

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD JANUARY 22, 2024**  
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 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day  
7 of January 2024.  
8

9 **ROLL CALL:** Brian Patrick took roll call.  
10

11 **Trustees Present:** Gordon Johnson, Chairperson  
12 Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson  
13 Bill Bronson  
14 Mark Finnicum  
15 Amie Thompson  
16 Paige Turoski  
17

18 **Trustee Absent:** Marlee Sunchild - Excused  
19

20 **Others Present:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business  
21 Operations; Jackie Mainwaring, Heather Hoyer, and Lance Boyd, Executive Directors  
22 for Student Achievement; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public  
23 Schools Foundation. Also present were Lisa Sapp, Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB)  
24 Child and Youth School Liaison and Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association  
25 president.  
26

27 At 5:30 pm, Chairperson Johnson called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of  
28 Trustees.  
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30

31 **ADOPT AGENDA**  
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33 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to adopt  
34 the agenda as presented.  
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36

37 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**  
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39 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve  
40 the Consent Agenda as presented.  
41

42 **A. Minutes of the January 8, 2024, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved  
43 the minutes of the January 8, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as presented.  
44

45 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.  
46

47 **C. Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple  
48 Awards: Maureen Lewis, Core Teacher Aide at Valley View Elementary School; Amy  
49 Blado, Elementary Student Advocate Para at Loy Elementary School; Darren Brown,  
50 Groundsman Foreman, Tim Heisler, AJ Griffith, Lane Spurzem, Wylie Rosipal, Russell  
51 Mott, Justus Hilbig and Tim Gunderson all Groundmen at Building and Grounds; Burke

1 Allen, Social Studies Teacher at C.M. Russell High School; Bella Valladolid and Kim  
2 Haney, both Core Teacher Aides at East Middle School; and Suzie Bedwell, Production  
3 Kitchen Manager, NaDel LaQue, and Jean Mansfield, both cooks at Paris Gibson  
4 Education Center.  
5

6 **D. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance Agreement at the Early Learning**  
7 **Center for the 2023-2024 School Year** – The Board approved the student listed in the  
8 agenda to attend the Early Learning Center for the 2023-2024 school year due to  
9 exceptional circumstances per Board Policy 3100.  
10

11 **E. Great Falls High School Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) State**  
12 **Conference Travel Request** – The Board approved the Great Falls High DECA  
13 students request to attend the State Leadership Conference in Missoula, Montana from  
14 February 4-6, 2024.  
15

## 16 **COMMUNICATION**

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18  
19 **A. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Communication** - Malmstrom Air Force Base  
20 (MAFB) Child and Youth School Liaison, Lisa Sapp, reported that a Sentinel Town Hall  
21 meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2024, in the Davidson Auditorium at Great Falls  
22 High School. This meeting will be a discussion regarding the modernization of the  
23 existing Minuteman III system and potential impacts. She also stated that there will be  
24 free developmental and health screenings as well as free dental and vision screenings  
25 for children at the Malmstrom Air Force Base Youth Center on February 9, 2024.  
26

### 27 **B. Superintendent's Report** –

28 Superintendent Moore stated that the students from Lewis and Clark Elementary School  
29 who were going to present on *Character Strong* were unable to make it to the Board  
30 Meeting due to illness.

31 He thanked Great Falls Public Schools' Transportation and Safety Supervisor Julie  
32 Shotnokoff and Transportation and Safety Administrative Assistant Justin Ziessler, as  
33 well as Big Sky Bus Lines' Denise Novak and Barbie Stucker for their work during the  
34 freezing weather. They received a Great Falls Public Schools *You Make a Difference*  
35 coin.

36 Great Falls Public Schools claimed the one million dollars allowed for one district in less  
37 than six minutes for the Innovative Tax Credit. Superintendent Moore thanked Brian  
38 Patrick and Anders Blewett for the work they did educating the public regarding this  
39 program. He also thanked the thirty-five (35) donors. Anders Blewett stated that the  
40 donors believe in the students and want to show support. He reported that he is excited  
41 for next year's program.

42 Superintendent Moore also thanked various community partners for their generous  
43 donations made throughout the District.

