

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ROBERTS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
MAY 15, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Roberts School District No. 5, Roberts, Montana was called to order by Chair Michelle Swansborough at 6:00 p.m. on May 15, 2024 in the library at the Roberts School.

ATTENDANCE

Michelle Swansborough, Chair
Brandon Crane, Vice Chair
Joel Bertolino
Nick Dobbel
Mariah Holdbrook

Alex Ator, Superintendent (via Zoom)
JaLayne Obert, Business Manager/Clerk

Guests: Lynette Burgan, Nancy Langager, Lacy Kircher, Sanford Langager, Brian Frank, Jackie Douglas, Kale Douglas, Peter Wisniewski, Ravipau Norman, Brad Norman, Michael Bissonnette, John Holdbrook, Jen Larson, Caitlin Hall, Sarah Clark

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Brandon Crane, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting April 17, 2024 as presented. (YES – Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

WARRANTS

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Brandon Crane and carried unanimously to approve warrants 50145-50197 as presented. (YES: Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Holdbrook stated calculus and trigonometry are two classes that should be offered to high school students and eighth graders should be learning pre-algebra. He stated he was told board members would be meeting with him on the Road to Recovery document but he hasn't heard of any plans.

Mr. Ator stated there has been discussion of whether or not this should be handled as a board committee.

Nick Dobbel stated he spoke with Lance Melton of the Montana School Boards Association and he didn't feel two trustees meeting with other individuals would have to be designated as a board committee.

Michelle Swansborough stated we have been advised by our attorney that it should be done as a board committee held as an open meeting so as to be transparent to the community.

TEACHER REPORT

Brian Frank gave the teacher report stating we have an outstanding staff in Roberts and although it has been said we're being rated at a C, so are other schools.

Mr. Frank stated he teaches fourth grade and also is the advisor for BPA. He stated he tells the members that BPA is a service club and they do the birthday calendar and carnival/bingo.

Mr. Frank stated as he only has two students in fourth grade, he has also been filling in for other classes when the teacher is gone.

LITERACY REPORT

Caitlin Hall reported Kindergarten Roundup was held on April 26 but we didn't have any four-year olds for screening.

Mrs. Hall stated MAST testing (taken instead of SBAC) has been completed and we are in the MAP and Dibels testing cycle as required by the literacy grant. She added several teachers will be going to Bozeman for professional development in June.

ACTIVITY REPORT

Mr. Ator stated track is underway with the girls' team taking the 6C District championship and there are nine students qualified for divisional. He added junior high track is over and thanked Lacy Kircher for stepping up into the coaching role and doing such a great job.

STAFFING

RESIGNATIONS – Mr. Ator recommended acceptance of letters of resignation from Sarah Wade and Caitlin Hall.

Michelle Swansborough stated it was a joy to have Caitlin Hall on the staff.

Mr. Ator stated no one picked up more slack than Sarah Wade and she was a great employee.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Mariah Holdbrook and carried unanimously to accept the letters of resignation from Sarah Wade and Caitlin Hall. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

NEW HIRE – TABLED

SUMMER STAFFING – TABLED

RENEWAL OF STAFF - TABLED

NEW BUSINESS

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW ROAD TO RECOVERY – Mr. Ator stated one of the items on the Road to Recovery document was to return to a five-day week and asked what board members think of that.

Nick Dobbel stated he would like to survey the community about how it affects child care and if it is positive for the students.

Michelle Swansborough stated she thinks the students are not as tired with the four-day week and the input of the teachers is it is a good recruiting tool. She stated she really prefers the four-day school week.

Joel Bertolino stated he had mixed feelings when we first started with the four-day week but he hasn't received information from the community that it isn't working. He stated he hasn't noticed a difference scholastically but what is noticeable is the positive effect it has had on applicants applying for our open positions.

Brandon Crane stated for his family the four-day week is great and his children like it. He stated he does see the advantage in hiring teachers and doesn't feel it affects academics.

Mariah Holdbrook stated her son was in high school when we started the four-day week and he did better scholastically. She stated we are seeing this being done worldwide but she would be willing to survey the community to see what people think.

Mr. Ator stated he would also like to ask Brad Norman and Michael Bissonnette for their opinions as they will be coming on the board.

Brad Norman stated from a teacher standpoint it would be great but he would like to see data on how the students are performing with a four-day week. He stated he would probably go with a five-day week.

Michael Bissonnette stated he would also like to see data on student achievement. He stated child care worked for his family with the four-day week.

