

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD  
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
September 10, 2018**

The school board of Grand Forks Public School District #1 held a regular meeting on Monday, September 10, 2018, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with President Bill Palmiscno presiding.

**Board Members Present:** Douglas Carpenter, Chris Douthit, Amber Flynn, Jacqueline Hoffarth, Eric Lunn, Shannon Mikula, Bill Palmiscno, Cynthia Shabb, and Matt Spivey.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Superintendent Dr. Terry Brenner, Associate Superintendent Jody Thompson, Assistant Superintendent Catherine Gillach, Business Manager Ed Gerhardt, GFEA President Amanda Weston Caillier, and Executive Secretary Cindy Johnson.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda.** It was moved by Spivey and seconded by Carpenter to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes.** It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Douthit to approve the August 20, 2018, minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

**Citizen Comments (non-agenda items).** None.

**Summer School Reports.** Thompson introduced Summer School Directors Kevin Ohnstad, Dr. Gabe Dahl, Terry Bohan, and Dean Opp. In addition to reports that were included in the meeting agenda packet, Ohnstad, Dahl, Bohan, and Opp, provided highlights of their respective summer programs. Students who participated in foreign language trips shared their experiences.

**Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2018-2019**

**Tax Levy.** Gerhardt reviewed action taken by the Board at the August 6, 2018, meeting that authorized a preliminary budget and total tax levy of 101 mills, which included three (3) mills for a new special reserve fund. That preliminary tax levy was certified to the County Auditor. Subsequently, the Finance Committee met on August 9 and passed a motion to recommend that the Grand Forks School District not levy for the new special reserve fund. The Board took action on August 20 to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee. As a result, the total property tax levy for fiscal year 2018-2019 will be 98 mills, which compares to 97.36 mills last year and represents an overall increase of 0.66%.

President Palmiscno then opened the public hearing at 6:48 p.m.

C.T. Marhula encouraged the Board to retain the three-mill emergency fund levy because the School District does not have any other options for increased revenue.

No other public or oral comments were received and the public hearing was closed at 6:51 p.m.

**Head Start Orientation.** Head Start Director Tracey Johnson provided orientation to the Board on eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, attendance (ERSEA policies), performance standards, school readiness goals, shared program governance, and Policy Council Bylaws.

**Review School Board Norms.** Dr. Brenner provided a draft of norms that was developed from Board members' comments at the last meeting. Board members explained the meaning behind their original comments and offered suggestions to modify the draft norms. The norms will be re-drafted and brought back for review at the next meeting.

**Building Projects Update.** Chris Arnold, Director of Buildings & Grounds, gave a

comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on building repair and maintenance projects that were completed this past summer and may be needed going forward.

**Procedure for Class Additions/Reductions.** Thompson reported on the process and Board policy that has been used for the past 15 years in determining elementary grade level sections and additions or reductions.

Whitney Berry, 1701 Lewis Blvd., Grand Forks, ND, addressed the Board on this topic and requested consideration of having an additional or separate policy for cancelling an incoming class of kindergarten students.

Lunn suggested the 6000 Policy Review Committee review this.

Hoffarth asked if there needed to be an addition to existing policy to address what happens to that class in subsequent years.

Mikula shared her research of some out-of-state districts that do a call for open enrollment in times of low enrollment. She suggested the 6000 Policy Review Committee could look at ways to solicit parental choice of the school they wish their student to attend.

Thompson responded that the District already provides for in-district transfers and open enrollment on an ongoing basis, not on a call basis.

President Palmiscno cautioned against putting a call out for open enrollment because it could create the same situation if students have to be sent back to their neighborhood school in subsequent years.

**Transportation Questions.** Gerhardt provided responses to the questions about bus transportation that were raised at the August 6 Board meeting.

Brian Yanish, CEO of Dietrich Bus Service, and John Neal, the Grand Forks Manager of Dietrich Bus Service, were present and answered additional questions about their process for adding routes, access to video recordings, response to bullying incidents, and the length of time some students spend on the bus.

