

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
March 17, 2020**

The Grand Forks School Board met in special session on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with 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 (via phone)
Matt Spivey, Voting Member

Student Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

None

Student Board Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Lewis Isassi, GFAFB School Board Liaison
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
Melissa Buchhop, Vice President, Grand Forks Education Association (GFEA)
Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

School District Closure Update. Dr. Brenner, along with several district administrators and directors, gave an update on the school district closure. The closure was ordered by Governor Doug Burgum as a precautionary measure against the transmission of COVID-19. Brenner reported on the internal work going back to January 29 through today that was done with Tracy Jentz, Communications and Public Engagement Coordinator, district cabinet, administrators, and staff, UND representatives, other local and state agencies, and other school districts' leaders. He clarified that the Governor's waiver was about students staying home and that the district expected all staff to come back to work on March 23.

Thompson, Gillach, Tracy Jentz, Chief Academic Officer Amy Bartsch, and Assistant Director of

Special Education Carrie Weippert spoke about work done in the schools to plan for an unknown future that will likely include online, distance teaching and learning. Gillach spoke about essential standards for the rest of the year and equity and access for all students.

Shabb joined the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Jentz spoke about connectivity and devices for students. Bartsch spoke about work done by instructional design coaches and CIT staff to identify free learning resources and create online tutorials for families that will be launched on the district website. Bartsch reiterated that State Superintendent Baesler was very clear the district does not have the authority to do distance or virtual learning. That must come from a waiver from Governor Burgum. Weippert spoke about work done by staff in the area of special education.

Dr. Brenner spoke about the compensation of classified staff. The Classified Personnel Policy Manual states, "All employees that are normally scheduled to work on days that there is an unscheduled school closing will be paid their regular scheduled hours." The administration's perspective is to keep people whole. He said that although there will not be students in the schools, paraprofessionals will be asked to return to work on March 23 to provide extra support in the schools and to teachers. He requested latitude from the board to continue to pay the hourly people who are not working with students, at least through Friday, April 3, which would get us through all of the storm waiver days, and then make another decision moving forward. Hoffarth agreed. Palmiscno said this was the same philosophy that the board had after the flood of 1997. More discussion on this topic will be held in April.

Emily Karel, Director of the Child Nutrition Program, spoke about feeding children breakfast and lunch through the Summer Food Service Program at 12 school sites. She has applied for a waiver from the USDA to serve meals at all school sites in the district. Pickup and delivery options for meals were also discussed.

Chris Arnold, Director of Buildings & Grounds, spoke about short-term and long-term cleaning and sanitation protocols at the buildings. He also spoke about the current inventory of cleaning supplies.

Discussion continued on day-to-day operations, who has the authority to close schools, whether there is a point where the board needs to determine a unified approach with distance learning so parents do not have to try to figure out multiple programs, and dissemination of family communications. Jentz reported that all of the family communications are on the district webpage and school web pages. She asked board members who may be getting questions from parents to direct those parents to their email, text messages, phones, and voicemail, or the district/school websites, and if the questions are employment-related, to direct them to the Human Resources Department.

Palmiscno clarified a request to also send the family communications to board members.

Gillach encouraged board members to refer questions to building administrators as well.

Discussion continued on distance learning, teachers working in the schools, and dealing with the unknowns of the current situation.

Arnold reported progress is continuing at West Elementary School. No guidance has changed on the other buildings until we know when the students will return. He said his biggest question is whether other construction projects will stay on schedule this summer.

Dr. Brenner also reported the following:

- The business manager will be tracking all expenses related to the closure in case there is a future opportunity for reimbursement.
- The March 26 meeting of the Facilities Taskforce is canceled. SiteLogIQ will communicate to the Taskforce members and send them some homework to complete before their April 9 meeting.
- The March 30 joint meeting of the school board and city council is postponed.

Hoffarth requested a video message be sent to all student email accounts informing them of what the district is doing and to stay safe while they are at home.

Discussion continued on access to books so students can be reading at home, internet access at home, and social distancing versus social isolation.

Dr. Brenner reported that the March 23 Board meeting will be held at the MSEC rather than Community High School and the meeting may need to be an electronic meeting.

Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Approved _____
(Date)

Bill Palmiscno, President

Scott J. Berge, Business Manager