Mr. Ator stated the data is all over the place for 7-12, and K-5 would probably do best with year round school. He stated we would probably have to give big raises to teachers to get them to go back to a five-day week. He stated the first thing to do would be to survey the community and it isn't realistic to look at changing for the 2024-2025 year so it would have to be the next year.

Mr. Ator stated a consolidated district would probably have one superintendent and one school board and resources would have to filter down.

Nick Dobbel stated this is one thing this county needs to look at.

Joel Bertolino stated he doesn't see how this would save money as it would be like the Billings school district and students would be shifted if schools are overpopulated or underpopulated.

Mr. Ator stated the only way to save a bunch of money is to close a school.

Michelle Swansborough stated Roberts has good kids and a good community and she wouldn't want to lose that.

Brandon Crane stated if the schools were really serious about this, there would have to be a study done to see how it would work. He added he doesn't think we'd have schools in Roberts, Fromberg, or Belfry.

Mariah Holdbrook stated she agrees with Brandon Crane and when a school goes, the community goes. She stated we would lose our voice and wouldn't have representation to keep Roberts as it is.

Michael Bissonnette stated he doesn't have any experience in this area.

Brad Norman stated he doesn't mind looking at the concept but other schools would also have to be interested.

Mr. Ator stated on the item on staff performance rewards, how would this work in Roberts.

Sarah Clark stated it is hard to compare classrooms that have one grade and those that are a combination of two classes.

Michelle Swansborough stated the board has tried to give staff bonuses when we have the money and we are trying to increase the base. She added it would be hard to base merit increases on student performance.

Brandon Crane stated he isn't opposed to performance based rewards, but feels it would be hard to do in a school.

Mariah Holdbrook stated she hasn't ever agreed with tenure and can appreciate some incentive but it would be hard to measure merit.

Nick Dobbel stated he isn't a big fan of tenure either but has no idea how merit rewards would be done.

Joel Bertolino stated he thinks the way OPI does its grading is really bad and not good for small schools.

Mariah Holdbrook stated she feels Roberts has really mature students but are we over-testing them.

Michelle Swansborough stated we need to table the design of the committee to discuss these ideas until after the new board members are seated.

SPRING ORDERS – TABLED

CERTIFIED NEGOTIATIONS – TABLED

CSCT CONTRACT RENEWAL – TABLED

CERTIFICATION OF CANVASS OF ELECTION RESULTS – Mr. Ator stated we need to certify the canvass of the election results for the levy and trustees. He stated the canvass shows the levy was defeated by a vote of 196 to 98.

Motion was made by Brandon Crane, seconded by Mariah Holdbrook and carried unanimously to certify the canvass of the levy election. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

Mr. Ator stated the canvass of the trustee election results shows the election of Brad Norman and Michael Bissonnette for three-year terms.

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to certify the canvass of the trustee election with Brad Norman and Michael Bissonnette elected as new trustees for three-year terms. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

STUDENT PETITION TO GRADUATE BY STATE STANDARDS – Mr. Ator stated Senate Bill 18 states that students with educational disruptions occurring some time during grades nine through twelve caused by the following are allowed to graduate with the state minimum high school credit requirements instead of the local district requirements:

- Homelessness
- Child welfare system involvement
- Juvenile justice system involvement
- Medical or mental health crisis
- Another event approved by the district trustees

Mr. Ator stated we may have a student who will meet these requirements for graduation.

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Brandon Crane and carried unanimously to allow a student who meets the requirements of Senate Bill 18 to graduate from Roberts High School with the state minimum high school credit requirements. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

OLD BUSINESS

POLICY UPDATES AND REVIEW

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

NEXT MEETING DATES – May special meeting to be determined

June 19

July 17

SUPERINTENDENT SCHEDULE

Mr. Ator stated he will work half-days next Tuesday and Wednesday. He stated he has been keeping a time log and is asking for the flexibility to not have to take time off next week.

GRADUATION HELP – Mr. Ator asked for assistance with handing out diplomas at graduation. It was decided Michelle Swansborough will hand out diplomas to eighth graders and Mariah Holdbrook will hand out diplomas to seniors.

VALEDICTORIAN SELECTION PROCEDURE – Mr. Ator stated our seniors with the highest GPAs have not met the valedictorian/salutatorian requirement of four years of math.

Nick Dobbel asked who counseled the students. Mr. Ator stated he did and he doesn't feel it is fair or appropriate to not recognize these students and is recommending we have co-valedictorians and a salutatorian. He stated going forward we need to look at the language and counsel students on the requirements.

ADJOURNMENT

Michelle Swansborough adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Board Chair

District Clerk