

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
2 **OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
3 **HELD JUNE 26, 2023**  
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 26<sup>th</sup> day  
7 of June 2023.

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 Marlee Sunchild  
16 Amie Thompson  
17 Paige Turoski  
18

19 **Others Present:** Tom Moore, Superintendent; Brian Patrick, Director of Business  
20 Operations; Tom Hering, Director of Information Technology; Luke Diekhans, Director of  
21 Human Resources; and Stephanie Schnider, Director of the Great Falls Public Schools  
22 Foundation. Also present was Tom Cubbage, Great Falls Education Association  
23 (GFEA).  
24

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

28  
29 **ADOPT AGENDA**  
30

31 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Bill Bronson, passed unanimously to adopt the  
32 agenda as presented.  
33

34  
35 **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**  
36

37 Motion – Mark Finnicum, Seconded – Paige Turoski, passed unanimously to approve  
38 the Consent Agenda as presented.  
39

40 **A. Minutes of the June 12, 2023, Regular Board Meeting** – The Board approved the  
41 minutes of the June 12, 2023, Regular Board Meeting as presented.  
42

43 **B. Personnel Actions** – The Board approved the Personnel Actions as presented.  
44

45 **C. Good Apple Awards** - The Board approved the nominations for Good Apple  
46 Awards: Ellen Forslund, Music Teacher and Sara Barker, Math Teacher both at North  
47 Middle School.  
48

1 **D. Student Activity Accounts for May 2023** - The Board approved the Student Activity  
2 Accounts for May 2023.

3  
4  
5 **COMMUNICATION**

6  
7 **A. Audience Communication** – Superintendent Moore thanked everyone for their  
8 thoughts and well wishes to his family for the loss of his mother. Superintendent Moore  
9 also stated that the Executive Directors of Student Achievement are in Washington D.C.  
10 this week.

11  
12  
13 **ACTION ITEMS**

14  
15 **A. Financial Report and Check Register for May 2023** -  
16 Director of Business Operations reported on the financial report and check register for  
17 May 2023. He reviewed transfers and fund balances for the Investment account.

18  
19 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve  
20 the May 2023 Financial Report and Accounts Payable checks #127966 - #128514 in the  
21 amount of \$2,243,883.21 and Payroll checks #78475 - #78748 in the amount of  
22 \$604,690.01 as presented.

23  
24 **B. District-Wide Safety Plan** – Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick explained  
25 that school districts are required to adopt an annual comprehensive Safety Plan. As  
26 part of the plan, Board Policies 3300, Suspension and Expulsion and 3311, Firearms  
27 and Weapons must also be reviewed annually. The policies were reviewed by the  
28 Board Policy Committee and presented to the full Board at the June 12, 2023, Board  
29 meeting. Mr. Patrick said the Safety Plan includes protocols, practices and monitoring  
30 to address the safety and security of students, staff and the facilities. The pandemic  
31 provided the District the opportunity to improve and adjust many operational safety  
32 protocols. Mr. Patrick reviewed each section of the Safety Plan in detail and said the  
33 goal of the District is to always be looking for improved ways to keep the students and  
34 staff safe.

35  
36 Motion – Paige Turoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to approve  
37 the District-wide Safety Plan as presented.

38  
39 **C. Contract Amendment with Big Sky Bus Lines** – Director of Business Operations  
40 Bran Patrick explained that Big Sky Bus Lines contacted the District about the possibility  
41 of opening the existing contract to provide an increase in drivers' wages. The current  
42 contract provides for an annual per route base increase of 3% in the first year, followed  
43 by an annual 3% increase each year in the remaining four years of the contract. The  
44 proposed amendment would increase the Flat Rate percentage in the second year to  
45 6%. This would be followed by the regular agreed upon 3% increases in each year of  
46 the contract thereafter. In opening the contract, the language would require that funds  
47 are directly tied to increasing wages. The bus company has been facing a shortage of  
48 drivers that impacts the service to the District. Brian stated that traditionally, the contract

1 has been for 180 days of student transportation, but with recent adjustments to the  
2 school calendar, there are now 177 student contact days. This allows the contract  
3 language to be clarified to match the actual days that students are attending school and  
4 transportation is being paid. At the current number of bus routes (66), the estimated  
5 increased cost to the combined high school and elementary district transportation funds  
6 for the flat bus rate of \$273.52 per bus equates to approximately \$93,105.54 in the first  
7 year of the contract. In the second year of the contract with the same number of routes,  
8 the increase would be an additional \$95,792.40.

9  
10 Motion – Bill Bronson, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to approve an  
11 amendment to the Contract Agreement between the District and Big Sky Bus Lines. The  
12 amendment includes clarifying student transport days from 180 to 177 and adding an  
13 additional 3% increase in the bus route Flat Rate Percentage in the second year of the  
14 contract to increase drivers’ wages.