44 On January 19, 2024, Great Falls Public Schools was notified that the Board of Public  
45 Education approved the application for the CORE School as the first charter school in  
46 Great Falls. Superintendent Moore congratulated and thanked those who have worked  
47 on and continue to work on this project. Executive Director of Student Achievement,  
48 Jackie Mainwaring, and upcoming Morningside CORE School Principal, Jennifer  
49 Martyn, reviewed the timeline of the hiring process and timeline for getting ready to  
50 open the school.

1 Crosstown Wrestling is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at the Great Falls  
2 High School Old Gym beginning at 6:00 p.m.

3 Superintendent Moore reported that Great Falls Public Schools received a concerning  
4 email that triggered immediate collaboration between Great Falls Public Schools and  
5 the Great Falls Police Department. After an investigation, it was determined that the  
6 threat was not specific or credible and schools would continue as normal. He thanked  
7 the police department for their work and diligence for keeping the students and  
8 community safe.

9 He encouraged the public to attend the job fair that is scheduled for February 1, 2024,  
10 at Paris Gibson Education Center from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

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12 **C. Audience Communication – None**

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15 **ACTION ITEMS**

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17 **A. Bids for Technology Purchase of Replacement Uninterrupted Power Supply**  
18 **(UPS) Battery Backup Devices** – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick,  
19 stated that Great Falls Public Schools participates in the Schools and Libraries  
20 Universal Services Support (E-Rate) program. This program helps ensure that schools  
21 and libraries can obtain telecommunications and internet access at affordable rates.  
22 The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted the E-rate Modernization  
23 Order in 2014 which focuses on expanding funding for wired and Wi-Fi networks in  
24 elementary and secondary schools and libraries so that broadband needs can be met in  
25 today’s world of interactive, individualized digital learning. Brian explained that in 2020,  
26 the FCC revised the rules and secured funding for the next five years. Currently, the  
27 District qualifies for an 80% discount on eligible equipment and services purchased  
28 upon application approval and availability of funding. The discount is calculated each  
29 year and is dependent on the number of students eligible for the National School Lunch  
30 Program (NSLP). The E-rate program requires that applicants follow a formal process to  
31 create open and fair competitive bidding. Brian said that the District is requesting to fund  
32 a replacement of UPS Battery backup devices for most all District locations. The current  
33 devices are out of warranty and not functioning correctly. During an interruption of  
34 service, District phone lines are not usable until a District technician goes on site at  
35 each location and re-boots the system. He explained that the newer devices will restart  
36 automatically when power is restored. The District will select the most cost effective bid,  
37 which provides the District with the flexibility to meet the needs of a growing  
38 dependence on online and remote learning environments.

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40 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Kim Skornogoski, passed unanimously to  
41 approve the request for replacement of Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) Battery  
42 Backup devices as presented.

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44 **B. Resolution Estimating Changes in Revenues/Mills for Tuition, Adult Education,**  
45 **Building Reserve, Flexibility, Bus Depreciation, and Transportation Funds for**  
46 **School Fiscal Year 2024-25** – Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick,  
47 explained Montana State Law requires school boards to adopt a resolution whenever  
48 Trustees intend to impose an increase in a non-voted levy in the ensuing fiscal year.  
49 The Board Budget Committee reviewed the estimated permissive levies at a work  
50 session held on January 11, 2024. Brian explained increases, decreases or no changes  
51 in each of the funds. The estimated impact for all the combined Elementary and High

1 School budgets is an increase of 1.75 mills. The impact on taxes for a home with an  
2 estimated taxable valuation of \$100,000 is an increase of \$1.81 for all funds combined  
3 and a home valued at \$200,000 is an increase of \$3.64. This information will be  
4 advertised in the local paper and on the District website. Exact fiscal implications will not  
5 be known until August as these are estimates only.

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7 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adopt the  
8 resolution estimating changes in revenues/mills to the Adult Education, Building  
9 Reserve, Flexibility, Bus Depreciation, Transportation and Tuition levies for the school  
10 fiscal year 2024-25 as presented.

11  
12 **C. Information on the Superintendent Search Candidates and Process –**  
13 Chairperson Johnson stated that the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA)  
14 collected applications for the open Superintendent position for Great Falls Public  
15 Schools and reviewed the screening matrix. He stated that two applications have been  
16 received and explained that the Board needs to determine if the District should move  
17 forward with the existing applications and interview process or extend the application  
18 timeline and/or adjust other components in the process.

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20 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to proceed with  
21 the existing applications and interview process as advertised.

