in the amount of
8 \$596,298.11 as presented.

9
10 **D. Cascade County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO) and Great Falls Police Department**
11 **(GFPD) Reserve School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement** – Superintendent
12 Hoyer requested that the Cascade County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO) and Great Falls
13 Police Department (GFPD) Reserve School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement be
14 tabled until the County Commissioners have time to review.

15
16 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Paige Henning, passed unanimously to table the
17 agreement to establish a Reserve Deputy/SRO program between the Cascade County
18 Sheriff’s Department, Great Falls Police Department, and Great Falls Public Schools
19 until the County Commission have time to review.

20
21 **E. Second Reading of Board Policies 2311 (Revised) – *Instructional Materials;***
22 **2311F (New) – *Supplemental Resources Vetting Document;* 3215 (Deleted) –**
23 ***Uniform Complaint Procedure (Students);* and 5215 (Deleted) – *Uniform***
24 ***Complaint Procedure (Personnel)*** - Superintendent Hoyer stated that GFEA
25 President, Tom Cabbage had concerns regarding the deletion of Board Policy 5215 and
26 the rights of teachers and their Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA).
27 Superintendent Hoyer believes that a future policy coming to the Board will ease his
28 concerns and she has invited him to the next Board Policy Committee meeting
29 scheduled for May 6, 2026.

30
31 Motion – Paige Henning, Seconded – Craig Duff, passed unanimously to approve
32 revised Board Policy 2311 – *Instructional Material;* new Board Policy 2311F –
33 *Supplemental Resources Vetting Document;* and deleted Board Policies 3215 – *Uniform*
34 *Complaint Procedure (Student)* and 5215 – *Uniform Complaint Procedure (Personnel)*,
35 as presented.

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38 **ACTION: OTHER**

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40 There were no items extracted from the Consent Agenda to discuss.

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43 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

44
45 **A. First Reading of Board Policies 3612 (Revised) – *District Provided Access to***
46 ***Electronic Information, Equipment, Services, and Networks;* 3612P (Revised) –**
47 ***Student Computer Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Agreement;* 5450F**
48 ***(Revised) – Staff Computer Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Agreement;* and**

1 **4330P (New) – Community Use of School Facilities Procedures** - Superintendent
2 Hoyer reviewed the recommended language revisions from the Board Policy Committee
3 to each of the Board policies listed. Language proposed brings policies into alignment
4 with legislative directives and/or cleans up confusing language. She stated there was
5 one minor change in policy 3612P in the *Cross References* section since the agenda
6 was published and that change will be made prior to the second reading on May 11,
7 2026. She asked if anyone had questions or concerns regarding any of the new policies
8 or revisions to contact her prior to the next regular Board meeting.
9

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

11 Trustee Henning stated that she appreciated the community members and her fellow
12 Board members who attended the Board Budget Committee meeting last week.

13 Trustee Duff reported that he toured some schools in the District last week.

14 Trustee Bronson attended the C.M. Russell High School drama production of *Trap* last
15 weekend. He also stated that he attended the Excellence in Education event and he
16 really enjoyed it.

17 Trustee Skornogoski congratulated Bob McNamee, Dusty Molyneaux, and Rea
18 Medrano. She also spoke on the Multi-district Agreement and encouraged her fellow
19 Board members to review the changes brought on by the prior legislative session.
20

21
22 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

23
24 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski said the next Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,
25 May 11, 2026, and Tuesday, May 26, 2026.
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28 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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30 Vice-Chairperson Skornogoski adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
31 at 6:46 p.m.
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34 _____
35 Kim Skornogoski, Vice-Chairperson

36 _____
37 Luke Diekhans, Clerk