

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD NOVEMBER 27, 2023**

A duly called Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Falls Public Schools was held at the District Offices Building, 1100 4th Street South, on the 27th day of November 2023.

ROLL CALL: Brian Patrick took roll call.

Trustees Present: Gordon Johnson, Chairperson
Kim Skornogoski, Vice Chairperson
Bill Bronson
Mark Finnicum
Marlee Sunchild
Amie Thompson
Paige Turoski

Others Present: Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business Operations; Tom Hering, Director of Information Technology; Luke Diekhans, Director of Human Resources; Jackie Mainwaring, Heather Hoyer, and Lance Boyd, Executive Directors for Student Achievement; and Stephanie Becker, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation. Also present were Lisa Sapp, Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Child and Youth School Liaison and Tom Cabbage, Great Falls Education Association President.

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

ADOPT AGENDA

Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

A. **Minutes of the November 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the minutes of the November 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

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

C. **Good Apple Awards** – The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple Awards: Anitra Hall, Transition Teacher at Great Falls High School; and Tosha Engel, Core Teacher Aide at Meadow Lark Elementary School.

D. **Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35’s** – The Board approved the

1 Montana School Bus Driver Certificates – OPI TR-35's for the individuals listed in the
2 agenda.

3
4 **E. Transitional Kindergarten Student Attendance Agreements at the Early**
5 **Learning Center for the 2023-2024 School Year** – The Board approved the students
6 listed in the agenda to attend the Early Learning Center for the 2023-2024 school year
7 due to exceptional circumstances per Board Policy 3100.

8
9 **F. Resolution to Dispose of Unsuitable District Property** – The Board approved the
10 resolution to declare the items listed in the agenda as surplus.

11
12 **G. Donation of a 2011 GMC Yukon XL** - The Board approved the donation of a 2011
13 GMC Yukon XL to Great Falls Public Schools Automotive/Industrial Technology
14 Departments from Randall Bogden with thanks.

15 16 17 **COMMUNICATION**

18
19 **A. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) Communication** - Malmstrom Air Force Base
20 (MAFB) Child and Youth School Liaison Lisa Sapp reported that Loy Elementary
21 School, North Middle School, and C.M. Russell High School were recognized as the
22 2023 Purple Star Schools. Jamie Williams, Lisa Sapp, and Nick Budeski were also
23 recognized as Purple Star Champions.

24 25 **B. Superintendent's Report** –

26 Superintendent Moore introduced Mountain View Elementary School Principal Jennifer
27 Martyn who explained how Mountain View Elementary School implements the
28 *Character Word of the Month*. Teacher Airyanna McLane, as well as students Miles
29 Zadick and Markie Schulte, played videos of their classroom monthly songs and recited
30 their monthly affirmations.

31 Superintendent Moore recognized the Indigenous Education Department for the Big Sky
32 Journal's article titled "Local Knowledge: Heritage Keeper."

33 *Mo Tales* took place at the Newberry on Thursday, November 16, 2023, where over 100
34 Great Falls Public Schools staff members gathered. Nine employees shared humorous
35 and/or heartwarming stories about experiences they have had during their Great Falls
36 Public Schools career. Longfellow Elementary School had the most representation at
37 the event and they will receive a free breakfast for their staff. All storytellers will receive
38 a T-Shirt with the MO Tale Logo.

39 Superintendent Moore thanked various community partners for their gracious donations
40 to Whittier Elementary School students for Thanksgiving.

41 Ryan Hart and Lance Boyd represented Great Falls Public Schools in the recent
42 Community Forum on Women and Children's Homelessness.

43 Superintendent Moore explained that Tax Credit Donations are time sensitive and
44 encouraged anyone interested to contact Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick
45 for further information.

46 The 2023 Christmas Stroll Pop-Up Shop event is scheduled for December 1, 2023,
47 during the Christmas Stroll. Students will have items for sale.

48 The *Business Goes to School* event was successful as 21 community members walked
49 in the shoes of Great Falls Public Schools Principals on November 14, 2023.

50 Superintendent Moore thanked Great Falls Public Schools Foundation and the Great
51 Falls Chamber of Commerce for their partnership in this event.

1 Superintendent Moore stated that the Great Falls Public Schools Clerical Union has
2 entered mediation to attempt to come to an agreement that satisfies both parties.

3
4 **C. Audience Communication** – Clerical Union members Dennis Martin and Deidre
5 Martinko as well the Community Connections and Data Specialist at the Career and
6 College Readiness Center Veronica Griffith spoke on their extensive job responsibilities
7 and the frustrations with the current negotiations.

