



DeSmet School District #20
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
6:00 pm Thursday, March 14th, 2024
In the School Library

Trustees Present: Aaron Foster, Synthia Wendell, Heather Burgad, Jasmine Dahlquist, Sigrid

Trustees Absent:

Others Present: Matthew Driessen, Freyja Hughes, Christina Wekkin, Vicki Richards

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Aaron Foster called the meeting to order at 6:09pm and the meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Introduction/Comments of Guests on Items not on the Agenda

III. Recognition of Students and Staff

Mr. Driessen relayed that the Girl's Basketball team placed 4th in the tournament this past week, and wished to express his congratulations and appreciation for the hard work of the girls and the coaches. He also stated that the Kindergarten readiness program is scheduled to be honored on April 5th at a community dinner.

IV. Board Correspondence

- A. Request from Vicki Richards regarding Paid Holidays (See agenda item VI-C.)

Board Chair Aaron Foster elected to move item VI-C to the top of the agenda.

Mrs. Richards requested that the board list President's Day as a paid holiday in FY25. The board asked Freyja Hughes to speak to the cost of paying staff for additional holidays. Freyja expressed that she understood Mrs. Richards' request, but because the district has been operating on such a tight budget, it was not financially feasible this year to pay for holidays outside of the approved school holidays listed in [MCA 20-1-305](#). Freyja relayed that classified staff have always been allowed to use personal time to cover weekdays where the school is not open. The board sympathized with Mrs. Richards, but agreed that the district's fiscally conservative approach was best at this time, and suggested revisiting the issue again next school year, during budget finalization.

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad and seconded by Synthia Wendell to table this item until the fall budget meeting in August. The motion was carried unanimously.

V. Business Manager's Report

A. Approve/Disapprove: Minutes

A motion was made first by Synthia Wendell to approve the minutes from 2.26.24. The motion was seconded by Heather Burgad and carried unanimously.

B. Warrants:

Warrants had not been issued by the time of the board meeting, so no action was taken.

C. Discussion: Budget Report

Freyja Hughes reviewed Budget Reports with trustee attendance.

D. Discussion/Action: FY25 Budget Estimates

Freyja Hughes and Mr. Driessen presented the preliminary budget data sheet from OPI.

E. Discussion/Approve/Disapprove: FY25 Levy Estimates/Publication

The board reviewed levy projections for FY25 in preparation for a publication dated 3.30.24. A motion was made first by Synthia Wendell and seconded by Heather Burgad to approve the budget estimates for the March 30th Levy publication as presented by Freyja Hughes.

F. Approve/Disapprove: Removal of Laura Zumpfe and Addition of Sigrid Sheie as an Approved Signer on the First Interstate Bank Account.

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad to approve the removal of Laura Zumpfe and addition of Sigrid Sheie on the First Interstate Bank Account. The motion was seconded by Synthia Wendell and carried unanimously.

VI. Superintendent's Report

[\[Annotated Superintendent's Report\]](#)

A. Discussion/Approval/Disapproval: ESSER Purchases and Allocations

Mr. Driessen and Ms. Hughes reviewed a history of ESSER purchases and allocations. A motion was made first by Heather Burgad and seconded by Synthia Wendell to approve the ESSER purchases and budget allocations year to date. The motion was carried unanimously.

B. Discussion/Action: 2024-25 Calendar

[\[2024-2025 Calendar\]](#)

Mr. Driessen reviewed the prospective FY25 Calendar with the board and highlighted scheduled dates for the teachers to review student performance metrics. MEA Days on the 17th and 18th of October were reviewed, and Mr. Driessen also discussed alternative professional development opportunities for teachers who may not be able to attend these. Driessen relayed that Math and ELA nights, as well as Kindergarten Roundup/Graduation and 8th Grade Graduation are now reflected on the calendar.

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad to approve the 2024-2025 School Calendar. This motion was seconded by Synthia Wendell and carried unanimously.

C. Discussion/Action: Request from Vicki Richards regarding Paid Holidays

[\[Letter from Vicki Richards\]](#)

[\[MCA 20-1-305\]](#)

This item was addressed under IV: Board Correspondence and was tabled for a future meeting.

VII. Personnel Report

A. Discussion/Action: Gabrielle Goodell request for tenure

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad and seconded by Synthia Wendell to approve the rehire of Gabrielle Goodell for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion was carried unanimously.

B. Discussion/Action: Stacy Bateman request for tenure

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad and seconded by Sigrid Sheie to approve the rehire of Gabrielle Goodell for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion was carried unanimously.

C. Discussion/Action: Lindsey McGee request for tenure

A motion was made first by Synthia Wendell and seconded by Heather Burgad to approve the rehire of Lindsey McGee for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion was carried unanimously.

D. Discussion/Action: List of Non-Tenured Teachers for Renewal

A motion was made first by Synthia Wendell to approve the rehire of non-tenured teachers Christina Wekkin, Savannah Stern, Michelle Mullis, and Morgan Abate, as presented by Superintendent Driessen. The motion was seconded by Heather Burgad. The motion was carried unanimously. Christina Wekkin expressed her gratitude to the board for her rehire.

E. Discussion/Action: List of Tenured Teachers for Renewal

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad to approve the rehire of tenured teachers Jackie Tunis, Kris Gardner, Beth Vibbert, Kelli Ebbs, Caitie Bloom, David Feeley, and Carly Aho, as presented by Superintendent Driessen. The motion was seconded by Sigrid Sheie. The motion was carried unanimously.

Possible Closed Session

F. Discussion/Action: SPED Department Restructure

Board Chair Aaron Foster called for a brief recess at 7:11pm, and relayed that the board would resume in executive session after the break.

Board Chair Aaron Foster found that the right to privacy exceeded the public's right to know in this matter, in accordance with Section 2-3-203 MCA and closed the meeting to Executive Session at 7:19pm. The meeting reopened at 7:46.

A motion was made first by Heather Burgad to approve the rehire of Maggie Marmon for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion was seconded by Synthia Wendell and was carried unanimously.

VIII. Committee Updates

A. Strategic Plan Meetings update by Superintendent Driessen

Mr. Driessen relayed that he would like to send out a letter after spring break to send out updates about the strategic plan and the district's goal of purchasing the ball field adjacent to the school campus. He relayed that there was a possibility that the school could lease the land if the purchase bond was to fail, but that no offer has been made in writing to date.

He reviewed the district's motivation for acquiring this property, and had presented the concept of putting in affordable housing to incentivize staff retention to the Mayor, who had reportedly responded positively to the idea. Driessen expressed his excitement about potential collaboration between the school district and the city and county of Missoula.

Mr. Driessen and Board Chair Aaron Foster indicated that they would be meeting with the mayor again on April 2nd to discuss future development.

IX. Upcoming Meetings

A. 6:00 pm Monday, April 15th

X. Comments of Guest & School Board Members on Items Not on the Agenda

XI. Adjourn

A unanimous motion to adjourn was made first by Heather Burgad and seconded by Synthia Wendell, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Date Approved

Respectfully submitted,

District Clerk

Board Chair