Discussion was held on whether the District could survey families about their interest in possible bus routes and then provide that information to Dietrich to assist in their route planning.

President Palmiscno directed Administration to work with Dietrich to develop a survey.

**Fire Thorn LLC Tax Increment Financing Assistance Application.** Todd Feland, Grand Forks City Administrator, reported on the events leading up to consideration of this application and the timeline for making the final decision. This project is also known as Pure Development, the Hugo's Mixed Development, or the Fire Thorn Development.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Lunn to approve the tax increment financing assistance application for Fire Thorn LLC at the full 80% for 15 years. Motion carried unanimously.

**Pure Development Project - Downtown - Land Exchange Contract.** Thompson reported the land exchange is for a portion of the Grand Forks Central High School staff parking lot to allow the Pure Development Project to proceed. The District will lose approximately 6,157 square feet and seven stalls as part of this land exchange. The developer will provide concrete paving of the new area for the entire new school lot including curb and gutter; all landscaping for the entire block; all costs for updating title work, title insurance, release of all liens, replatting and recording of replatting, and any closing costs for the proposed land exchange; maintenance of the temporary lots which shall be provided during the construction phase for the parking of School District personnel; approximately 71 parking stalls after project completion; striping the entire parking lot stalls and install a gate on the west side of the school lot with FOB/keypad access; repair or replacement of the storm sewer that serves this lot and block; mutual agreement on the design of the parking lot which will be created and utilized by the School District; and all lighting for the parking lot with no continuing cost for electricity, maintenance, or replacement of said lighting.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Shabb to approve the Land Exchange Contract between Fire Thorn LLC and Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Consent Agenda.** It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Shabb to approve

the consent agenda as follows: Teacher Appointments effective August 20, 2018, for Alta Brown (salary \$41,200), Briana Corneliussen (salary \$41,200), Brian Marcus (salary \$54,259), and Kendra Smith (salary \$41,200), and Open Enrollment applications as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**General Fund Financial Statement.**

Gerhardt reported for the first two months of fiscal year 2018-2019, total general fund revenues were \$6,621,643 and total general fund expenditures were \$5,026,674 resulting in an excess of revenues over expenses of \$1,594,969.

It was moved by Spivey and seconded by Douthit to approve the General Fund Financial Statement for the period of July 1, 2018 through August 31, 2018 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Annual Compliance Report as Required by NDCC 15.1-06-06.** It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Flynn to approve the Grand Forks Public Schools Annual Compliance Report for 2018-2019. Motion carried unanimously.

**Designation of NDSBA Convention Delegates.** Board members were reminded of the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA) training workshop for new board members on Thursday, October 25, 2018, which is held in conjunction with the Annual Convention on October 25-26 in Bismarck. Convention delegates must have their name submitted by October 12 in order to vote in the Delegate Assembly. The Grand Forks Public School District #1 is authorized up to five delegates.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Spivey to designate Doug Carpenter, Amber Flynn, Jacqueline Hoffarth, Shannon Mikula, and Cynthia Shabb as delegates to the 2018 NDSBA Delegate Assembly. Motion carried unanimously.

**GFEA Request for Consideration as Representative Organization for Negotiating Unit.** It was moved by Douthit and seconded by Mikula to receive the request for petition from the Grand Forks Education Association (GFEA) for recognition as the representative organization for the appropriate negotiating unit

and authorize posting of the notice as per North Dakota Century Code 15.1-16 as recommended. Motion carried unanimously.

**GFPA Request for Consideration as Representative Organization for Negotiating Unit.** It was moved by Hoffarth and seconded by Douthit to receive the request for petition from the Grand Forks Principals' Association (GFPA) for recognition as the representative organization for the appropriate negotiating unit and authorize posting of the notice as per North Dakota Century Code 15.1-16 as recommended. Motion carried unanimously.

**GFDA Request for Consideration as Representative Organization for Negotiating Unit.** It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Hoffarth to receive the request for petition from the Grand Forks Directors' Association (GFDA) for recognition as the representative organization for the appropriate negotiating unit and authorize posting of the notice as per North Dakota Century Code 15.1-16 as recommended. Motion carried unanimously.