15  
16 **D. Intergovernmental Agreement for the Transfer of Monies to the Department of**  
17 **Health and Human Services (DPHHS)** – Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick  
18 explained that the 2023 Montana Legislature transferred the management of the  
19 Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) program from the Office of  
20 Public Instruction back to the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS). The  
21 term of this agreement will be from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2028. Brian stated  
22 that the purpose of this agreement is to provide for a monthly intergovernmental transfer  
23 of monies from the District to DPHHS rather than to the Office of Public Instruction.

24  
25 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to  
26 approve the revised Intergovernmental Agreement for the transfer of monies to the  
27 Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) as presented.

28  
29 **E. 2023-2024 Student Handbook** – Director of Business Operations Brian Patrick  
30 explained that the Student Handbook is intentionally designed to be aligned with and  
31 reflect the Great Falls Public School Board policies. The handbook changes are in line  
32 with new Board policies that the Board had approved the past year. Brian reviewed the  
33 changes and thanked Administrative Assistant Heather Huston for her work updating  
34 the handbook that includes the policy changes. The Student Handbook is printed during  
35 the summer, so it can be ready for the upcoming school year. The cutoff date for edits  
36 was June 6, 2023. He explained a committee will meet in the upcoming year to review  
37 the handbook in its entirety for additional updates.

38  
39 Trustees Bronson and Thompson recommended a grammar change and additional  
40 wording.

41  
42 Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Mark Finnicum, passed unanimously to  
43 approve the 2023-2024 Student Handbook as presented with the grammar and addition  
44 wording proposed by Trustees Bronson and Thompson.

45  
46  
47 **ACTION: OTHER**  
48

1  
2 **REPORTS, DISCUSSION, AND POLICIES**  
3

4 **A. First Reading of New and Revised Board Policies** – Director of Business  
5 Operations Brian Patrick reviewed the changes to new and revised Board Policies 1110,  
6 Taking Office; 1650, Public Charter Schools; 3100, Early Childhood Education  
7 Enrollment Exceptional Circumstances; 7123, Transfers for School Safety; and 7125,  
8 Multidistrict Agreements. He asked if anyone has comments, concerns, or questions to  
9 contact him before the next Board meeting.

10  
11 **B. Classified and Hourly Staff Compensation for the 2023-2024: Support Staff,**  
12 **Paraprofessionals, Teacher’s Aides, Hourly Classified Staff and Part-Time Nurses**  
13 Director of Human Resources Luke Diekhans stated that Non-Union employee  
14 compensation is to be established by the Board under Board Policy 5140. He said that  
15 there are 348 employees in the five compensation units and they serve a variety of  
16 functions in the District. They support the goals and objectives of the District and  
17 provide support to students, employees, and programs. Luke reported that the 4%  
18 increase on the base salary schedules for these five budget groups in the 2023-2024  
19 school year will result in an approximate salary budget of \$6,503,053. The cost of the  
20 base increase is estimated to be approximately \$279,662. He stated that this will be  
21 included within the 2023-2024 budget proposal allotted for salaries.

22  
23 **C. 2023-2024 Great Falls Public Schools Teacher Retirement System (TRS) /**  
24 **Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) Administrators’ Handbooks and**  
25 **Compensation** – Director of Human Resources Luke Diekhans stated that the 2023-  
26 2024 Administrator and Supervisor Compensation Budget unit is comprised of 48  
27 employees who are critical to the mission of the District. They set the climate,  
28 implement the Board’s goals, provide instructional leadership, and maintain the safety  
29 and discipline that allows Great Falls Public Schools to continually perform at high  
30 levels. A 4% increase in base salaries will result in an approximate salary budget for this  
31 group of \$5,208,123 for 2023-2024. This is an estimated \$174,434 net increase. He  
32 stated that this will be included within the 2023-2024 budget proposal allotted for  
33 salaries. Luke also reviewed the TRS/PERS salary schedule and the Great Falls Public  
34 Schools Administrators/Supervisors Handbook.

35  
36 **D. Discussion, Committee Reports, and Comments** –  
37 All Trustees thanked Brian Patrick and his team for their work regarding budgets and  
38 policies. They also thanked Heather Huston for her work with the Student Handbook.  
39 Trustee Skornogoski thanked Big Sky Bus Lines for their continued service with Great  
40 Falls Public Schools, especially with the hiring challenges. Stephanie Schnider was  
41 congratulated on her wedding nuptials that took place this last weekend.

42  
43  
44 **UPCOMING EVENTS**  
45

46 Chairperson Johnson said the next Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Monday,  
47 July 17, 2023, and Monday, August 7, 2023.  
48

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13

**ACTION TO ADJOURN**

Motion – Kim Skornogoski, Seconded – Amie Thompson, passed unanimously to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:15 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon Johnson, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Patrick, Clerk