Jamestown Public Schools
Regular Meeting
Official Minutes

The regular meeting of the Jamestown Public School Board was held on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Thompson Community Room.

Present: Heidi Larson, President, Dan Tweten, Vice President, Jamie Bear, Owen McKenna, Jacob Meier, Aaron Roberts, Jason Rohr, Superintendent, Robert Lech and Business Manager, Kristi Grounds. Steve Veldkamp and Melissa Gleason were absent.

Guests: Jim Roaldson, Bill Nelson, Lori Roberts, Amy Walters, Edison Walters, Jenny Michalenko, Autumn Roberts and Finn Moser.

President Larson called the meeting of the Jamestown School Board to order and welcomed those in the audience, Jason Linz, Jamestown Video and Amy Neustel, Administrative Assistant.

Mr. Rohr requested clarification on item E, the Health and Human Services Rural Health Transformation Program Grant, regarding the district's practice for analyzing grant sustainability and potential impact on current staff. Dr. Robert Lech and other board members discussed the district's considerations for long-term implications of grants, ensuring positive impact on student and workplace experience, and avoiding additional staff burden.

Mr. Rohr moved to approve the consent agenda which consisted of April 20, 2026 regular board meeting minutes, payment of bills, approval of summer school staff revision, approval to submit Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant, approval to submit Health and Human Services Rural Health Transformation Program Grant, approval to submit Consolidated Application for the 2026-2027 school year and review of April 8, 2026 teacher negotiations meeting minutes. Mr. Meier seconded the motion. Roll call with unanimous "yes" vote. Motion carried.

The board recognized winter sports, drama and orchestra achievements.

Mr. Tweten reported on Health Insurance Fund with a general overview of the district's health insurance. The fund currently holds a balance of approximately $1.87 million, which is about 2.9 times the defined minimum before cost-sharing. The district covers approximately 78% ($2.775 million) of the total plan cost. The fund is operating at about 14% under budget, but expenses are expected to align with projections by year-end. The renewal process has begun, with rough estimates indicating an 11.4% ($46,000) increase in total fund cost. The health insurance committee will discuss plan design adjustments (deductibles, co-pays) and cost-sharing between employees and the district. Final decisions are expected by June, with the plan rolling out by August.

Mr. Tweten left the meeting at 6:47 pm.

Mr. Roaldson, Activity Director, presented an update and review of athletic activities. The report covered participation numbers, costs, administrative supervision, coaching salaries, and future fundraising opportunities. Participation numbers overall remain consistent despite enrollment fluctuations. Mr. Roaldson clarified that some sports are 7th-12th grade programs due to numbers, the nature of the activity, or the absence of middle school programs elsewhere in the state. Mr. Roaldson stated the coaches' council is actively working on analyzing youth and feeder programs. He also confirmed that cooperative numbers are included in the report, with hockey having the largest number of co-op students. The JPS budget covers coaches' salaries, transportation and travel, officials, game management staff, equipment and uniforms, rental fees for facilities, tournament entry fees, and High School Activities Association and Coaches Association dues. Fundraising efforts and booster clubs contribute to meals on the road, additional desired equipment, team camps, clinics, and athletic apparel. Activity fees are $75 for high school students and $40 for middle school students, with a sliding scale based on free and reduced lunch eligibility. Gate receipts are $8 for adults and $5 for students, with an emphasis on keeping student costs low. Co-op fees are currently $300 per school per activity, regardless of student numbers. Administrative Supervision in the winter season (December to February) dedicated 131 hours to activity supervision. Due to the nature of certain events, multiple administrators are often required. Mr. Roaldson noted that JPS students generally exhibit excellent behavior, and the primary challenge for administrators is managing adult conduct at games. The High School Activities Association has an ejection policy resulting in a two-week attendance ban. Dr. Robert Lech added that fan education is sometimes required for individuals to return after an ejection. Coaching salaries are determined by the Negotiated Agreement with the Jamestown Education Association (JEA). The current salary structure, in place for over 23 years, is based on factors such as season length, involvement with safety equipment, specialized skills, and liability. The season length calculation assumes the full duration through state tournaments, meaning no additional stipend is provided for postseason advancement. Payment is typically staggered for coaches. The coaches' council, implemented within the last year, consists of five head coaches who address professional development, coaching needs, and strategies to maintain participation numbers amidst declining enrollments. Mr. Roaldson discussed potential unified or activity-specific fundraising for significant capital items, such as motor coaches for transportation. He emphasized the need for community support, booster groups, and parent involvement. He also highlighted pressing facility improvement needs, including pool maintenance, the need for locker rooms, bathrooms, and concessions at Erstad Field, an overhaul of the Jerry Meier Arena floor (estimated previously at $85,000), and a new timing system for the pool area. The board requests a presentation on the fine arts programs.

