

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD  
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
January 7, 2019**

The school board of Grand Forks Public School District #1 held a regular meeting on Monday, January 7, 2019, 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:** Student Board Members Riley Thoreson and Anastasia Usatii, Superintendent Dr. Terry Brenner, Associate Superintendent Jody Thompson, Assistant Superintendent Catherine Gillach, Business Manager Scott Berge, GFAPB School Board Liaison Branden Shepperd, 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 Douthit to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

**Celebrating Success.** Ali Parkinson, Discovery Elementary School Principal, and Loren Hoheisel, Building Resource Coordinator at Discovery, shared a video about Discovery that was created two years ago by Meteor Education. Parkinson and Hoheisel then highlighted initiatives at Discovery including a culture of reading, a culture of support and interventions, a culture of innovation, a culture of student voice, a culture of connectedness, a culture of supporting all, a culture of purposeful fun, and the family of Trailblazers staff.

**Approval of Minutes.** It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Lunn to approve the

December 10, 2018, minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

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

**Review School Board Norms.** Board members took a few minutes to silently review the school board norms.

**Technology Update.** Dr. Joel Schleicher, Executive Director of Technology, updated the Board on the 2016-2019 Technology Plan as it relates to student learning. He reported on conditions that need to be in place for teachers and students to fully realize the District's technology vision. Schleicher also reported on operational initiatives and device requests at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

**Teacher Benefits & Leave Package Study Committee Report.** Flynn reported on the meetings of the Teacher Benefits & Leave Package Study Committee that have been held to date. At the January 3, 2019, meeting, the committee reviewed quotes for completing the study that were received from third party, neutral consultants. Hays, the District's current benefits consultant, stated that they would work on the study project as part of their current consultant services at no additional cost to the District. The committee agreed by unanimous consensus to ask Hays whether they could perform a detailed review of the District's leaves benefits as described in one of the other consultant's quote, and if so, the committee was in favor of moving forward with Hays.

Brenner reported that per Tracy Abentroth, Human Resources Manager, Hays has said that they would complete the study as requested.

**Consent Agenda.** It was moved by Spivey and seconded by Douthit to approve the consent agenda as follows: Teacher Appointments for Jessica Christofferson (salary \$22,353), Stacy Ellingson (salary \$22,791),

Jennifer Jeffrey (salary \$11,395), Amanda Kraft (salary \$22,791), Haley Olson (salary \$22,791), and Megan Zimmerman (salary \$22,791); One-Year Childcare Leave for Abby Black for the 2019-2020 school year; and resignation of Janeene Monley, effective May 31, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

### **8000 Series Policy Review Committee**

**Report.** First Reading of Policies 8320 and 8330 and Rescind of Policy 8405. Lunn reported on the proposed policy format and modifications that were made to it to ensure ADA compliance. The committee thought that it was a good template to use going forward.

Policy 8320 has been reformatted and amended by adding language that the Board shall have the discretion to approval additional frequency for board members to attend national meetings, conference, or conventions, and that those board members who attend such event(s) shall be expected to share any information they acquired at the event(s) with the full board. The committee recommends approval of the first reading.

Board members discussed the components of the new format, Definitions and Applicability and Scope. Douthit questioned the necessity of having the Applicability and Scope component as it seemed to be just extra words. It was suggested that each policy series committee determine whether to include either component before the policy is forwarded to the full board. Mikula stated that Applicability and Scope is a listing of whom the policy applies to and who is excluded from the policy. She stated that it was a good idea to keep the component in the policies unless the board was going to generally say that all policies apply to everybody including teachers, students, board members, and the community as a whole. She also suggested that when a policy does not contain any definitions, it be so noted as "not applicable."

The question was raised whether Policy 8320 applied to only elected and appointed board members or if it also applied to student board members. This may be clarified in the definition.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Hoffarth to approve the first reading of Policy 8320 with the changes mentioned herein. Motion carried unanimously.

Lunn reported the committee's recommendation to amend Policy 8330 to increase compensation for each board member from \$3,500 to \$5,000 and for the board president from \$4,000 to \$6,000. It was noted that definitions and applicability and scope as described earlier should be added. It was suggested that a master list of definitions be developed for consistency throughout future policy amendments. Upon discussion, it was determined to amend the sentence, "Board members may be reimbursed for all necessary meals, lodging, and travel expenses actually incurred by their selves while engaged in official business of the board" by deleting the words, "by their selves".

Lunn stated that he was in favor of the policy but he was not in favor of increasing board member compensation because he did not think it was the appropriate time to do so. Mikula echoed Lunn's comments and stated that she did not think the position of board member was driven by its monetary value. She stated that she struggled with increasing her own pay and that she would prefer to put those dollars toward other initiatives. Flynn stated that she did not run for school board member to be paid or to have a side job; however, she stated that, on the flip side, time spent as a board member is taking away time from other things and that just as the board tells others that they deserve to be compensated for their time, board members should also be compensated appropriately for their time. Even with the proposed increase, the board is behind compensation comparable to other boards. Flynn pointed out that the policy contains a provision for board members to not accept their salary. She also stated that not paying someone for their time to show up and do their position fully might limit them from future service if they cannot afford to take time away from their family or work. Lunn clarified that he agreed with an increase, but suggested it be done in steps just as it was for the teachers, directors, and for everybody. Hoffarth agreed that board members were undercompensated when compared to other districts. She stated that coming into board service was not about increasing the pay; however, increasing the compensation may increase the range of potential applicants.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Spivey to approve the first reading of Policy 8330 with the language changes mentioned herein except to revert compensation back to \$4,000 for each board member and to \$5,000 for the board president.