22  
23 Trustees Finnicum and Bronson stated that the applications received have been  
24 reviewed and are more than qualified for the position. Trustee Bronson does not believe  
25 that extending the application deadline by two weeks would benefit the District.

#### 26 27 28 **ACTION: OTHER**

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

### 30 31 32 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

#### 33 34 **A. Report on the School Nutrition Program**

35 School Food Services Supervisor, Jessa Youngers, thanked individuals who have  
36 helped provide coverage at schools that have staff shortages. She also thanked Paris  
37 Gibson Education Center staff for providing meals to Montana School for the Deaf and  
38 Blind (MSDB) for two (2) weeks in December while a staff member needed time off to  
39 care for an ill family member. Jessa reported on the National School Lunch Program,  
40 School Breakfast Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. She stated that  
41 there was a slight increase of meals provided during the Summer Food Service  
42 Program from last year, however, when she looked further into the data, she believes  
43 that it is around the same meals as last year due to traveling summer school lunches  
44 provided during the summer. Sacajawea Elementary School hosted a representative for  
45 the Montana No Kid Hungry program in November where they learned more about  
46 breakfast in schools and how they can better support program operators. She also  
47 reported on student participation and meals served from the 2017-2018 school year to  
48 current. Free and reduced meals are categorically based on participation in certain  
49 Federal Assistance Programs or classified as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or  
50 Medicaid. Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) states that all students qualify for free  
51 meals due to the high level of poverty among enrolled students. Seven schools within

1 the District qualify for this CEP. Meal charges for students increased causing a higher  
2 negative balance than last year. Jessa reported on the new Great Falls High School  
3 single lunch transition. A variety of new items have been introduced to the menu and  
4 are proving popular with the students. Jessa reported that Great Falls Public Schools is  
5 still in collaboration with Get Fit Great Falls with the *Color Your Plate* challenge. She  
6 stated that there has been a request for a bid to purchase a new Warehouse truck.  
7 Normont Equipment has been awarded and Great Falls Public Schools should receive  
8 the truck in the summer. Jessa then reviewed her current staff and stated that they have  
9 fourteen (14) open positions.

10  
11 Trustee Skornogoski stated that she has worked with Jessa with the healthier eating  
12 initiative, and she is very creative in her way of thinking. Trustee Thompson thanked  
13 Jessa and her staff for their work.

14  
15 **B. First Reading of New Revised Board Policies 3141 (New), 3141P (New) and**  
16 **3610 (New)** – Superintendent Moore reviewed the recommendations to Board Policies  
17 3141 – *Nonresident Student Enrollment*, 3141P – *Nonresident Student Enrollment*  
18 *Procedures*, and 3610 – *Student Success* in detail. He asked if anyone has comments  
19 or concerns about the policies to contact him before the next Board meeting.

### 20 21 **C. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments**

22 Trustees Turoski, Finnicum and Thompson stated that they appreciate the work of the  
23 Board Policy Committee, Lisa Sapp and Jessa Youngers. They also stated that they  
24 were blown away by Innovative Tax Credit donations equaling one million dollars.

25 Trustee Finnicum also stated that he appreciates the work and partnership with  
26 Malmstrom Air Force Base and the Great Falls Police Department. Trustee Thompson  
27 thanked her fellow Trustees for their work.

28 Trustee Bronson stated that he attended the ribbon cutting at Meadow Lark Elementary  
29 and was impressed with the students helping throughout the event. He also stated that  
30 the media reported the CORE School application was approved. Not all applications  
31 were approved, but the Board of Public Education appreciated our thorough application.

32 Trustee Bronson will be traveling to Helena for further Insurance discussion. He  
33 encouraged his fellow Trustees to read the obituary for Velma Jordan, a prior Great  
34 Falls Public Schools educator. Mr. Bronson also stated that she was an integral part of  
35 the development of the Credit Recovery Program.

36 On the Superintendent hiring decision Trustee Skornogoski quoted the late Jan Cahill  
37 “This decision will be the most important decision we make as a Trustee”. She stated  
38 that during the time she has served as a Great Falls Public School Trustee that those  
39 words have been extremely accurate. She feels that the Superintendent position has to  
40 be about the students, not the money.

### 41 42 43 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

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45 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,  
46 February 12, 2024, and Monday, February 26, 2024.

### 47 48 49 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

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1 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adjourn  
2 the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:08 p.m.

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Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

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Brian Patrick, Clerk

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