8
9
10 **ACTION ITEMS**

11
12 **A. Meadow Lark Elementary School Roof Replacement 2023** – Director of Business
13 Operations Brian Patrick stated that the Meadow Lark Elementary School roof is
14 identified in the Great Falls Public Schools Building and Maintenance 2022 Roof
15 Assessment as needing to be replaced. With the new addition having a new roof, this
16 will also put the replacement of the entire roof system in line during future years. This
17 will be bid by the District according to Montana Law and Board Policy 7320. The project
18 will be advertised on February 18 and 25, 2024. A pre-bid walkthrough is scheduled for
19 February 22, 2024, with a bid opening date of March 5, 2024.

20
21 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
22 advertising for bids on the Meadow Lark Elementary School Roof Replacement Project
23 as presented.

24
25 **B. Second Read Finance and Career Prep Know-Understand-Do (KUDs)** –
26 Executive Directors of Student Achievement Heather Hoyer and Secondary Curriculum
27 Coordinator Beckie Frisbee reported that they have not received any comments of
28 concerns regarding the new KUD documents that were discussed at the November 13,
29 2023, Board meeting.

30
31 Motion – Kim Skornogoski , Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to approve
32 the Finance and Career Prep Know-Understand-Do (KUD's) as presented.

33
34 **C. Board Appointment of CORE School Advisory Committee**– Executive Director of
35 Student Achievement Jackie Mainwaring requested the Board appoint a seven-person
36 committee to serve in an advisory capacity to the Great Falls Public Schools Board and
37 the CORE school. The committee will consist of the Elementary Curriculum Coordinator,
38 a representative from the University of Montana – Western, a Great Falls Public
39 Schools Board member, a CORE school parent, a CORE school teacher, a community
40 member, and an Educator-at-large. She stated that applications for available positions
41 were available on the District's website.

42
43 Trustee Thompson stated that herself, Trustee Skornogoski and Trustee Sunchild
44 reviewed the many applications that were received. Trustee Skornogoski reported that it
45 is a two-year committee commitment. The following individuals are being recommended
46 as committee members: Rachel Cutler as the Elementary Curriculum Coordinator;
47 Laura Strouse as the University of Montana – Western representative; Marlee Sunchild
48 as the School Board representative; Shelly Fagenstrom as the Community Member
49 representative; Jessica Erwin as the CORE school parent representative; and Bob
50 Griffith as the Educator-at-Large representative. She stated that the CORE school
51 representative will be recommended at a later date after staff have been selected.

1
2 Motion – Kim Skornogski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to appoint
3 and approve members for the CORE School Advisory Committee as presented.
4

5 **D. Superintendent Search 2024** – Chairperson Johnson stated that there are two in-
6 state service providers who are properly licensed and endorsed to assist with the
7 upcoming Superintendent Search. He said that the previous Superintendent searches
8 were executed by the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA) and is
9 recommending utilizing their services again.
10

11 Trustee Bronson stated that each Superintendent Search provider is extremely
12 qualified. Having an outside entity assist with the Superintendent Search could relieve
13 some of the burden on District Administration and broaden the spectrum with all aspects
14 of the search.
15

16 Trustee Finnicum stated that he sits on the MTSBA Board and has seen them complete
17 other Superintendent Searches with success.
18

19 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to adopt the
20 process for the Superintendent search with the Montana Schools Boards Association as
21 presented.
22

23 24 **ACTION: OTHER**

25 26 27 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**

28
29 **A. City of Great Falls Growth Management Plan Process** – Superintendent Moore
30 stated that on October 17, 2023, the City Commissioners of Great Falls held a work
31 session where City Planning Director Brock Cherry outlined the Growth Policy Update
32 purpose scope, timeline, and process. Brock Cherry stated the Growth Policy is a
33 mandated official public document that Montana cities, town, and counties use to guide
34 future decisions, particularly land use. He stated that this document provides data and
35 analysis and how the data and analysis pertain to the existing condition of the
36 community. It is a strategic roadmap including goals and objectives that are
37 measurable, realistic and provide residents with tangible results. Brock stated that the
38 most recent Growth Policy was initiated on December 20, 2011, and adopted on August
39 6, 2013, and was undertaken using an internal staffing model and no third-party
40 consultant was utilized. Senate Bill 382 requires that the City provide a Public
41 Participation Plan, a future land use map, and a review of the Growth Policy every five
42 years to determine if any updates need to be performed. Both the Growth Policy and
43 related ordinance updates must be completed by mid-2026. He named the Growth
44 Policy Update Partners, which includes Great Falls Public Schools. A Great Falls Public
45 Schools representative will serve on the Growth Policy Steering Committee, assist with
46 public outreach efforts, and potential financial contributions from Great Falls Public
47 Schools for specific planning efforts. Brock stated that future planning items could
48 include potential school boundary adjustments, including recommendations of
49 schools/facilities that should be combined. It could also include how community
50 development and land design influence Great Falls Public Schools hiring, retention, or

1 specific functions such as busing. He reviewed a possible timeline from January 2024
2 through November 2025.

