

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD MARCH 24, 2011

A duly called Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Schools was held at District Offices Building at 1100 4th Street South in the Aspen Conference Room on the 24th day of March, 2011.

ROLL CALL: Ernie Jean took roll call and Trustee Ann Janikula was absent and Alicia Thompson was in attendance via phone.

Trustees Present: Steve Erwin, Chairman
Greg Oswood
Laura Vukasin
Jan Cahill
Jeff Gray
Alicia Thompson present via phone

Trustee Absent: Ann Janikula

Others Present: Cheryl Crawley, Superintendent; Ernie Jean, Interim Business Manager;; Ruth Uecker, Assistant Superintendent K-6; Tammy Lacey, Director of Human Resources; Jeff Patterson, Director of Technology; Sally Mathers, Supervisor Federal Programs, and Sharon Lindstrom, Director of Student Services. Also present was Mike Picking, President GFEA

At 12:00 noon, Chairman Steve Erwin called to order the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Great Falls Public Schools and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPT AGENDA

Motion – Greg Oswood, Seconded – Jan Cahill, passed unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

QUESTIONS, CONCERN, AND INFORMATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

None

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A SCHOOL LEVY ELECTION

Motion – Jeff Gray, Seconded – Laura Vukasin, passed unanimously to adopt the resolution call for a Levy Election on May 3, 2011 per the attached document which sets forth the date, purpose, ballot deposit sites, and the times for the ballot deposit sites will be open.

Discussion:

Jeff Gray thanked everyone who served on the Budget Committee. It was a great process but also a difficult one. The budget committee has come up with the best solution without knowing what the State will be doing for school funding. The district has made \$4 million cuts in the last 3 years and trying to stretch out the reserves over a number of years. With going out for a levy the district will only use what mills they truly need. He also thanks the audience for coming to the meeting. Trustee Thompson also appreciated the work of the Budget Committee. She stated that cuts will be made whether the levy passes or not. Trustee Cahill commented that if the assessment value on homes would change, and if goes up the number of mills will be adjusted accordingly and taxpayers could pay less than what is actually voted. Trustee Oswood asked when we would set the dollar amount. Superintendent Crawley replied that this would be brought back to the Board on March 28 to set the dollar amount. She reminded the Board that they are meeting again today to call for the levy election in that the Budget Committee's last meeting was held on March 17, 2011 and wanted to give them time to make their final decision.

Mr. Purpura living at 127 Hawk Dr., commented that this is his 2nd year on the Budget Committee and the process was very thorough. We knew we had a short all and would need a 2% reduction. They also concluded that they would need to go to the tax payers to ask for a levy in order to provide the best education possible. They felt it was reasonable and he was delighted to have served on the committee and feels the administration does a great job. Cyndi Baker, of 500 Montana Ave NW, commented that she feels that the district is going to have a tough time passing a levy. Food prices have gone up 4% and gas is up to \$3.57 per gallon. Also Sr. Citizens make up a huge population in Great Falls and they are all on fixed incomes. She also stated that as a measure of goodwill that the administration voluntarily give up any raise this year and also give back the raise that they received last year. She also handed to Cheryl Crawley an opinion from the Attorney General's office on open meeting laws. Aaron Weissman, of 315 4th Ave North, commented that this is also his 2nd year on the Budget Committee. The District's revenue from the State is up in the air pending legislature. There will be a 2% cut with part of that being the cutting out of middle school foreign languages and the Hip Hop program. The maximum levy amount we are asking for is \$1,000,000 and is in line with what we asked for last year. Sheila Kelly, of 310 4th Ave N, commented that she represents the KEY (Kids Education Yes) Group. Their job is to get information out to the community about the election, a positive message. They will provide good information to voters such as what cuts are projected even with the levy dollars. They will also remind voters about how important education is to our community.

Steve Erwin reminded everyone that today at 5:00 pm is the deadline for anyone to file for the position of Trustee on the Board.

ACTION TO ADJOURN

Motion – Laura Vukasin, Seconded – Jeff Gray, passed unanimously to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 12:35 pm.

Steve Erwin, Clerk

Ernie Jean, Clerk