Spivey stated that the board talks a lot about equality, fairness, and responsibility and if doing a comparative analysis for board compensation, the level of compensation should reflect those attributes. Mikula asked if board compensation should be tied to the board's self-evaluation, although that would still be a self-reflection. Flynn responded that historically board compensation is determined in July. She suggested there may be options for the board to choose to backdate the increase or to make the increase effective going forward. Flynn stated that she did not support the levels of \$4,000 and \$5,000 because board members were spending more time in meetings and board work than before. Palmiscno stated that he did not believe the president should be paid an extra \$1,000. He stated that all board members should take their turn at serving as president. Shabb stated that she felt the president puts in more time than a board member. Carpenter stated that he thought the president should be paid more because the president does put in a lot more time than a board member and it should be reflected in compensation. He also agreed with Flynn that the compensation should be \$5,000 for board members and \$6,000 for the board president, which is still substantially under what other districts, city councils, and county commissions make.

Motion defeated on roll call vote as follows: Aye: Lunn, Shabb, Spivey, and Palmiscno; Nay: Carpenter, Douthit, Flynn, Hoffarth, and Mikula; and Absent: None.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Shabb to approve the first reading of Policy 8330 with \$5,000 for board members and \$6,000 for the president and that it is effective January 1, 2019. Motion defeated on roll call vote as follows: Aye: Flynn, Hoffarth, Spivey, and Carpenter; Nay: Douthit, Lunn, Mikula, Shabb, and Palmiscno; and Absent: None.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Mikula to approve the first reading of Policy 8330 with the language changes mentioned herein and with the original compensation of

\$3,500 for each board member and \$4,000 for the board president. Flynn stated that there should be some sort of compensation increase given the increased workload that all of the board members are doing.

It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Spivey to amend the motion to set compensation for all board members including the president to \$4,000 retroactive to July 1, 2018. Mikula restated her position and stated that she would probably continue to vote down an increase. Douthit stated that it was difficult to give himself a pay raise. Motion to amend carried unanimously.

Motion as amended carried on roll call vote as follows: Aye: Hoffarth, Lunn, Shabb, Spivey, Carpenter, Flynn, and Palmiscno; Nay: Mikula and Douthit; and Absent: None.

Lunn then explained the recommendation to delete Policy 8405 regarding the signing of checks because it is administrative procedure in nature. Mikula asked if there was any requirement that the board provide authority via policy for the signing of checks. President Palmiscno responded that it is covered under other policy and that information can be provided at the next meeting.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Spivey to approve the first reading to delete Policy 8405. Motion carried unanimously.

**Herald Building Lease Agreement.** Berge reported that a new revision of the proposed lease agreement was placed at each board member's table. He reviewed previous conversations about this lease for new alternative education space for special needs students in the Grand Forks Herald building and revisions that have been made to the original proposed lease. Mikula stated that a number of typos still exist in the new revision. She questioned what certain things in the lease mean in terms of default and explained that she wanted to ensure understanding of what the District is obligated to do or not do in order to avoid default and how damages will be calculated in that default. Berge reported that the District's legal counsel had reviewed the proposed lease specific to Mikula's comments and did not have any additional changes. Douthit stated that he was comfortable with the District legal counsel's review. Shabb asked what

“quiet possession” meant. Berge responded that this typically meant if the tenant is being a good tenant and following the lease agreement, the tenant has the right to peaceably enjoy and use the property as intended without interference from the landlord. Mikula stated that it is covenant and right to use the property so long as the tenant is paying and following its obligations under the lease.

It was moved by Spivey and seconded by Shabb to approve the administrative recommendation to approve the lease agreement for the term beginning February 1, 2019 and ending January 31, 2021, and to authorize the business manager to sign the lease on behalf of the school district. Flynn asked if in the future when the board is considering items like this, the District’s legal counsel be asked to attend the meeting to answer any questions board members may have. Mikula asked if the typos that still exist could be corrected. President Palmiscno responded that they could be corrected. Motion carried on roll call vote as follows: Aye: Lunn, Shabb, Spivey, Carpenter, Douthit, Flynn, Hoffarth, and Palmiscno; Nay: Mikula; and Absent: None.

**Announcements.** Dr. Brenner and Shabb announced that the Second Annual Culture Fair would be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, in the hallway of the Red River High School Performance Hall. All board members were invited to attend.

Shabb announced that she is serving on a legislative committee for the North Dakota School Boards Association and will report periodically about that work to the board.

**Board Requests for Future Consideration.** Flynn requested updates on legislative bills and issues and that the board review the contract for the District’s legal counsel. It was reported that individuals could sign up on the Legislature’s web page for weekly updates.

**School Board Norms - How Did We Do?** Palmiscno commented that there was a lot of discussion.

**Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

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

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Bill Palmiscno, President

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Scott J. Berge, Business Manager