3
4 Trustee Bronson stated that he has been through two Growth Policies and finds it
5 enjoyable. He believes that it is beneficial for Great Falls Public Schools to be an
6 involved partner.

7
8 **B. 2023-2024 Indigenous Peoples Education Program** - Director of Indigenous
9 Education Dugan Coburn reported that 1,645 American Indian students attend Great
10 Falls Public Schools. He stated that they have brought in Knowledge Keepers to speak
11 and teach the culture and heritage.

12 Jordann Lankford reported that Indian Education for All (IFEA) teaches Indigenous
13 culture and heritage to all Great Falls Public Schools students. She reported on the
14 opportunities that have been provided to students.

15 Daniel Hall, Serena Steffenson, and Tawny Cale reported on the curriculum for the
16 *Culture Class*. They stated that they are traveling to all Great Falls Public Schools each
17 month for team teaching which provides more quality time with students for in-depth
18 instruction. They reviewed the upcoming lessons which include Plant Medicines,
19 Cradleboards, Winter Count, Necklace Making, Indigenous Authors and Powwow
20 Etiquette and Dance Styles.

21 Kylan Hallett and Whitney Staub reported the increased interest in flag presentations.
22 They reported that students proudly participated in the Homecoming Parade where both
23 Great Falls High School and C.M. Russell High Schools homecoming floats were both
24 voted 2nd place. Underclassmen will learn how to bead graduation caps to gift to
25 graduating students. *Unreserved Project* participants prepare four pictures representing
26 Heritage, Happiness, Hurdles, and Hope. The students then share the stories behind
27 their images in small talk circles. The project visually represents each student and their
28 uniqueness.

29 Dugan reported on the opportunities within the Indigenous Education Department that
30 enrich cultural development such as Warrior Health Society – Men’s Health Day, lodges
31 at the schools and the District Office Building, and lodge talks. He and his staff continue
32 to encourage family and community engagement through Youth Pow Wows, Bison
33 harvest and other various activities. Dugan thanked the Board and administration for
34 their continued support of Indigenous Education.

35
36 Superintendent Moore thanked the Indigenous Education staff for their work and
37 presented them all with the “You Make a Difference” coin.

38
39 **C. School Board Election Information, School Election Calendar 2024, Declaration
40 of Intent and Oath of Candidacy for Trustee Candidates, and Trustee Filing -**

41 Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick reviewed the 2024 School Election
42 Calendar that was included in the agenda and is available on the District’s website. He
43 explained the nominating petitions and candidacy forms for Trustee positions will be
44 available starting December 14, 2023. There will be one open seat on the GFPS Board
45 of Trustees and it is for a three-year term. This Trustee position is currently held by
46 Marlee Sunchild. Mr. Patrick said candidates must live within the Great Falls Public
47 School District boundary and must submit a Declaration of Intent and Oath of
48 Candidacy for Trustee Candidate form no later than March 28, 2024, to be included on
49 the ballot or by April 4, 2024, to be a write in candidate.

50
51 **D. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments –**

1 Trustee Thompson reported that Great Falls Public Schools excelled during the
2 Leadership Great Falls event that took place last week. She also stated that the “Peer
3 Mentors” at North Middle School have been well received throughout the school.
4 Trustee Turoski and Trustee Finnicum thanked the audience communication speakers
5 for their heartfelt comments and hopes that an appropriate compromise will be met.
6 Trustee Turoski stated that she attended the *Business Goes to Lunch* and appreciated
7 the various opportunities that the District provides.
8 Trustee Bronson is grateful to be on the Growth Policy Steering Committee as a School
9 Board representative. He also updated the Board on the status of work in progress for
10 the Health Insurance Trust created by House Bill 332.
11 Trustee Finnicum congratulated the Purple Star Schools and Champions recipients and
12 is grateful for the Districts involvement with our Military families. He also encouraged
13 everyone to participate in a bison harvest.
14 Trustee Skornogoski thanked Chairperson Johnson for researching and providing
15 information regarding the Superintendent’s Search. She also thanked the Indigenous
16 Education Department for their work and appreciates the changes to the *Culture Class*
17 that have taken place.
18 Trustee Sunchild stated that she appreciates being on the Growth Policy Steering
19 Committee.
20 Chairperson Johnson thanked Randall Bogen for the generous donation of a 2011 GMC
21 Yukon XL and recognized the Good Apple Award recipients.

22
23

24 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

25
26 Director of Business Operations, Brian Patrick stated that the Board Work Session –
27 Audit Review has been postponed until January 8, 2024.
28
29 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,
30 December 11, 2023, and Monday, January 8, 2024.

31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 **ACTION TO ADJOURN**

46
47 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to adjourn
48 the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:58 p.m.

49
50
51

1
2
3
4
5

Brian Patrick, Clerk

Gordon Johnson, Chairperson