

BOARD MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 9, 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of Fort Benton High School and Elementary School Districts was called to order April 9, 2024 at 7:08 p.m. in the High School Board Room, by Joellyn Clark, Chairperson.

Members present: Joellyn Clark, Will Scott, Kyla Wright, Darin Arganbright, Jenni Starman, Kayle Axtman, Dusty Schuler, and Brant Hasbrouck. A quorum was present.

ROLL CALL

Also present: Pat Hould, Superintendent; Cali O'Hara, Business Manager/Clerk; Russ Axtman, Maintenance Supervisor; Bethany DeBorde, reporter for the River Press; Paul Benhart, Transportation; Roxie Benjamin, Elementary Principal; Jamie Ball, Athletic Director, Emily Wicks.

Joellyn Clark opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE

It was moved by Will Scott, seconded by Jenni Starman, to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2024 regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES

It was moved by Dusty Schuler and seconded by Brant Hasbrouck, to approve payment of warrants. The motion passed unanimously.

WARRANTS

Payroll: 97288-97306  
Claims: 62156-62207

Joellyn Clark asked for public comment. There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joellyn Clark, Board Chairman- No report

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Roxie Benjamin, Elementary Principal- Roxie reported that spring parent teacher conferences are complete; there was a smaller turn out than in the fall. Teachers worked hard to get all parents rescheduled to ensure that they saw as many parents as they could. Thank you to Angel Johnson and the County Health department for their presentation of the Maturation curriculum to the 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades. Pre-School screening was last week. They are using a new OPI approved screening assessment. The Preschool program is transitioning to an Early Literacy program. There have been some changes to the Early Literacy program from the last legislative session that we will now need to follow going forward for the Early Kindergarten program. There were 18 students tested. Thank you to the Lions Club for the spring vision screening. The state testing is changing from the SBAC to the MAST program. So next year we will see a change in the standardized testing format. Upcoming events: the CCPA will have a performance this week, as well as there will be a robotics demonstration.

ELEMENTARY  
PRINCIPAL

They are going to host a formal registration day, May 1 for all elementary school students, to get forms updated for the upcoming school year. Thank you to Russ for all his help getting the school ready for all the spring events. The senior citizen lunch will be May 2 the theme is Make My Country Great. There will be some announcements for the retirement celebrations before the end of the year. See attached report

Russ Axtman, Maintenance – Would like to thank Larry and Corey for all their hard work. Corey is now working at the elementary school and is doing well, very thankful to have him on the janitorial staff. Thanks again to Larry for all he does at the school. Thank you to the City crew for the help with getting the track dragged. They will drag it one more time before the middle school track meet on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Longhorn Day is May 2, thank you to Karyn Giles for all her help with getting the kids set up with projects around town. Graduation is May 19<sup>th</sup> so they are working to make sure that the ground will be cleaned up and ready for that celebration. Joellyn and Jamie are doing a great job with getting the Hall of Fame cleaned up along with all the record boards.

MAINTENANCE

Jamie Ball, Athletic Director – Reported that all spring sports are now in full swing. The weather has been a little challenging. Golf will have a meet Thursday, track will have meets Wednesday and Saturday, and tennis had meets last week. Thank you to Paul and drivers for being flexible with all the spring schedule changes. There will be a middle school track meet at home on the 25<sup>th</sup>, thank you to Russ for getting the track ready to go. The district has received a letter from MHSAA to be reclassified to class B. In order to petition the board of the MHSAA there is a formal request and the district will have to meet with the MHSAA board to state why we feel it is in our best interest to remain in Class C. The meeting will be April 22 at 11:00 in Helena. The letter to request to petition the changes has been submitted. At the extracurricular meeting the committee visited about any coaching changes to wrestling as the girl's program continues to grow, at this time the current coaches felt they were ok with just the addition of another assistant coach, so there would be 1 head coach with 2 assistant coaches. There was also discussion of adding boy's tennis, the boys currently can participate in middle school tennis but not at the high school level. There would be minimal cost to operate the program, the current coaches would coach the boys team as well just like all the other spring sports. The current tennis coaches are in favor of adding the program.

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

It was moved by Kayle Axtman and seconded by Kyla Wright, to approve Brooke Johnson as Middle School Track coach. The motion passed unanimously.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK  
COACH

It was moved by Kayle Axtman and seconded by Will Scott, to approve Ray Allen as Middle School Track volunteer. The motion passed unanimously.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK  
VOLUNTEER

Cali O'Hara, Business Manager/ Clerk - Reported that we can send notification that the election can be cancelled. Kayle Axtman was the only person to file so he will be elected due to acclamation at the May board

CLERK

meeting. Not running the school election saves the district some money as the cost of postage and paper increases every year. The general fund budget is almost ready to go, OPI has made some changes due to an error on their end with some of the schools quality educator payments being missed. So that information will be ready for the meeting in May.

Pat Hould, Superintendent- Would like to send a big congratulation to the Longhorns in Theater for an excellent job on their production. Thank you to Amy Hanson for putting on a great performance. The students did an amazing job. The accreditation process is almost completed, thank you to Roxie for all her help as well it has been quite a process to get all of the items completed. They received an email Monday stating that OPI has accepted their plan and that it was approved. Hiring has been going smoothly; there have been several applicants, so with the latest hires we now only have the High School PE teacher position and Music teacher position left to hire. Child care update - with the current staff that will be returning next year there doesn't seem to be as large of a need for child care, so they are putting a pause on this process. However, they are going to go forth with the sight visit, so the plan will be in place if the need should ever arise again, we are in a better position to provide services in the future. In Pats Big Picture items, they are looking to have another community engagement task force meeting. They are still working to complete the profile of a graduate; this is a part of the new accreditation process that they have yet to complete. Currently working on a review of the crisis management plan in conjunction with Chouteau County first responders. Will work on finalizing the remaining hires by the May board meeting. See attached board report.