**Authorization for Sale of Building Trades Project House.** It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Spivey to authorize the sale of the residential property located at 3259 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Grand Forks, ND, which is being constructed during the 2018-2019 school year by the Building Trades Program, at a fair market value and to authorize the School Board President, or his/her designee, and the Business Manager to sign the required documents for the sale of the property. Motion carried unanimously.

**Substitute Teacher Pay.** Marjorie Irwin, 725 Belmont Road, Grand Forks, ND appeared before the Board and spoke in support of the administrative recommendation for substitute teacher pay except that she requested the rate be increased to \$135 and asked if the Board was willing to increase the number of days subbed before the long-term sub status would kick in.

Dr. Brenner explained the recommendation is to increase substitute teacher pay to \$130 in concert with commencing the substitute bonus pay at 20 days and with additional payout every subsequent 20 days subbed, and that the next

substitute teacher pay review be held in August 2021.

Some Board members questioned the three-year wait to review the topic again. Brenner explained that he anticipated the next teacher negotiations agreement would be a two-year agreement and that waiting three years to review substitute teacher pay would put both groups on the same timeline going forward.

Shabb suggested the Board consider a tier system of pay for substitute teachers.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Carpenter to approve the administrative recommendation for substitute teacher pay except that the next review is conducted in August 2019.

Flynn suggested that this topic deserved a committee and that said committee be comprised of substitute teachers, Board members, other administration, and current teachers.

Mikula suggested the benefits and leave committee could review the topic rather than forming another committee, or that the topic could be handled through Human Resources staff.

Palmiscno indicated that this would be left to the superintendent to handle.

Motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Carpenter, Douthit, Flynn, Hoffarth, Lunn, Mikula, Shabb, Spivey, and Palmiscno. Nay: None.

**CNP Lunch Account Procedure Committee Report.** Lunn reviewed the history of this committee and its discussions. Initially the proposed policy contained some things in it that were uncomfortable for Board members and others. The final policy was that parents would be notified when their child gets into a negative balance. Federal guidelines require an end point to that policy. The Committee determined that when an account gets to a negative \$50 balance, the child would receive a sunbutter sandwich meal rather than a regular meal. Between zero and negative \$50, there will be multiple contacts with the family. He pointed out that this is not a School Board policy; rather it is an operational policy in the Child Nutrition Program. Lunn also informed the Board that there is a fund managed by the Foundation for Education to help pay for meals for students.

Shabb spoke against not giving children whose accounts are in arrears a meal of their choice.

Hoffarth stated that she understood the soybutter sandwich was an acceptable meal. She originally thought the District had to put a number on the end point policy but after doing some research, she learned that USDA regulations say it is up to each school district to decide whether to do that. Therefore, it is acceptable if a school district chooses that there is no end number. Hoffarth stated that with all of the planned notifications and staff involvement and access to donated funds for meals it is unlikely that any child would reach the \$50 threshold. She reiterated that all children will be fed and that the intent is for all children to have a meal choice regardless of how the policy reads.

Flynn explained that former Board Member Meggen Sande had brought up a concern that the District did not offer a meal choice to students every time no matter what the circumstances. Flynn stated that she would never be in favor of a policy that puts a cap on negative meal account balances and that does not offer a meal choice to students regardless of their meal account balance.

Emily Karel, Child Nutrition Program Director, confirmed that USDA regulations do not require school districts to put a cap on negative meal balances. It only requires that school districts have a policy. She explained the purpose of the policy is to protect the general fund. The Child Nutrition Program is operated as a non-profit and if there were so many negative balances that bills can no longer be paid, she would have to request that those costs be covered by the general fund. She found that other school districts were either allowing a choice meal without any account balance cap and turning unpaid accounts over to a collection agency or adopting a negative balance threshold and offering a non-choice meal.

Flynn stated that not providing a child with a choice meal was punishing the child because their parents did not put money into their meal account.