Strategic Plan Progress Monitoring Dashboard for board members to review.

Dr. Robert Lech reported that the policy BEC school board self-assessment has been digitized and is open until May 13th. Results will be synthesized and shared with the board in June.

Dr. Lech reported there is training on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will be conducted for JPS administration and the Jamestown Police Department by Meredith Vukelic from Pearce Durick. The training aims to ensure compliance with FERPA while allowing appropriate access to student information for law enforcement to maintain safety. Any proposed changes to the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between JPD and JPS will be brought before the board.

Dr. Lech attended the AASA State Leadership Conference in Atlanta. The costs were covered by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the North Dakota Association of School Administrators (NDASA), incurring no expense to the district. A significant takeaway was information regarding the new K-12 federal tax credit program.

Dr. Lech informed the board of the awards ceremony scheduled for Wednesday, May 6th, at 2:00 p.m. in the Jamestown High School auditorium. This year, 65 scholarships totaling $67,500 will be awarded, an increase in both number and value compared to previous years. Dr. Robert Lech commended the dedicated Dollars for Scholars volunteer board, noting they met their 2030 endowment goal in one year. He explained that an endowed scholarship of $1,000 in perpetuity requires a $20,000 contribution. This year marks the first time that every submitted scholarship application (65 total) will receive an award.

Dr. Lech reported on Sydni Larson resignation and the memo of understanding. Ms. Larson’s resident teacher MOU will be prorated payback and deducted from the payment made to James River.

Dr. Robert Lech recognized three outstanding individuals in the Food Service Department: Cindy Wall named North Dakota State and Mountain Plains Food Service Director of the Year. As president-elect of the organization, she will host 200 food service staff for their state conference in Jamestown in 2027. Liz Zinc (Louis L'Amour Elementary) named School Nutrition Association's Employee of the Year. Jennifer Erickson (Jamestown High School) named State Manager of the Year.

Mr. Roberts moved to approval the hire of Jenna Baarson for the 2026/2027 School Year upon a successful background check and appropriate licensure. Mr. Meier seconded the motion. Roll call with unanimous “yes” vote. Motion carried.

Mr. McKenna moved to approve the resignation of Kimberly Carpenter, Elizabeth Wilkie and Sydni Larson at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 School Year. Mr. Rohr seconded

the motion. Roll call with unanimous “yes” vote. Motion carried. President Larson thanked them for their service. Mr. Roberts suggested a deeper dive into teachers leaving. Dr. Lech noted there are exit surveys and interviews to provide insight.

I, Mr. Owen McKenna believe that discussion with our negotiators and developing a strategy relative to the School Board’s position in this matter in open session would have an adverse fiscal effect on the negotiations position of the Board. Therefore, I move: That the Board enter into executive session, That the following members and negotiators be identified as being present: Jamie Bear, Heidi Larson, Owen McKenna, Jason Rohr, Dr. Robert Lech, Adam Gehlar, and Kristi Grounds. On May 4, 2026 at 7:03 pm that only the following topic will be considered in executive session: NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES. That the legal authority for the executive session is: SECTION 44-04-19.1 OF THE NORTH DAKOTA CENTURY CODE. That the executive session be recorded. Seconded by Mr. Rohr.
Mr. Roberts raised a procedural question regarding the quorum for the vote, given only four voting members were listed to attend the executive session. President Heidi Larson clarified that a quorum was established at the start of the meeting and was maintained.

The regular meeting resumed at 7:52. No further business, President Larson adjourned the meeting.