SUPERINTENDENT

It was moved by Dusty Schuler, and seconded by Brant Hasbrouck, to approve rehire of High School teachers

REHIRE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

*Mark Ayers	**Colby Cline	**Rheanna Fultz
**Damon Gilbreth	*Brooke Johnson	Megan Lords
**Tanara Martin	*Emily Nishikawa	*Wendy Truax
Carley Vielleux	Miranda Woodhouse	

\*\* 4<sup>th</sup> contract with tenure status \*Non-Tenured  
The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Kayle Axtman, and seconded by Will Scott, to approve rehire of Elementary School teachers

REHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Anna Arganbright	Jamie Ball	Justin Cartwright
**Colby Cline	**Mindy Evans	**Rheanna Fultz
Peggy Gannon	**Damon Gilbreth	Jessica Hanford
*Brooke Johnson	*Beth Jones	Mylo Lane
Megan Lords	**Tanara Marin	Mandy Rominger
*Elizabeth Southard	*Esme Teeters	Carley Vielleux
* Mandy Wright	*Deanna Farwick	

\*\* 4<sup>th</sup> contract with tenure status \*Non-Tenured  
The motion passed unanimously. Darin Arganbright abstained.

Committees -

Policy – Meeting April 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 6:00pm

Personnel- Will Scott reported that they have completed teacher negotiations, as well as annual review of the business manager. They have also completed negotiations with the superintendent, elementary school principal and business manager.

It was moved by Dusty Schuler, and seconded by Jenni Starman, to approve the following changes to the Professional Agreement with the teachers

\*Personal Leave -Each teacher is allowed four (4) personal leave days. Unused personal leave days may accumulate up to a maximum of six (6) days.

\*Bereavement Leave – Three (3) days per year, at full salary, not deducted from sick leave, will be allowed each certified employee for a death in the immediate family, as defined in Article II, H. This leave is not accumulative. Bereavement leave may be used for the death of a district employee if requested by the employee and approved by the Superintendent.

\*Longevity Payment- Teachers will receive an annual longevity payment in addition to their annual salary, based on their years of certified service to the Fort Benton School District. A teacher shall receive an additional: Five hundred dollars (\$500) added to their salary at year five (5) and an additional two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) added to their salary at each of the following years: 10,15,20,25,30,35,40 and 45. Current teachers will be given credit for their years of service with the Fort Benton School District.

\*A 2% increase to the base salary matrix for year 2024-2025 and for 2025-2026.

The motion passed unanimously

It was moved by Darin Arganbright, and seconded by Brant Hasbrouck, to approve addition of 15 floating days to Superintendent Pat Hould’s 2024-2025 contract. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Dusty Schuler, and seconded by Kayle Axtman, to approve a 3% salary increase for Business Manager Cali O’Hara’s 2024-2025 contract. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Darin Arganbright, and seconded by Kyla Wright, to approve a 3% salary increase for Elementary School Principal Roxie Benjamin. The motion passed unanimously.

Buildings and Grounds –

Darin Arganbright reported that they still have lots of questions to answer surrounding the best way to fund all of the building maintenance projects. The board may want to reach out to MTSA to see if they have an answers for us. Visited with Cameron from FICO they are working with Bear Paw Co-op on securing a grant for local schools that have HV/AC needs. So that is now in the works the committee will know more on the

COMMITTEES

TEACHER  
NEGOTIATIONS

SUPERINTENDENT  
NEGOTIATIONS

BUSINESS MANAGER  
NEGOTIATIONS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL  
NEGOTIATIONS

grant in the coming weeks. If the grant is approved that will change how much the district is going to need to get from the voters to complete the remainder of the projects.

Transportation-

Paul Benhart reported that he has two quotes for new traveler busses. Still working with Cali on budget numbers to see when we could order a new bus. The replacement of route busses got off schedule with COVID-19, so working to get that corrected and get things back on a regular rotation. Looking to increase the hourly rate for our activity drivers as well as a longevity bonus.

It was moved by Darin Arganbright, and seconded by Dusty Schuler, to approve the purchase of a new traveler bus pending budget constraints. The motion passed unanimously

Resignations –

Kathleen England – Music Teacher

RESIGNATIONS

Hires-

It was moved by Brant Hasbrouck, and seconded by Will Scott, to approve Kelly Bushong as High School Math teacher. The motion passed unanimously

HIRES

HIGH SCHOOL MATH  
TEACHER

It was moved by Dusty Schuler, and seconded by Kayle Axtman, to approve Amber Disney as FACS and Art teacher. The motion passed unanimously.

FACS/ART TEACHER

It was moved by Kayle Axtman, and seconded by Jenni Starman, to approve Julie Robertson as volunteer Art club advisor. The motion passes unanimously.

ART CLUB VOLUNTEER  
ADVISOR

Future Agenda items:

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Committee meetings –

Policy meeting April 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 6:00 pm

Obsolete Property

Boys Tennis

It was moved by Dusty Schuler, and seconded by Will Scott, to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

ADJOURN

BOARD CHAIRPERSON \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST

CLERK \_\_\_\_\_