

BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
December 11, 2025

Jenni Starman, Chairperson, called the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Fort Benton High School and Elementary School Districts to order December 11, 2025, at 10:12 p.m. in the Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

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

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

Jenni Starman opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Dusty Schuler, seconded by Kayle Axtman, to approve the minutes of the November 11, 2025, regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Payroll: 98510-98556
Claims: 63426-63492

Jenni Starman asked for public comment. None.

Communications to and from the Board. None.

Jenni Starman, Board Chair- None

Roxie Benjamin, Elementary Principal- Reported the Christmas programs are today at 1 and 6. The Griz won the food drive. Parent-Teacher Conferences were well attended. Thank you to Mandy Wright and some middle school students that helped with the book fair during Parent-Teacher Conferences. Cooking with Kids continues to be a big success, so Thank You to Karyn Giles and the Extension Agency. The 2nd grade had their annual feast; the National Honor Society students came from the high school to help out. I think all the kids had a great time. State testing data has been released, and it will take time to review. MAPS and DIBLEs testing will start in January. 5th and 6th grade band concert is December 17th @ 6pm. The Art club is going to decorate Christmas ornaments on December 18th.

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE

MINUTES

WARRANTS

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMUNICATIONS TO
AND FROM THE BOARD

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPAL

Jamie Ball, Athletic Director – Reported middle school boys basketball season has concluded. They had a good season with lots of growth as players. Winter sports have started, there are 7 students in speech & drama, they will be competing in Malta this weekend. Robotics have 5 students and their next competition will be in January in Butte. There are 13 girls and 12 boys participating in Wrestling. Their first tournament was in Cascade last weekend which the girl's placed 1st. Cheer has 13 girls. Basketball has 15 girls this includes the 8th graders. There were 19 participants in the boys' basketball teams. Their first games were last weekend in Lewistown, and the JV boys will head to Chester today. The football banquet was last night, nice to celebrate the great season that they had. I was invited to speak at the senior center last week about the change to Class B and all the upcoming winter sports season. Senior Night for wrestling will be the 18th, at our home mixer. Friday, the 19th, Montana Tech will be coming to play at our gym to honor Hayden Diekhans. Middle school girls' basketball will start January 6th. I will continue with the recommendation from the extracurricular committee meeting that we will not be allowing concurrent play for our 8th graders wanting to move up to high school sports. That they will need to decide to either participate in middle school or high school. Monte Geise will be stepping back from the head football coaching position; he has enjoyed his time coaching. Kevin Shaw has also decided that he will be stepping away from coaching. The head football coach and head track coaching positions will be posted.

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

It was moved by Kayle Axtman and seconded by Will Scott to hire Damon Gilbreth as Winter Host. The motion passed unanimously.

WINTER HOST

It was moved by Dusty Schuler and seconded by Kayle Axtman to hire Roxie Benjamin as Winter Cheer Coach. The motion passed unanimously.

WINTER CHEER COACH

It was moved by Kayle Axman and seconded by Will Scott to hire Patrick Northam as Middle School Wrestling Coach and Colby Cline as assistant Middle School Wrestling Coach. The motion passed unanimously.

MIDDLE SCHOOL
WRESTLING

It was moved by Dusty Schuler and seconded by Joellyn Clark to hire Deanna Farwick High School Assistant Tennis Coach. The motion passed unanimously.

HIGH SCHOOL
ASSISTANT TENNIS
COACH

It was moved by Brant Hasbrouck and seconded by Will Scott to hire Shana Diekhans head coach and Megan Lord as assistant High School Volleyball Coaches. The motion passed unanimously.

HIGH SCHOOL
VOLLEYBALL COACHES

Russ Axtman, Maintenance- Reported that winter work is underway, snow removal equipment is up and running. The heaters in the high school science room are completed. The heater in the math room is just waiting on the control panel. The grease trap project will be completed over the Christmas break; they needed some time to complete when students were out of the building. Hartford boiler inspectors were at the elementary - boiler #2 is good, boiler #1 is waiting on a new control panel. Once the new control panel is installed the Hartford inspector will come back. Once

MAINTENANCE

that inspection is completed, the state boiler inspector will visit and check the boilers as well.

Cali O'Hara, District Clerk- Reported the trustee elections are now open for filing. There are two positions open in district #1(Fort Benton), one position open in district #56 (Carter), and one position one in district #99(Benton Lake). Trustee filing is open from December 11 through February 9. Potential candidates can obtain a filing form at the district business office. The new Bridged Alliance insurance for schools is now up and running. We have asked our Agent Kerry Arganbright about our options for health insurance for the district. Invoices for all the maintenance projects will be submitted to the Intercap loan now that they are completed. Working with a tax lawyer to clear up an issue with our 941 tax filing.

CLERK

It was moved by Dusty Schuler and seconded by Joellyn Clark, to run a mail ballot election for trustees and levies. The motion passed unanimously.

CALL FOR ELECTION

Pat Hould, Superintendent- Reported that the Honor Band and Choir were in Choteau. There were 7 students that participated. FFA districts were held here on Tuesday, huge thank you to Brooke Cunningham for all her hard work to put this event on. 2nd quarter mid-term report cards were sent home. There have been several parent meetings and student meetings this last week checking in on students. There has been lots of interest in the superintendent position but haven't received any applications yet. The art club will be heading to the elementary on the 18th for ornament decorating. The 12th graders will be heading to the courthouse for a mock trial on the 16th. The elementary Christmas program is tonight, and the band concerts are on the 16th and 17th.

SUPERINTENDENT

Committee Reports-

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy – First reading of the Fort Benton Public Schools Gym Rec Access Agreement. Policy meeting January 6th at 7:00pm

POLICY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Joellyn Clark and seconded by Dusty Schuler to approve the following policies: Policy 2334; Policy 2158; Policy 3310; Policy 3141; Policy 3121; Policy 3110; Policy 2600; Policy 2450; Policy 5255; Policy 5122; Policy 3650; Policy 3416. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF POLICIES

Hires-

HIRES

It was moved by Kyla Wright and seconded by Darin Arganbright, to hire Trevor O'Hara as substitute Custodian. The motion passed unanimously.

SUBSTITUE CUSTODIAN

Future Agenda Items-

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

2ND Reading of Rec Gym Access Policy.

It was moved by Dusty Schuler and seconded by Darin Arganbright, to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

ADJOURN

CLERK _____

ATTEST

BOARD CHAIRPERSON _____