

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD  
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
December 16, 2019**

The Grand Forks School Board held a work session on Monday, December 16, 2019, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Amber Flynn and Bill Palmiscno presiding.

**Board Members Present:**

Bill Palmiscno, President/Voting Member  
Amber Flynn, Vice President/Voting Member  
Doug Carpenter, Voting Member  
Jacqueline Hoffarth, Voting Member  
Eric Lunn, Voting Member  
Jeff Manley, Voting Member  
Shannon Mikula, Voting Member  
Cynthia Shabb, Voting Member  
Matt Spivey, Voting Member

**Student Board Members Present:**

None

**Board Members Absent:**

None

**Student Board Members Absent:**

Riley Thoreson, Non-voting Member  
Oliver Wolfe, Non-voting Member

**Others Present:**

Tom Weber and Gavin Benson, Senior Business Consultants, Unesco  
Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools  
Scott J. Berge, Business Manager  
Jody Thompson, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Education  
Catherine Gillach, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education  
Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary

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

Shabb joined the meeting at 6:03 p.m.  
Palmiscno joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**Pre-Referendum & Community Engagement Discussion Led by Unesco Representative Tom Weber.**

Weber gave a presentation on community engagement that included discussion on creating a community engagement task force and its membership and charge and the community engagement process.

Discussion continued on needs in addition to deferred maintenance that board members wished to include in community engagement conversations. These included how to provide an

equitable education to all students, access to schools, transportation, safety (buildings and students), and special programming.

Mikula left the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Weber said that based on the conversations with the board tonight and with the administration earlier today and to ensure the district has a solid, transparent process that everyone is confident in; he recommended the referendum date be moved out from June. He suggested avoiding the November election because the district’s message would get drowned out by the national campaigns and most people are tuned out by the time the election happens. He suggested sometime in the spring of 2021 would give the district the greatest chance for a

successful referendum. He also said that a referendum that is done at the same time as a school board election often becomes a referendum on the school board member rather than on the issue.

Discussion continued on the timing of a referendum and the advantages and disadvantages of a delay from the June election. Some board members were concerned with a delay because of the district’s financial issues, the cost of a special election, and deferred maintenance issues, but agreed that referendum planning and timing had to be done right.

Weber said that he would revise the timeline to add in the additional topics requested by board members and map it backward from potential referendum dates.

Palmiscno said he preferred a September date for a special election.

Weber said that delaying the referendum would not cause additional fees for Unesco’s services.

The discussion will continue on this topic at the January 6 school board meeting.

**Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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Bill Palmiscno, President

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Scott J. Berge, Business Manager