Douthit shared his personal experience in dealing with this topic while he was an administrator at Red River High School. He assured the Board that staff involved in each

student's situation do their due diligence and look out for the best interest of the student.

Hoffarth questioned the amount of effort being put into this topic when it is not a large problem for the District and it is not a school board policy.

Karel confirmed that 2016-17 ended with a negative accounts balance of \$190 for the entire District. The 2017-18 year ended with a negative balance of \$2,500.

Spivey left the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Mikula identified the problem as being the impact to a student and stated that going a collections route is better than cutting off the choice to the student.

Brenner suggested that for one year the District allows all students to have their choice of meal and that any debt be paid through fundraisers and funds that are available through the Foundation for Education.

Hoffarth requested policy language be changed so that it is the parents being notified of negative balances rather than the students.

Flynn handed out invites to the *Chair Affair*, a fundraiser for the school lunch program that will be held on Thursday, September 13 at the Gorecki Alumni Center in Grand Forks.

**Second Reading & Adoption of Policy 3200 and Rescind of Policy 3211.** Palmiscno reported that District Legal Counsel reviewed Policy 3200 and that two minor changes were made since the first reading.

Mikula explained her concerns related to First Amendment issues, inconsistencies, and lack of clear directive in the policy.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Lunn to send this policy with changes suggested by Mikula back to the 3000 Series Policy Committee. Motion carried with all members present voting aye. Absent: Spivey.

Lunn commented that the 8000 Series Policy Review Committee, which is the internal operations committee, thought the conversation regarding templates should start with that committee. He clarified that his understanding from the last meeting's minutes was that the Board would not develop a template and change all the policies at once but rather develop a

template and then change the policies as they come up for review.

**Second Reading & Adoption of Policies 8100, 8110, 8111, 8120, 8340, and 8507.** Lunn reported on the August 27 meeting of the 8000 Series Policy Review Committee and changes that are being proposed to Policy 8111 since its first reading. No additional changes were proposed for Policies 8100, 8110, 8120, 8340, and 8507.

Hoffarth referenced her recommendation concerning Policy 8111 that was made at the last meeting to have one student appointed from each high school and asked why that was not incorporated into the policy.

Lunn and Flynn explained that the preference is for one student from each high school but the committee did not want to direct administrative procedure for nominating the students. By using nonspecific language there is flexibility for either of the high schools to have more than one participating student in the event one of the high schools did not have a participating student.

Hoffarth suggested adding "with best efforts for representation from each high school" to the policy.

Mikula suggested adding "up to three students not to exceed one from each of the primary high schools in Grand Forks."

Mikula also referenced her suggestion that was made at the last meeting to have nominations for up to three students and they work together as a group to speak with one unified voice for all students of the District at a meeting rather than having two or three individuals showing up to each meeting. She realized this was not represented in the policy and added that she would leave it to procedure to decide how that operates if that was the intent.

Flynn explained that the committee did consider Mikula's suggestion and decided that it was acceptable to have three voices at the table.

Carpenter thought three students was a lot when there were already nine Board members. He expressed concern that the Board would have three students and each one representing their own school rather than speaking on behalf of students as a whole and not just high school students but middle school and elementary students too. He suggested picking a number

without any indication of a school, or to specifically state one student from each school if that is the intent.

Mikula also recommended rewording "and/or" to either "and" or "or."

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Shabb to approve the second reading and adoption of Policies 8100, 8110, 8120, 8340, 8507, and 8111 as outlined with the additional change to Policy 8111 to reword "and/or" to "or." Motion carried on roll call vote as follows: Aye: Douthit, Flynn, Hoffarth, Lunn, Shabb, and Palmiscno; Nay: Mikula and Carpenter; Absent: Spivey.

**Announcements.** The following announcements were made:

- The School Board photo is postponed.
- Brenner announced the October 22 meeting would be a retreat. The venue and whether to televise the meeting will be determined soon.

**Board Requests for Future Consideration.**  
None.

**Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

**APPROVED** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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Bill Palmiscno, President

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Edwin J. Gerhardt, Business Manager